

REIMAGINING THE GOVERNMENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK

2025–2026 TRANSFORMATION REPORT



Introduction

Reimagine GNB was created to help the government move from plans and intent to measurable improvements in services, outcomes, and public trust. 2025 was a foundation year to test practical approaches to whole-of-government transformation, strengthen the conditions for cross-departmental action, and build readiness for larger-scale reform.

This report documents what the Reimagine GNB team did in 2025, what was learned through that work, and what structural changes and next steps were beginning to take shape before the initiative paused in February 2026. It is written to make the work visible, to distinguish between what was done and what was still emerging, and to show the conditions required for the work to move from early testing into sustained implementation.

This report should be read as an account of a transformation effort that was underway, but not complete. Reimagine GNB was created to respond to a system-level diagnosis: that many of New Brunswick's service and outcome challenges were not simply problems of effort or policy intent, but of how government was organized to make decisions, allocate resources, and deliver across silos.

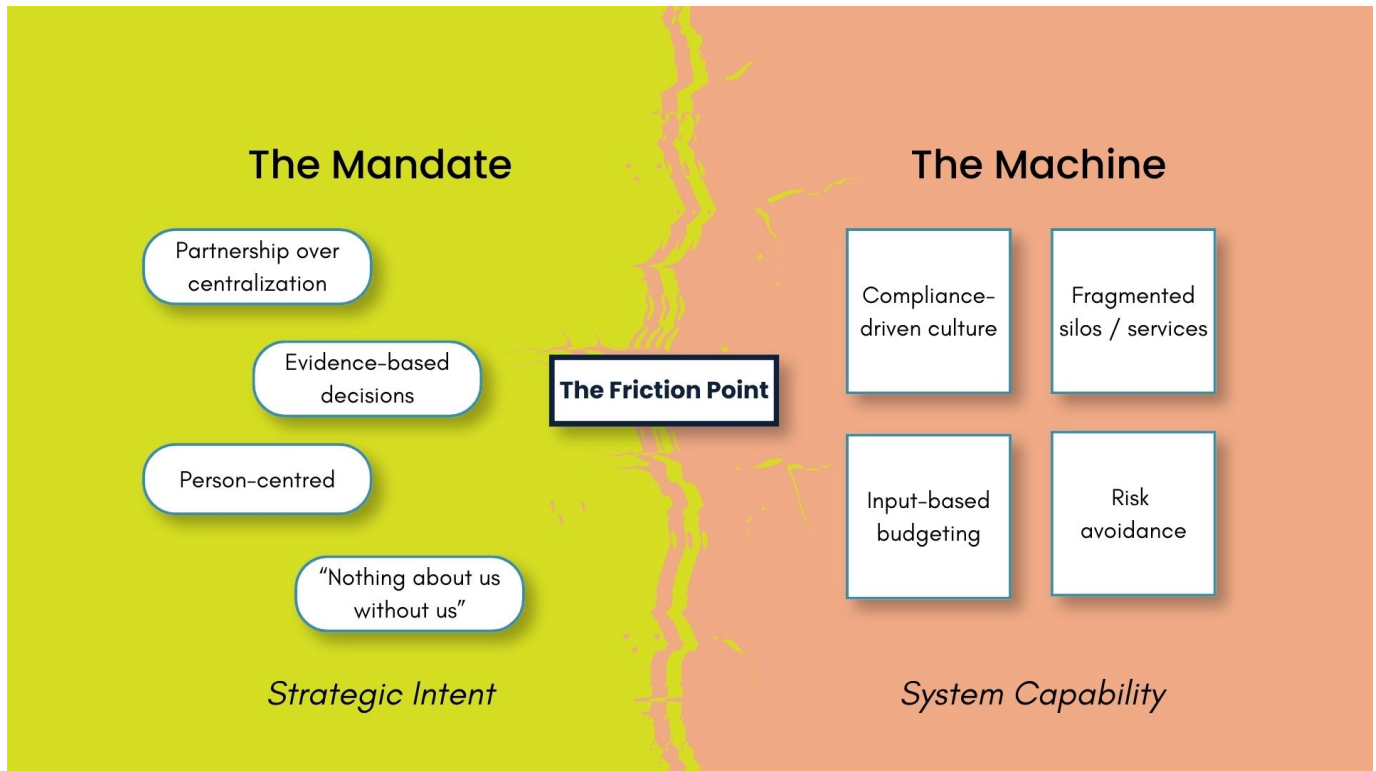
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Key Terms

Key term	Definition
Accelerator	A short, structured cycle to support cross-department teams working on a priority, where solutions have stalled in their adoption or scaling due to systemic barriers or other challenges.
Absorption capacity	How much change the organization can realistically take in and implement without overload, anxiety, or rework.
Capability building	Developing skills and shared ways of working so teams can deliver and improve services without relying on heroics or outside help.
Customer experience (CX)	What it feels like for residents or citizens to use a service—clarity, ease, dignity, speed, and how coherent the journey is across departments.
Cross-functional collaboration	People from different functions (policy, finance, HR, digital, operations) working together end-to-end on shared outcomes.
Decision rights	Clear authority about who can decide what—so work doesn’t stall in ambiguity or repeated approvals.
Delivery	Where government services meet the public—what actually happens for residents, not what is intended on paper.
Enabling functions	Corporate functions like policy, finance, HR, procurement, digital, data, and communications that shape how work moves (or stalls).
Experiment	A small, safe test designed to learn quickly before scaling—used to reduce risk and build evidence.
Evidence loop	A cycle where service results and user insight inform decisions, priorities, and investment (so learning drives action).
Executive sponsor	A senior leader accountable for supporting a mission or portfolio—removing barriers and securing decisions and resources.
Governance	The structures and routines that set direction, make decisions, resolve trade-offs, and reinforce accountability.
Good Services Assessment	A structured way to assess service quality against shared principles, document evidence, and identify improvements.
Guardrails	Clear rules and risk limits that allow teams to move faster while staying safe and accountable.

Institutional maturity	The ability to sustain improvement over time through stable practices and systems
Integrated Service Delivery (ISD)	A strength based, research driven child and youth-centered framework adopted by GNB and is intended to improve services and programs to children and youth (aged 0-21) having significant social, emotional, physical and/or mental-health needs.
Learning infrastructure	The routines, roles, and tools that capture insights from pilots and make them reusable across government.
Logic model	A simple map of how activities are expected to lead to outputs and outcomes—used to clarify the theory of change.
Long-Term Care (LTC)	A priority area focused on improving services and outcomes for seniors and care systems.
Mandate letters	Formal letters outlining ministerial priorities and expectations for what government will achieve and how it will work.
Measurement framework	A structured way to track progress (outputs, outcomes, experience, capability) so leaders can act on evidence.
Missions	Missions are concrete goals that, if achieved, will help to tackle ‘grand challenges’—important, systemic and society-wide problems that do not have obvious solutions.
Mission portfolio	A set of coordinated initiatives under a mission (policy, services, funding, data, workforce) designed to move outcomes.
Ministerial Committee	A governance body intended to provide political authorization, priority-setting, and protection for transformation work.
Operating model	How government actually works day-to-day: decision-making, roles, routines, incentives, and collaboration pathways.
Outcomes-based	Focused on real-world results for people and communities (not only activity, outputs, or compliance).
Prequalified vendor list	A procurement mechanism that makes it faster to access specialized expertise, ideally with capability transfer built in.
ReGo (Reinventing Government Initiative)	A broader modernization effort intended to shift government toward more people-centred, outcomes-focused ways of working.
Service design	Designing services around the experience of users and their needs, connecting back-of-office and frontline using research, mapping, prototyping, and iteration.

Service standard	A shared definition of “good” service quality used to guide design, measurement, and improvement.
Social Policy Office (SPO)	A proposed capability hub to strengthen social policy design, planning, outcomes focus, and cross-government alignment.
Steering Committee (SteerCo)	An early governance forum intended to coordinate and align transformation; often strong for dialogue, weaker for resourcing.
Test-and-learn	Running small tests, learning quickly, and scaling what works rather than waiting for perfect plans.
Transformation	Long-term change in how government thinks and works, shifting structures, decision-making, ways of working, and enabling systems
Triple Helix	A model linking governance, operations, and delivery—with emphasis on the overlaps where change holds or snaps back.
Ways of working	Repeatable collaboration practices (cadences, sprints, decision forums, templates) that make delivery predictable and scalable.

1. Responding to Urgency with Systemic Reform

Section In Summary

Core claim

New Brunswick's biggest service and outcome challenges are not the result of lack of effort or intent. They are about how the system is designed to make decisions, allocate resources, and deliver services.

What happened

The 2024 How It All Broke report diagnosed recurring governance failures across social policy and recommended structural reform, including a Social Policy Office within the Executive Council Office working with Finance and Treasury Board. Reimagine GNB launched in April 2025 as a foundation-year effort to test what whole-of-government transformation would require in practice and to prepare for broader scaling in 2026. The dedicated team was disbanded in February 2026 before deeper structural changes could be embedded.

What we tried and observed

- Executive engagement examined where decision rights sit and what it takes to move from alignment to action.
- Call for ideas assessed appetite for improvement and revealed uneven capability in problem framing and innovation methods.
- Policy/Finance/Digital/HR workshops examined whether cross-functional collaboration could become a repeatable rhythm, not a one-off event.
- Accelerators provided an opportunity to experiment with mission-style delivery and surfaced the barriers that must be removed for change to stick.
- Good Service Assessment explored whether government could build a shared baseline for service quality and experience.

What we learned

- Enthusiasm for collaboration is high, but structures for cross-department collaboration are weak.
- Transformation cannot run as "extra work." It requires protected capacity, clear decision rights, and reinforcement through governance and budgets.
- Readiness for organizational transformation is low, and there is a gap in innovation and design skills.
- Under constraint, systems revert unless leaders actively protect and prioritize the new way of working.

Implication for leaders

If government wants more people-centred, outcomes-focused delivery, it must treat transformation as a shift in how the system works, not as an add-on initiative. That means clear decision rights, protected capacity, cross-functional governance, and stronger links between policy, budgeting, and delivery.

Reflection prompts

1. What work will we stop or pause to free real capacity for transformation?
2. How do we set cross-departmental priorities that create the conditions for genuine collaboration rather than parallel efforts?
3. What structures will make this "how we work," not "extra work"?

People aren't failing the system. The system is failing the people." This message from the Child, Youth and Seniors Advocate's 2024 report "How It All Broke" points to a hard truth: weak services and poor outcomes can happen even when public servants are working hard. The report describes governance problems that repeat across the system and offers 10 recommendations. One key recommendation was to create a **Social Policy Office (SPO)** in the Executive Council Office (ECO), in partnership with Finance and Treasury Board (FTB).

The SPO was imagined as a practical engine to improve how social programs are designed, funded, staffed, and managed. It would help government forecast demand, set service standards, strengthen planning (budgets, staffing, and service design), and set clearer outcome goals. The SPO would also lead a broader "**Reinventing Government Initiative**" (ReGo).

ReGo was meant to shift government away from compliance-driven ways of working and toward approaches that are people-centred and focused on outcomes. In plain terms, it was about modernizing the system so it better serves New Brunswickers, **putting the "service" back in public service**. It also signalled a shift in how government understands value for money: not through the volume of outputs produced, but through the social outcomes achieved with public investment. This is what Reimagine GNB was initiated to do.

This work began during a period of rising constraint. The Holt government built its platform after eight surplus budgets, but the economic outlook shifted sharply between the election campaign and after taking office. New Brunswick also entered this period with long-standing gaps. **Governments had not consistently invested in modern public service capabilities, and the system's capacity did not keep pace with growing complexity.**

These gaps showed up in predictable ways: hard decisions were made harder because evidence on trade-offs was thin; policy capacity was stretched; testing new approaches was difficult; and employee experience was weak. In this context, simply cutting resources from the status quo without shifting resources into a clear future state would not create transformation. It would create weaker versions of today's results.

More broadly, the public service was built for a different era; one with more linear problems and slower change. Its institutions were traditionally organized around policy sectors such as health, education, and public safety, rather than around people's life events and lived experiences. Today's reality is different: demographic shifts, economic transition, climate adaptation, and rising demand across health, education, social development, housing, and more. Because these challenges cut across

multiple sectors, people often encounter fragmented services, gaps in support, and systems that are difficult to navigate. At the same time, public expectations are rising.

This is the context that led to Reimagine GNB launching in March 2025. It was not meant to be superficial modernization. It was framed as foundational transformation: a long-term effort to change how government operates—structurally, culturally, and behaviourally.

This report covers the foundational phase of Reimagine GNB (March 2025 to February 2026). It documents what the team did, what was learned, and what would have been next. The foundational phase was not designed to chase quick wins. It was designed to build traction for transformation by developing organizational learning, strengthening internal capability, and preparing reforms that could scale.

In 2025, Reimagine GNB treated each major activity as a test of the transformation framework:

- **Senior engagement** examined where decision rights actually sit and what it takes to move from agreement to action.
- **The call for ideas** assessed the appetite for improvement and showed uneven capability in problem framing and innovation methods.
- **Reimagine GNB Workshops** with policy, finance, digital, and HR examined whether cross-functional collaboration could become a repeatable way of working.
- **Accelerators** provided an opportunity to experiment with how mission-style delivery could work in practice—and exposed the barriers that must be removed for progress to stick.
- **The Good Service Assessment** explored whether government could build a shared baseline for service quality and experience.

Transformation at this scale is iterative and requires sustained political and administrative commitment. The first cycle aimed to build clarity and readiness for deeper reform. But moving beyond foundation-building required difficult choices: freeing up capacity, sequencing priorities, protecting transformation work during fiscal constraint, and changing governance to support cross-departmental work. That meant shifting away from siloed approaches and individual departmental ownership toward shared, government-wide accountability for outcomes. Those choices were not made. Without clear prioritization, cross-government ownership, and structural reinforcement, Reimagine GNB remained “extra work” rather than becoming part of how government operates.

In February 2026, the dedicated reimagine team concluded its work. **The work paused not because the need went away, but because the commitment required to carry it forward was not locked into decisions, resources, and structures.** If Reimagine GNB had continued, the next phase would have moved from building conditions to delivering sustained results across mission portfolios, supported by

stronger measurement and budget alignment. The lesson is clear: transformation cannot run on enthusiasm alone. Leadership must convert intent into a protected priority.

2. Context and Rationale: The Case for Structural Transformation

Section In Summary

Core claim

The ambitions in the 2024 mandate letters require an operating model government does not yet reliably have—so transformation must focus on structural alignment, not just better effort.

What happened

On November 7, 2024, the Premier issued mandate letters outlining priorities and expectations for how government will work: evidence-based decisions, transparency, meaningful engagement, regional partnership, integrity, and improved outcomes in core systems. These expectations are clear and measurable. They also imply a shift in how government must coordinate, learn, and deliver across departments.

What we tried and observed

- The mandate letters describe outcomes that require shared accountability across departments, not single-department ownership.
- Current incentives and routines tend to reward short-term delivery, local optimization, and compliance-heavy decision cycles.
- Many priority outcomes depend on cross-boundary coordination (policy, finance, digital, workforce), but true collaboration — such as shared decision-making across responsibility centers — is not yet “built in.”

What we learned

- The system can work very hard and still struggle to shift outcomes at scale because structures are misaligned.
- Without shared ownership and accountability, teams revert to silos even when everyone agrees on the goal.
- Without investing in space to experiment and learn, and how to take smart risks for innovation, risk won't be managed, it will be avoided

Implication for leaders

If government wants mandate-letter outcomes, leaders must align governance, resourcing, and ways of working to enable cross-department delivery and safe testing. Otherwise, the system will continue to deliver siloed activity without durable outcome change.

Reflection prompts

1. Which 2–3 cross-department outcomes will we treat as shared responsibility this year?
2. What flexible structures will allow teams to test improvements safely and quickly?
3. How will we tie funding, staffing, and leadership attention to outcomes, not just activity?

On November 7, 2024, Premier Holt issued mandate letters to each Minister. These letters set out clear priorities, measurable outcomes, and expectations for “how we will work.” Taken together, they describe a government that aims to make decisions based on evidence, act transparently, and engage New Brunswickers in a real way, not just through consultation, but through partnership.

The mandate letters also point to a deeper shift in posture. They emphasize working with communities and regions rather than trying to control everything from the centre. They reinforce New Brunswick’s commitments on official languages, highlight integrity and respectful collaboration, and commit to rebuilding relationships with First Nations. Overall, the letters signal a balanced approach: fiscal responsibility, alongside meaningful improvements in health care, education, housing, and public services.

HOW WE WILL WORK

Our government is committed to evidence-based decision-making across all departments. We will operate under an ‘open by default’ principle to improve transparency and trust in government.

We will “get out of the office” and engage authentically with New Brunswickers, communities, stakeholders, and experts inspired by the disability advocacy principle of “Nothing about us without us”.

We recognize that one size does not fit all – that some communities will need different things to thrive and our legislation, policies and programs should be designed to support those unique differences.

We will prioritize partnerships, trusting and empowering the people and organizations on the ground working most closely with New Brunswickers.

The *Official Languages Act*, which guarantees the equality of our official languages and linguistic communities, is an integral part of our culture, our history and our future as a province. I expect us all to work together to show leadership to enable New Brunswick to fulfill its role as a leader in official languages in the country and the world.

We commit to rebuilding relationships with First Nations based on a nation-to-nation relationship that establishes trust and a shared understanding of treaty obligations.

We will be a government that cares for all New Brunswickers and that does our best to bring people together. New Brunswickers have placed their trust in us, and we will work every day to hold that trust.

We are going to lead with a balanced approach. That means we will watch the bottom line and deliver fiscal responsibility while we improve the services that New Brunswickers need, like health care and education and an affordable place to call home.

Reimagine GNB begins with a structural truth: **the expectations in the mandate letters require an operating model that does not yet fully exist.** In other words, government is being asked to deliver outcomes and behaviours that its current incentives, structures, and operating practices do not reliably support. If the system already produced these results consistently, many of these expectations would not need to be stated so explicitly.

Over time, the public service has developed patterns that make transformation harder. These patterns are not about bad intent. They are about a system that has evolved to manage risk, manage workload, and protect stability, often at the expense of learning, collaboration, and long-term outcomes. The result is a government that can work extremely hard, and still struggle to shift outcomes at scale. In this context, Reimagine GNB framed the challenge as a set of **structural misalignments; places where what we say we want and what the system rewards do not match.** The misalignments show up in predictable ways, including:

- **Short-term pressures over long-term outcomes.**
The system rewards immediate delivery and visible activity, even when the real outcome requires sustained addressing root causes rather than fixing symptoms over time.
- **Siloed accountability instead of shared responsibility.**
Many outcomes (health, housing, child wellbeing, long-term care) require multiple departments and partners to act together, but the system is not set up to incentivize that or make it easy.
- **Compliance-heavy processes that slow learning.**
When everything must be proven before it can be tried, safe testing becomes difficult, and risk becomes something to avoid rather than manage.
- **Funding and staffing decisions that are not tied to outcomes.**
Resources often flow based on history and institutional patterns rather than measurable impact, foresight or cross-department strategies.

These misalignments shaped the transformation agenda. Reimagine GNB did not treat transformation as a series of isolated program fixes or incremental technology upgrades. It treated transformation as a system shift: changing how government sets priorities, makes decisions, collaborates across boundaries, and learns through testing. Ultimately, this is so the province can deliver more consistently on the ambitions reflected in the mandate letters.

3. Vision and Goals: A Modern Public Service

Section In Summary

Core claim

Transformation holds when it closes the gap between policy intent and delivery reality, and when outcomes are tracked and reinforced through decision-making and budgets.

What this section establishes

Reimagine GNB aimed to make government more person-centred and outcomes-focused by changing how priorities are set, how work gets done across departments, and how change is reinforced through governance, resourcing, and incentives. Reimagine GNB's vision was not "more initiatives." It was a modern public service that can respond to complex, connected needs. The approach drew on global lessons about whole-of-government reform.

What we tried and observed

- Successful transformations typically have a strong coordinating "nerve centre" that can remove barriers and keep momentum.
- Cross-functional, end-to-end teams are more likely to design changes that survive contact with reality.
- Progress becomes real when outcomes are clear and tracked consistently, not just reported occasionally.
- Test-and-learn methods reduce risk by proving value and feasibility before scaling.
- Without reinforcement (incentives, resources, governance), good ideas fade under pressure.

What we learned

- Transformation is not a plan, it is an operating model.
- Working differently must be paired with reinforcement, or the system snaps back.
- The most useful insights came from testing ambition against operational reality.

Implication for leaders

If government wants durable improvement in services and outcomes, it must build the conditions that make cross-department delivery possible: clear outcomes, protected capacity, shared methods, and governance that can decide and unblock, not just discuss. Effective transformation occurs when leadership places organizational outcomes above individual influence and commits to shared stewardship.

Reflection prompts

1. What are the few outcomes we will organize around, and how will we design progress measures that reinforce shared accountability and joint decision-making?
2. What cross-functional teams or "nerve centre" functions are required to remove barriers and keep transformation moving?
3. What reinforcement mechanisms (governance, budget alignment, incentives) will prevent regression to the status quo?

From the outset, Reimagine GNB set a clear direction: build a government that is person-centred, outcome-focused, and designed to respond to the complex, connected needs of New Brunswickers. The mission was to mobilize the public service to rethink policy, services, resource flows, and governance using a portfolio-based, mission-oriented approach that strengthens social outcomes while renewing the long-term capacity of government.

The team drew on lessons from other jurisdictions that have tried whole-of-government reform under real constraint (see Appendix A). A consistent lesson across these examples is that transformation becomes credible when it closes the gap between policy intent and delivery reality, and when public funds can be linked to **measurable outcomes that people can actually feel**.

Key success factors and transformation levers

Across global examples, a few patterns showed up again and again as conditions for success:

- **A strong “nerve centre” for transformation.** This could be a delivery unit, a transformation office, or a digital/service team that can bring departments together, track progress, and remove barriers when delivery slows or stalls.
- **Cross-functional teams that work end-to-end.** Teams that combine policy, operations, digital, finance, and workforce expertise are better able to design changes that survive contact with reality.
- **Clear outcomes and visible progress tracking.** Transformation holds when there is a shared destination and a practical way to measure progress over time.
- **Fast learning through testing.** Systems improve when they can run small, safe tests, learn quickly, and scale what works over writing perfect plans.
- **Reinforcement through governance and budgets.** Without decision rights, resources, and sustained leadership attention, even good ideas tend to fade.

These are not “nice-to-haves.” They are levers that shape what is possible inside the system.

Implementation strategies for successful transformation

Reimagine GNB also drew from common implementation strategies seen in successful reforms:

- Start with a clear framework that provides direction, shared language, and metrics to track progress.
- Create a central enabling team that has authority to convene departments, resolve issues, and maintain momentum through crises.

- Stand up mission-based, cross-functional teams with end-to-end accountability for outcomes, supported by enabling functions.
- Pilot, learn, and scale, using short delivery cycles and visible progress to build credibility and demand.
- Institutionalize what works through roles, governance, budgeting practices, procurement pathways, and communities of practice.

The practical takeaway is simple: transformation is an operating model that must be built and protected.

Our theory of change

Reimagine GNB's underlying logic was that outcomes improve when government can do three things at the same time:

1. **Make better choices** (clear priorities and trade-offs)
2. **Work differently** (cross-functional collaboration, modern methods, test-and-learn)
3. **Reinforce change** (governance, measurement, incentives and budget alignment)

In other words, transformation happens when new intent is matched by new ways of working and then stabilized through the machinery of government.

In practice, that means:

- designing services around life events rather than departmental boundaries,
- empowering public servants with skills, tools, and permission to test and learn,
- aligning funding with impact through portfolio governance,
- engaging residents and frontline workers as co-creators,
- delivering through agile, iterative cycles and feedback loops rather than rigid plans, and
- using measurement as a learning discipline, not just compliance reporting.

Over time, these shifts were expected to produce more integrated services, stronger institutional capacity, better alignment between budgets and outcomes, and increased trust through responsiveness and transparency. The point of the work was to build a transformation "engine," not a one-time project plan. (See Appendix B for the Theory of Change)

Strategic goals

Reimagine GNB's strategic goals focused on strengthening government's ability to deliver on social outcomes by improving how the system functions. The emphasis was not only on "doing more," but on building the capacity to do the right work well across boundaries and sustain it over time.

This included shifting toward people-centred services, strengthening cross-department coordination, improving how government learns and adapts, and building stronger enabling infrastructure (policy, finance, digital, HR) to support delivery rather than slow it down.

The Reimagine GNB mandate was anchored in four strategic goals aligned with the findings of “How It All Broke”:

1. **Enable measurable improvements in social outcomes**, particularly in areas of complex and persistent need.
2. **Strengthen the internal culture of innovation** to foster a positive employee experience (EX).
3. **Improve the citizen/resident experience (CX)** through seamless, integrated, and accessible service delivery.
4. **Enhance fiscal stewardship** by optimizing the use of financial, human, and data resources.

Together, these goals connect external outcomes (what New Brunswickers experience) with internal capability (how government actually delivers).

A transformation agenda

Based on these ideas, Reimagine GNB began to shape a transformation agenda that treated government as a system that must be updated across multiple dimensions not just through isolated projects.

This agenda included practical work to clarify outcomes, test mission-style collaboration, establish shared measures of service quality and experience, and strengthen the conditions needed for innovation portfolios to mature. It also included work to build shared fluency across enabling functions and to surface where current structures were creating friction. (Appendix C)

Intent-led, test-and-learn foundation

This initiative was not launched with a fully formed operating model in hand. In truth, the team did not know at the outset what the operating model would need to look like in practice. The team began with a clear intent and a notional framework, but not a fixed blueprint for how the operating model would work in practice.

A key design choice in 2025 was to treat the year as a foundation and learning cycle, not a full delivery cycle. The team used “try, test, learn” work to validate assumptions, identify constraints, and determine what a workable transformation model would actually require inside GNB.

Through workshops, experiments, and candid conversations, a more realistic picture emerged. Some early assumptions were too optimistic. Some approaches needed to be adjusted. The most useful patterns only became clear by testing ambition against operational reality.

The next section provides a review of what happened in 2025 and the operating model that began to emerge from that work.

Draft Vision Statement

A People First Government

We envision a public service where:

- Services are designed around the lived experiences of New Brunswickers.
- Public servants are empowered to learn, experiment, and lead change.
- Budgets align with outcomes that matter most to citizens.
- Communities, departments, and partners work together across boundaries to deliver lasting impact.

Reimagine GNB is our commitment to fundamentally shift how we think, work, and deliver—transforming government from within to create better outcomes for New Brunswickers today and into the future.

The outcome of our work will be government departments structured to design with and for people, and where staff at all levels are equipped, supported, and accountable for delivering citizen-centred services.

4. 2025 in Review

Section In Summary

Core claim

2025 was a foundation year that tested Reimagine GNB's transformation approach in real conditions and it revealed that appetite for change was stronger than the system's ability to support it.

What this section establishes

From April 2025 to February 2026, Reimagine GNB focused on building conditions for long-term transformation rather than chasing quick wins. The work combined senior engagement, system-wide idea generation, governance design, cross-functional learning, and mission-style accelerators. The year offered a clear view of the conditions required to move from ambition to sustained results.

What we tried and observed

- Senior engagement assessed alignment, sponsorship, and where decision rights actually sit.
- The call for ideas measured demand for renewal and surfaced uneven capability in problem framing and innovation methods.
- Governance structures (SteerCo, then Ministerial Committee) experimented with what it takes to authorize and protect transformation work.
- Cross-functional workshops (policy, finance, digital, HR) explored whether enabling functions could build shared fluency and reduce friction.
- Accelerators (ISD, LTC) created an opportunity to experiment with mission-style collaboration as a low-disruption entry point.

What we learned

Collaboration desire exceeded available mechanisms (time, capacity, decision pathways).

A central team can unintentionally create a "Reimagine GNB will do it" dynamic unless ownership is distributed. Without protected capacity and reinforcement, learning does not reliably convert into change that sticks.

Implication for leaders

If government wants mission portfolios and outcomes-focused delivery, the foundation phase shows what must be put in place: clear decision rights, protected capacity, shared methods, joint stewardship and enabling systems that support delivery.

Reflection prompts

1. What will we protect (time, people, authority) and what will we let go of, so transformation work is not treated as "extra work"?
2. Where are the biggest friction points across policy, finance, digital, and HR and what will we change first?
3. How will we distribute ownership so departments lead, while a central function coordinates and removes barriers?

Between March 2025 and February 2026, Reimagine GNB focused on building the conditions for long-term transformation, rather than chasing short-term wins. The year was used to set up governance, engage leaders and staff across government, and test practical methods that could be scaled later.

What we did in the foundation year

The foundational work included six main streams:

1. Senior-level engagement

The team held more than 30 sessions with Cabinet, Deputy Ministers, Executive Management Teams, and departmental leaders. The purpose was to build alignment, clarify intent, and surface what would block progress.

2. All-of-government idea generation

A call for ideas generated around 300 submissions from public servants. This signalled strong appetite for renewal, but also surfaced uneven confidence and capability in problem framing and innovation methods.

3. Governance design

The team tried to create a decision-ready container for cross-department work. A dedicated Reimagine GNB team was set up, supported first by a Steering Committee (SteerCo), and later by a Ministerial Committee when SteerCo did not translate into sustained resourcing.

4. Cross-functional collaboration-building

A workshop series across policy, finance, digital, and HR was used to build a shared language for transformation and to identify where enabling systems were creating friction for delivery.

5. Mission-style collaboration through accelerators

Accelerators (including ISD and LTC) were used as practical prototypes for mission work—time-bound cycles designed to help people collaborate across silos, create shared understanding, and generate testable ideas.

6. The Good Services pilot

The team piloted the Good Services approach to test a practical method for assessing and improving service quality from the user's perspective.

These activities were designed to create traction for transformation; to establish alignment, build shared methods, and test practical tools that could later be embedded more broadly.

When ambition met operational reality

In 2025, the ambition for overdue reform encountered the lived realities of capacity, culture, and incentives inside government. **A team of three full-time equivalent (FTE) executives was put in place**

to devise and execute a strategy. At the same time, efforts to recruit a larger and more diverse delivery team proved difficult. This left the initiative structurally thin relative to the scope of expectations being placed on it.

Early engagement surfaced an important sequencing lesson: **in many cases, the initial breadth of outreach was too much, too soon.** Enthusiasm was strongest among early adopters, but **the machinery of government was still calibrated for business-as-usual delivery and unwilling to dedicate staff.** The result was a familiar pattern in large institutions under pressure: **participation without absorption, and curiosity without the time or conditions to act.**

As the work progressed, a clear pattern emerged: interest in collaboration was higher than the system's ability to support it. Many leaders and staff wanted to work differently, but the structures that make collaboration easy were inconsistent or missing.

What the call for ideas revealed

The call for ideas produced 300 submissions – a clear signal about what public servants think would unlock meaningful change. Many submissions clustered around a small set of foundational, whole-of-government enablers; the kinds of building blocks that make many other improvements possible. This reinforced the broader insight that pilots and point solutions tend to stall unless the underlying levers (governance, policy, finance, HR, service and digital, and data/technology) are addressed.

To make this analysis more practical, the Reimagine GNB team applied the **Three Horizons model** (See Appendix D) to sort ideas by the kind of change they represent. **Horizon 1 ideas improve the current system** (quick fixes and service upgrades). **Horizon 2 ideas build shared capabilities** and “bridges” that allow new ways of working to take hold (common platforms, tools, and cross-department mechanisms). **Horizon 3 ideas are deeper transformations** that change how outcomes and services are produced (new models, new end-to-end experiences, and structural shifts). In reviewing submissions, the team asked: ***Is this mainly an H1 improvement, an H2 enabling foundation, or an H3 system shift?*** This helped clarify why many submissions that looked transformational were actually dependent on H2 foundations before they could deliver H3 impact at scale.

The volume of submissions signalled genuine interest in contributing. However, the content revealed low innovation and design maturity overall. For example, **80% of submissions focused on incremental improvements rather than transformative change.** This suggested that the organization had motivation, but lacked shared methods, permission structures, and scaffolding to generate and test higher-impact ideas.

Ownership and the “Reimagine GNB will do it” dynamic

A predictable pattern appeared: when a central team exists, the system can begin to treat it as the owner of transformation. Many executives and staff implicitly assumed “Reimagine GNB will do it.” **This created an abdication dynamic: transformation was treated as something delivered by a central team rather than something stewarded through line accountability.** This reduces local ownership and makes progress fragile. Reimagine GNB’s work reinforced that transformation must be distributed, owned by departments and leaders across the system, while still being supported by a strong coordinating function.

What 2025 clarified

By the end of the year, the approach had to become more realistic and more supported. The big ambitions remained (mission portfolios, cross-functional ways of working, service design standards), but the path had to be proven through smaller moves that the system could absorb.

In effect, **2025 became a diagnostic year.** It showed that transformation will not be achieved through aspiration or central coordination alone. It will require a deliberate model that:

- builds shared capability,
- distributes ownership,
- protects capacity, and
- sequences change so the system can actually sustain it.

These 2025 lessons made one thing clear: if Reimagine GNB was going to move from learning to results, government needed governance that could make decisions, free capacity, and protect mission-style collaboration from being treated as ‘extra work.’

5. Governance and Missions

Section In Summary

Core claim

Reimagine GNB's governance evolved because the work made a hard truth visible: transformation needs clear authority, protected capacity, and decision pathways. Otherwise it stays "extra work."

What this section establishes

As Reimagine GNB moved from intent to tests, governance had to shift to match reality. Early coordination through a Steering Committee (SteerCo) helped build dialogue and alignment, but it did not reliably translate into resourcing or cross-department commitments. Governance then shifted toward a Ministerial Committee, while accelerators were used as a practical entry point to prototype mission-style collaboration starting with ISD and LTC.

What we tried and observed

- SteerCo assessed senior alignment and barrier identification, and surfaced limits in decision rights and resourcing.
- The shift to a Ministerial Committee was assessed to determine whether political authorization could reduce ambiguity and protect the work.
- Early portfolio efforts explored whether existing "good work" could be aligned into shared outcomes and revealed resistance to new structures.
- Accelerators (ISD, LTC) provided an opportunity to experiment with mission-style collaboration as wrap-around support for ongoing work.
- Participation challenges revealed the system's real capacity: even priority files struggled to free the right people to engage.

What we learned

- Coordination forums help, but they cannot replace clear authority and resourcing.
- "Good work already happening" can become a reason to avoid alignment and shared accountability when capacity is tight.
- Accelerators produced proof of need and insight—but also showed missions require explicit capacity commitments to sustain progress.

Implication for leaders

For mission-style initiatives to be successful, leadership needs to move beyond silos toward a model of joint stewardship and shared accountability for outcomes that organizational boundaries.

Reflection prompts

1. Who can authorize and sustain mission work end-to-end (tests, trade-offs, scaling)—and what decision rights do they need?
2. What capacity will be protected for mission priorities, and what will be stopped to make space?
3. What governance rhythm will ensure barriers are removed quickly rather than escalated slowly?

Reimagine GNB's governance changed quickly as the work revealed what was actually true about decision-making, sponsorship, and transformation literacy. Governance was not treated as a final design. It was adjusted in response to what the system made visible: who had authority to approve change, how much capacity existed, and how shared the understanding of "transformation" really was.

The Steering Committee (SteerCo): coordination and its limits

The first governance structure was a Steering Committee (SteerCo). It was meant to be a senior coordination forum—a place to align intent, surface barriers, and turn big transformation goals into practical next steps.

In practice, SteerCo delivered what these groups often deliver in government: meaningful dialogue, strong interest, and a clearer view of constraints. It also exposed a structural limit: **executives were curious and engaged, but they did not share a consistent understanding of what transformation requires, and they were not able (or ready) to mobilize resources across departments.**

Put simply, the system could talk about transformation more easily than it could authorize it. **Without clear decision rights and protected capacity, transformation stays "beside the work" instead of becoming "how the work gets done."**

Why the shift to a Ministerial Committee mattered

As the work progressed, it became clear that transformation could not be sustained as a central initiative led mainly through administrative coordination. It needed stronger political authorization to signal that the work was a real priority, legitimize experimentation, and unlock commitments across departments.

This is why governance shifted to a Ministerial Committee. The intent was to reduce ambiguity about whether Reimagine GNB was optional, extra, or advisory. In plain terms, **it was a shift from "a place to coordinate" to "a place that can mandate and protect."**

This change reflected a hard truth: **in high-pressure environments, systems revert to familiar patterns unless leaders actively protect a new way of working.** When time and capacity are tight, encouragement is not enough. The system needs clear authority, visible protection, and reinforcement through structures.

Portfolios, "good work," and the coordination paradox

A key design intent of Reimagine GNB was to connect existing efforts to new work through **portfolios**. This was not meant to replace what was already working. It was meant to align efforts, fill gaps, and improve coherence against shared outcomes.

That early attempt met significant resistance. At the executive level, the team was repeatedly told that “too much good work is already happening,” and that a lab or mission would take energy away from delivery and create disruption.

This revealed a common paradox: **when systems feel overloaded, coordination can feel like subtraction.** “Good work already happening” was both true and protective: true in many places, but also used as a reason to avoid the harder work of aligning priorities, integrating efforts, and resourcing collaboration properly.

Missions in practice: why accelerators were the entry point

This context shaped the first mission work, starting with the Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) and Long-Term Care (LTC) accelerators. **These accelerators acted as mission prototypes: short, structured cycles designed to test whether cross-functional collaboration, modern methods, and shared outcomes could create traction without disrupting day-to-day operations.**

Importantly, the accelerators were not framed as brand-new mission structures. They were positioned as **wrap-around support for work already underway.** The goal was to bring cross-department and cross-sector stakeholders into the same room, reduce friction through modern methods, and make the work more visible: what was happening, what was missing, and what could be tested quickly.

In effect, the accelerator became the least disruptive path into mission-style collaboration. It was designed to **prove value without triggering the “new initiative” immune response.**

What the accelerators produced

The accelerators delivered three results at the same time:

1. A container for collaboration

Instead of asking departments to “collaborate more,” they provided a time-bound, outcome-focused structure to work differently together.

2. A way to make complexity manageable

The mission framing helped teams map the system, identify leverage points, and create a portfolio of experiments rather than betting everything on one solution.

3. Evidence and legitimacy

Even when outputs were early-stage, the accelerators created shared language, surfaced constraints, and clarified what supports were required to move from ideas to execution; especially across policy, finance, digital, workforce, and procurement.

For more information about the Reimagine GNB Innovation Accelerator, see **Appendix H: Promising Practices and Lessons Learned: The Reimagine GNB Innovation Accelerator**.

The second reality: proof of need, not proof of readiness

Once the accelerators began, a second reality emerged: **departments struggled to identify existing initiatives and free up the very people who were supposedly already working on these priorities.**

This was not a failure of individual managers. It was a structural signal. If critical work is “happening,” but staff cannot be found, released, or empowered to participate, it points to fragmentation, informal ownership, and capacity constraints. These are exactly the conditions that portfolio approaches are meant to address.

The result was **proof of need, not proof of readiness**. The accelerators tested whether government could collaborate on priority missions without additional dedicated capacity. The answer was mixed. Participants generated momentum, insight, and practical outputs, and many left with a clearer understanding of what modern transformation work requires. But the system could not reliably create the protected space needed to convert that energy into durable change.

The core lesson: transformation is a capacity commitment

This phase produced the most important lesson. The case for mission portfolios became clearer at the exact moment Reimagine GNB’s ability to carry them was shrinking.

The experience did not weaken the mission approach, it strengthened it. It showed that without explicit commitments to capacity and resourcing, even well-designed collaboration structures struggle to turn enthusiasm into lasting change.

In the end, the shift to a Ministerial Committee and the use of accelerators were not just steps toward a mission model. They revealed a more sobering truth: transformation is a capacity commitment. Without that commitment, the system defaults back to the same patterns Reimagine GNB was created to disrupt.

6. Corporate Functions as Levers for Change

Section In Summary

Core claim

Corporate functions (policy, finance, HR, digital, procurement, data, communications and engagement) largely determine whether mission work can move quickly and safely or gets slowed down by friction and uncertainty.

What this section establishes

Reimagine GNB treated enabling functions as part of the operating system of government, not “support services.” When these functions align around shared outcomes, delivery speeds up and risk becomes manageable. When they operate in silos, cross-department work becomes slow, negotiation-heavy, and harder to sustain.

What we tried and observed

- A cross-functional workshop series (Policy, Finance, Digital, HR) explored whether government could build shared fluency and identify practical “safe-to-test” improvements.
- Participants surfaced recurring friction: being brought in late, unclear decision pathways, and binary approval dynamics.
- The workshops shared global practices and explored where GNB could adapt them within real constraints.
- Early accelerator work assessed what it looks like when enabling functions behave as design partners, not only reviewers or ‘compliance officers.’

What we learned

- Desire to collaborate exceeded the mechanisms available to support it.
- Many constraints were driven by capacity and capability gaps, not resistance.
- People across functions increasingly aligned around being more people-centred and outcomes-focused, but the system lacks predictable collaboration rhythms to reinforce it.

Implication for leaders

If government wants mission portfolios to mature, enabling functions must shift from reactive “gatekeeping” to proactive “design partnership,” supported by clear decision rights, shared methods, and time-bound collaboration cycles.

Reflection prompts

1. What must change so policy, finance, HR, and digital can partner early, before work gets locked in?
2. Which approval steps can be simplified into guardrails so teams can test safely and move faster?
3. What capacity will we protect to build shared methods and cross-functional rhythms across enabling functions?

If missions describe **what government wants to achieve**, corporate functions determine **whether government can actually achieve it**. In 2025, Reimagine GNB increasingly focused on the “machinery” of government; the enabling functions that quietly shape behaviour, incentives, and the speed of decisions across the system, often without being visible to the people doing frontline delivery.

Corporate functions (governance, policy, finance, human resources, procurement, service and digital, data and technology, communications, and engagement) are not just support services. They are the structures, rules, processes, and incentives that shape how GNB makes decisions, allocates resources, and delivers services. These functions can either reinforce an older model (siloes, compliance-heavy, input-focused) or help enable a newer model (integrated, outcomes-focused, people-centred).

The premise was simple: transformation does not happen through projects alone. It becomes durable when the core enabling functions work as an aligned system in support of shared outcomes.

Why misalignment becomes a delivery constraint

In government, each function is designed to do an important job. Policy aims for clarity and risk management. Finance aims for control and predictability. Procurement aims for fairness and compliance. HR aims for equity and procedural consistency. Digital teams focus on reliability and security. Communications and engagement focus on shared understanding. Each function is doing what it was built to do.

The problem shows up when each function operates only by its own internal logic, without a shared outcomes framework. When that happens:

- Cross-functional work becomes slow and negotiation-heavy.
- Innovation feels risky because it crosses rule boundaries.
- Staff experience friction when trying to collaborate.
- Delivery teams hit barriers that actually originate upstream (policy, finance, HR, procurement, or data practices).

Reimagine GNB treated these functions as strategic levers that shape system behaviour. The key question became: **what operating conditions do these functions collectively create for design and delivery teams?**

The 2025 Reimagine GNB workshops

The 2025 workshop series on Policy, Finance, Digital, and HR was the first coordinated effort to build shared fluency across enabling functions. These were not traditional training sessions. They were cross-department learning forums designed to:

- build a **shared language** for transformation,
- surface **friction points** between functions,
- look at how **global practice** is evolving, and
- identify **“safe-to-test” experiments** within real constraints.

A consistent insight emerged: people’s desire to collaborate was much stronger than the system’s ability to support it. Participants repeatedly described:

- a desire for **deeper cross-functional collaboration**,
- frustration with **being treated as “friction”** or brought in too late,
- interest in **learning-focused approaches** instead of simple yes/no approval processes, and
- recognition that **capacity and capability gaps** were often the real constraint.

One important shift also appeared. People across functions began to align around a shared goal: being more **people-centred and outcomes-focused**. Rather than defending process, they asked what success looks like for residents and frontline teams. They focused **less on approvals and more on improving** the full service experience from start to finish. They showed **more interest in results and learning** over inputs and compliance.

This changed how capability-building was understood. It became clear that capability-building is not a “nice extra.” It is enabling infrastructure. Without shared methods and predictable collaboration rhythms, mission portfolios cannot mature. The system will keep defaulting to each function optimizing for its own goals instead of delivering better outcomes for people.

Connecting functions and missions

By late 2025, a clearer pattern emerged: if transformation is going to work, enabling functions need to shift **from reactive “review roles” to proactive “design partners.”** In practical terms, that means:

- **embedding** policy, finance, HR, and digital expertise directly in mission teams,
- using shared **sprint cycles** so functions can test aligned changes in parallel,
- clarifying **decision rights** to reduce duplication and rework, and
- using light-touch governance that sets **guardrails** without slowing experimentation.

The accelerators showed early versions of this alignment. The workshops and prototypes did not fully redesign the machinery of everyday work but they made it visible. They clarified a central lesson of Reimagine GNB: transformation is not blocked by a lack of will. It is constrained by the architecture of everyday work. Capability-building, strategic procurement, and cross-functional alignment are not side issues. They are preconditions for durable system change.

7. Improving the Service Experience: Orienting Around People's Need

Section In Summary

Core claim

The service experience is where transformation becomes real: it reveals where the system is fragmented and provides a practical way to design services around lived experience instead of departmental boundaries.

What this section establishes

New Brunswickers don't experience strategy or governance structures, they experience services: clarity, ease, dignity, and whether the journey across departments is coherent. Reimagine GNB treated service delivery as a structural lever to expose misalignment and create concrete improvement pathways. The Good Services pilot provided a shared set of principles and a practical method to assess service quality and identify priority improvements.

What we tried and observed

- Service journey work examined how departments might collaborate when anchored in a real end-to-end service.
- The Good Services assessment explored whether teams could define "good" consistently, document evidence, and identify improvement actions.
- The approach tested moving from internal process thinking to user-outcome thinking ("what is the person trying to achieve?").
- Early work assessed how delivery insights can inform governance, enabling functions, and resource decisions.

What we learned

- Mapping services makes silos visible without blame: the journey is fractured even when teams are trying hard.
- Many services rely heavily on internal measures and have limited consistent user insight.
- Delivery teams often have ideas and energy, but lack authority or enabling support to make deeper structural changes.

Implication for leaders

If government wants people-centred, outcomes-focused delivery, it must make service quality measurable, build design capability, and connect delivery insights back into policy, finance, HR, digital, and governance decisions.

Reflection prompts

1. Which priority services will we assess first using a shared standard for "good," and how will we track improvement over time?
2. What capabilities (user research, content design, service ownership) must be built so CX improves reliably?
3. What decisions must be unlocked (policy interpretation, funding rules, data-sharing, procurement) so service improvements can be implemented?

If governance sets direction and operations build internal capacity, delivery is where transformation becomes real for the public. New Brunswickers don't experience strategy documents or steering committees. They experience services: wait times, clarity of communication, ease of access, dignity in interactions, and whether their journey across departments feels smooth or fragmented.

For that reason, Reimagine GNB treated service delivery as a structural lever; a practical way to reveal where the system is misaligned and to re-orient government around real-world need.

In line with the mandate: a government that cares

The Premier's mandate letters emphasize partnership, dignity, transparency, and authentic engagement. **Those commitments are ultimately tested where people meet government. A government that cares is proven when people can get what they need without confusion, duplication, or unnecessary burden.**

Reimagine GNB tested structured ways for teams to look at services from the perspective of lived experience centred on Lou Downes' Good Services. Instead of starting with internal process, teams started by asking:

- Who is this service for?
- What is the person trying to achieve?
- How many steps, barriers, or handoffs does the system impose?
- Where do departmental boundaries break the journey?

This shifted the conversation from "improving our process" to "helping a person achieve an outcome."

A practical way to address silos

Silos are often discussed as a governance issue. Reimagine GNB treated silos as a service design issue. New Brunswickers do not experience programs the way government organizes them. They experience life events. A senior navigating long-term care does not separate policy, funding, inspection, and clinical delivery. A family seeking income support experiences one high-stakes journey, not separate departmental mandates.

When teams map services end-to-end, fragmentation became visible. For example, mapping shows where:

- people are asked for the same information multiple times,
- eligibility rules differ across related supports,
- service designs drift away from policy intent,

- communications are written for internal compliance instead of public understanding, and
- digital and in-person channels don't line up.

This CX lens matters because it is a low-threat way to surface misalignment. Instead of blaming departments for “working in silos,” teams can simply observe: the journey is fractured. The problem becomes structural, not personal.

In this way, CX work bridges delivery and governance. It translates “whole-of-government coordination” into evidence-based conversations about service redesign and policy-service alignment.

Making “nothing about us without us” real

A guiding principle throughout Reimagine GNB was “nothing about us without us.” The challenge is turning that into everyday practice, not just rhetoric.

In partnership with Project and Advisory Services, the **Good Services** pilot created a practical entry point. Using fifteen principles of effective public service delivery, teams completed facilitated self-assessments of real services. The process required teams to:

- define “service” in a common way,
- describe what “good” looks like for users,
- identify where evidence exists and where assumptions are driving decisions,
- distinguish operational data from direct user insight, and
- select priority improvements and near-term actions.

The assessment was designed as a starting point, not a compliance tool. It created enough psychological safety for teams to be honest about strengths and gaps. It also revealed a key maturity gap: many services are assessed mainly through internal metrics, with limited consistent engagement of users themselves.

From that, several capability needs became clear:

- regular user engagement (not one-off consultations),
- ways to capture frontline insight as usable evidence (not just anecdotes),
- content design literacy to reduce jargon and complexity, and
- clear service definition and ownership.

Orienting around people is not only a mindset. It is a professional discipline that requires tools, roles, and repeated practice.

Measuring experience and design maturity

The pilot reinforced an oft repeated rule: government cannot improve what it does not measure in a coherent way. Traditional reporting often focuses on throughput (applications processed, timelines met, budget adherence). Those measures matter but they do not tell you whether the service works well for the person using it.

The Good Services framework introduced a shared language for service quality, including:

- how easy the service is to find,
- clarity of purpose and next steps,
- consistency across channels,
- transparency in decisions,
- accessibility and inclusion, and
- ease of getting human help.

By scoring services against these principles and documenting evidence, teams created baseline snapshots. These were not rankings. They were diagnostics to guide improvement.

This laid the groundwork for two complementary measurement streams:

- **CX Performance:** how well services perform from the user perspective (operational measures + feedback + qualitative insight).
- **CX Design Maturity:** how embedded user-centred practices are (journey mapping, prototyping, content audits, structured research).

A key dependency became clearer: strong CX performance depends on internal design maturity. Seamless services do not emerge from fragmented internal systems. Had Reimagine GNB continued, the team would have tested CX Design Maturity frameworks to complement the Good Services assessment.

Early signals and structural implications

The CX work produced several early signals:

- teams became more comfortable naming user friction without defensiveness,
- cross-functional conversations became more concrete when anchored in a shared service,
- small improvements to language and process often created outsized user benefit, and
- enthusiasm for service improvement outpaced the authority to make deeper structural changes.

That last point is important. Improving CX often requires changes in policy interpretation, funding rules, procurement, or data-sharing. This showed the boundary between delivery innovation and governance reform and reinforced why mission coordination and enabling conditions matter.

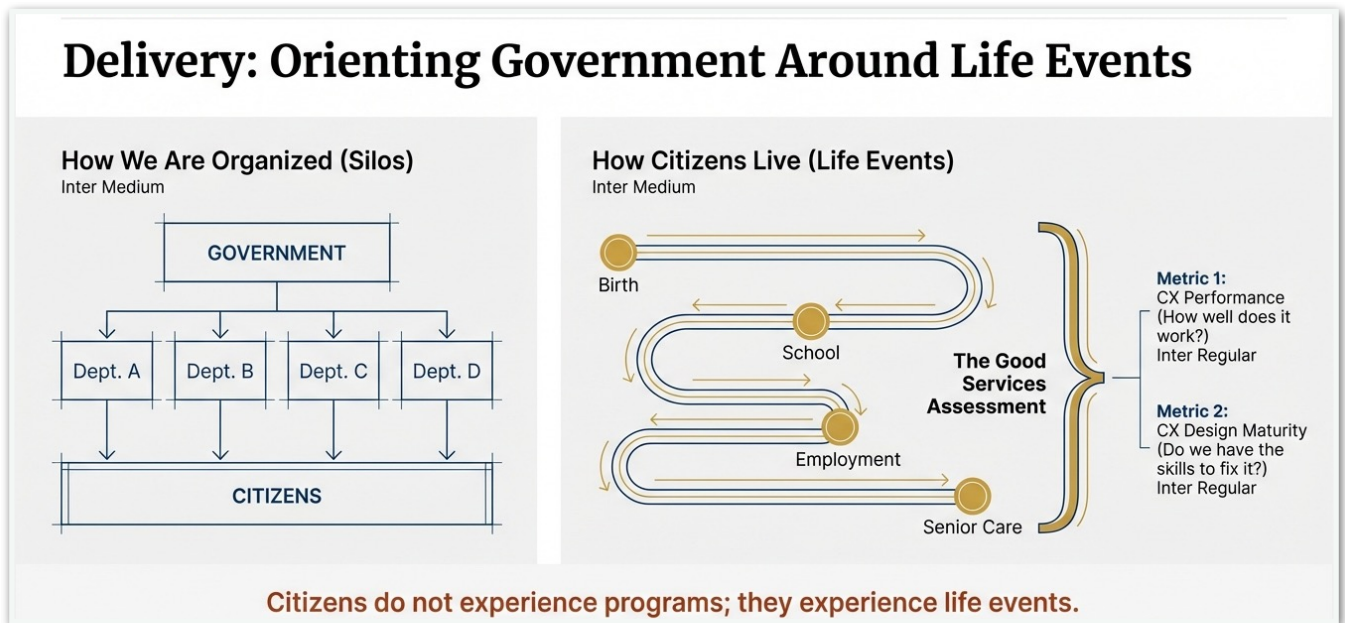
Delivery as proof of institutional integrity

In the end, a government’s credibility depends on whether residents feel the difference. Delivery is where institutional integrity is tested. When services are clear, coherent, and dignified, trust grows. When they are fragmented or opaque, trust erodes, regardless of internal effort.

The 2025 work did not fully re-orient government around life events. It did demonstrate a practical pathway:

- start with real services,
- use structured principles to surface evidence gaps,
- build internal capability for user-centred design and innovation,
- connect delivery insights back into governance and budgeting conversations, and
- institutionalize measurement of outcomes, experience, and design maturity.

In this sense, the CX stream of work was a visible expression of the broader transformation ambition: a person-centred government that operates collaboratively and delivers with care.



8. Towards a Model for Transformation

Section In Summary

Core claim

Reimagine GNB's core insight is that durable transformation requires a connected operating model linking **governance, operations, and delivery (e.g. the service experience)**, so government can learn, adapt, and scale what works.

What this section establishes

Reimagine GNB moved away from a "one big reform plan" approach and toward a portfolio-based model that learns through coordinated testing. Over 2025, the team tested assumptions through executive engagement, enabling-function workshops, service/CX work, and accelerators. Those learnings evolved into the Triple Helix model, which explains how government must connect decision-making, internal capability, and service delivery to improve outcomes at scale.

What we tried and observed

- A portfolio of experiments explored how to reduce risk while increasing learning speed.
- Multiple initiatives assessed different parts of the system (decision rights, capability, cross-functional collaboration, service quality).
- The Triple Helix considered a simpler, more practical way to explain transformation: the overlaps between governance, operations, and delivery are where progress either holds or snaps back.
- The model posits that service delivery is not the end of the chain; it is a source of evidence that should inform decisions and priorities.

What we learned

- Transformation fails when governance, operations, and delivery improve in isolation.
- The "overlaps" matter most: where priorities become resourced work, where internal processes become service experience, and where service evidence informs leadership decisions.
- Institutional maturity is the ability to sustain improvement without relying on heroics.

Implication for leaders

If government wants outcomes-based delivery at scale, leaders must strengthen the operating model that connects decision-making to capability to service reality, then reinforce it through governance rhythms, measurement, and resourcing.

Reflection prompts

1. Which overlaps are weakest today: governance→operations, operations→delivery, or governance→delivery, and what will strengthen them?
2. What evidence loops will we build so service delivery data and user insight directly shape priorities and trade-offs?
3. What governance rhythm will turn learning into decisions, and decisions into resourced action?

Transformation at this scale takes more than new tools or a few new projects. It requires a different way of working. Traditional government change programs often follow linear plans with fixed milestones and centralized control. Reimagine GNB argued for a different approach: a portfolio-based, adaptive model that learns its way forward, that is better suited to complexity.

Instead of betting everything on one big reform, Reimagine GNB designed and tested a coordinated set of experiments. Each experiment acted like a learning engine: it generated evidence, built capability, and created practical momentum. This approach reduces risk because government does not overcommit to unproven ideas. At the same time, it speeds up learning because teams can test, adjust, and scale what works.

Reimagine GNB began in March 2025 with an initial transformation framework; a working hypothesis about what conditions are needed for people-centred, outcomes-focused delivery in GNB. Over the year, the framework was tested through executive engagement, the call for ideas, enabling-function workshops, service/CX work (including the Good Services Assessment), and the Children & Youth and Long-Term Care accelerators. As patterns became clearer, the model evolved into the Triple Helix: a clearer way to explain how government must connect governance, operations, and delivery to improve outcomes at scale.

The Triple Helix framework for transformation

We use the Triple Helix metaphor because it describes something important about how transformation behaves:

- **It is interdependent.** A helix holds its strength because strands are woven together. One strand alone can't do the job.
- **It is dynamic.** A helix suggests ongoing movement and evolution, not a one-time plan. Government change is not "design once, implement once." It requires repeated cycles of action and learning.
- **It creates resilience.** When the strands are linked, the system can absorb pressure and keep moving. When they are separated, progress depends on heroic effort, and it breaks when people change roles or priorities shift.

The Triple Helix is our way of explaining how real transformation happens in government. Over 2025, we started with an early draft framework. It was a "best guess" about how GNB could achieve transformation. As we tested ideas through engagement, workshops, accelerators, and service assessments, the same pattern kept showing up: progress only happens when three things move forward together. That is what the Triple Helix captures.

What are the three strands?

Strand 1: Governance

Governance is how direction is set and how decisions get made. It includes political and executive sponsorship, clear priorities, decision rights, accountability, and the ability to remove barriers. Governance answers questions like: *Who has the authority to decide? What are we trying to achieve? How do we commit resources and resolve trade-offs?* Without strong governance, work gets stuck in coordination and discussion, and teams can't get the approvals or support they need to act.

Strand 2: Operations

Operations is the enabling system—the “machinery” that makes change possible or impossible. It includes policy, finance, HR, procurement, digital, data, risk processes, and the everyday rules and routines that shape what people can do. Operations answers questions like: *Do our funding, staffing, and risk processes support this work? Are enabling functions working together? Do we have shared standards, tools, and cadences?* Without operational alignment, even strong ideas and motivated teams hit friction, slow down, or stop.

Strand 3: Delivery

Delivery is where change becomes real for people. It includes mission teams, service teams, and the practical work of designing, testing, and improving programs and services. Delivery also includes learning loops—using evidence, user feedback, and performance signals to adapt and improve. Delivery answers questions like: *What are we building or changing? What can we test quickly? What are we learning, and how are we improving?* Without delivery and learning, transformation stays theoretical and doesn't translate into better outcomes or better experiences.

How the helix works

The key idea is that these three strands must stay connected.

If leadership makes bold commitments but the enabling system doesn't change, delivery teams won't be able to execute.

If delivery teams try new approaches but leadership can't make decisions or remove barriers, the work will stall.

If enabling functions try to modernize rules and processes without real delivery work to test against, change becomes abstract and disconnected from what people actually need.

The Triple Helix shows that transformation is not a straight line. It is a continuous cycle: leadership sets direction and makes decisions → enabling functions make the work possible → delivery teams test and deliver → learning flows back to improve decisions and system design.

Where Strands Connect

Governance + Operations: where ambition becomes executable

This overlap is where big goals become real work. It includes the structures and routines that turn priorities into decisions, sequences, and resourcing. When this overlap is strong, government can move from “we agree” to “we are doing” because decision rights are clear, capacity is protected, and leaders can remove barriers quickly.

Operations + Delivery: where internal ways of working show up as service quality

This overlap is where internal systems become visible through the service experience. If internal processes are slow, fragmented, or unclear, users feel it as confusion, delays, repeated steps, and inconsistent outcomes. Strengthening this overlap means improving how work flows across teams so service delivery becomes easier, more coordinated, and more humane.

Governance + Delivery: where services connect to outcomes and public value

This overlap is where government connects service improvements to the outcomes the public actually cares about. It includes service standards, measurement, and accountability that links what is delivered to what is changing in people’s lives. When this overlap is weak, government can improve processes without improving outcomes. When it is strong, service design and delivery become a direct pathway to public value.

The centre: what “institutional maturity” looks like

At the centre of the Triple Helix is institutional maturity: the ability to sustain transformation. Mature systems can set clear priorities, collaborate across boundaries, learn through testing, and reinforce improvement through governance, budgets, and enabling functions. In this model, transformation is not a one-time initiative. It becomes a capability of the organization.

A governance proposition

The Triple Helix is a practical proposition about how transformation holds over time: strategy strengthens operational capability, operational capability improves delivery, and delivery generates evidence that sharpens strategy. When all three reinforce each other, government can scale innovation, respond to complex challenges, and rebuild public sector capability.

The Triple Helix emerged through a portfolio of experiments in 2025 and as a result it shaped the plan for what needed to happen next. It made one point clear: transformation will not stick if government improves governance, operations, or delivery on their own. Progress depends on strengthening the links between them. Section 9 shows how this model was turned into a 2026 workplan through three practical pillars: mission portfolios, embedded service design, and structured cross-functional collaboration.

9. Making the Model Real: A 2026 Workplan Built on Three Pillars

Section In Summary

Core claim

The 2026 plan translated the Triple Helix into day-to-day practice through three reinforcing pillars: mission portfolios (direction), service design (grounded delivery), and cross-functional collaboration (system capacity).

What this section establishes

Based on 2025 learning, Reimagine GNB drafted a 2026 workplan and logic model to move from foundation-building to sustained delivery. The plan focused on making transformation practical and repeatable under real constraints. It did this by organizing work around priority missions, scaling service design capability, and aligning enabling functions so teams could move faster with less friction.

What we observed and designed

- Pillar 1 tested mission portfolios (e.g., Children & Youth; Seniors & Long-Term Care) with clear outcomes, executive sponsors, decision rights, and a simple governance cadence.
- Pillar 2 scaled service design using shared service standards and tools (e.g., Good Services assessments) so improvements are grounded in lived experience.
- Pillar 3 strengthened cross-functional collaboration across policy, finance, digital, HR, procurement, and data through shared cycles and embedded support.
- The three pillars were designed to reinforce each other so progress could scale without relying on heroics.

What we learned

- Missions fail when enabling functions are not aligned and resourced to support delivery.
- Service improvement becomes measurable and actionable when government uses shared standards and repeatable methods.
- Cross-department collaboration needs structure and cadence; otherwise it remains ad hoc and slow.

Implication for leaders

If government wants measurable outcomes from mission priorities, leaders must commit to the full package: mission governance that can decide, service design capability that can improve delivery, and enabling-system alignment that reduces friction and accelerates execution.

Reflection prompts

1. Which mission outcomes will we prioritize and what decision rights, cadence, and capacity will we protect to deliver them?
2. Which services will we improve first, and what shared standards will we use to measure progress?
3. What enabling-function changes must happen in parallel so delivery can improve and missions progress?

In 2025, Reimagine GNB applied and iteratively refined a transformation approach, which was later refined into the Triple Helix model (governance, operations, and delivery working as one system). Based on what was learned, the team drafted a logic model and a 2026 work plan to turn the model into day-to-day practice through three connected pillars. Each pillar reinforced the others: missions create direction, service design keeps work grounded in people’s experience, and cross-functional collaboration makes the system move.

Strategic Pillar 1: Establish a Mission-Oriented Innovation Framework

The first pillar focused on creating mission portfolios tied to government priorities and measurable social outcomes. Missions would have been the organizing “containers” for transformation, bringing policy, finance, digital, and service delivery together around shared goals.

The 2026 plan envisioned multi-year mission portfolios in areas like Affordability and Seniors and Long-Term Care. Each mission portfolio would have included a balanced mix of initiatives across key system levers, such as:

- policy changes,
- service redesign,
- funding shifts,
- data and digital improvements,
- workforce redesign, and
- public communications.

The intent was to keep these functions moving in alignment so government wasn’t improving one part of the system while another part stayed stuck.

Missions were also designed to bring decision-makers closer to the work. Each mission would have had a named executive sponsor, a cross-department team with clear roles, and a simple governance charter that defined scope, decision rights, risk limits, and success measures. Progress would have been managed through a regular cadence (for example, monthly mission reviews and quarterly portfolio checkpoints), supported by a transparent dashboard tracking outcomes, learning, and investment decisions. The goal was to shorten the distance between evidence, decision, and action so promising work could scale, weak approaches could stop, and barriers could be resolved quickly.

Strategic Pillar 2: Embed Service Design Capabilities in Key Departments

The second pillar focused on strengthening service design as an internal capability across government, building from the Good Services pilot in 2025. The core idea was simple: New Brunswickers experience government through services, so improving outcomes requires improving the service journeys that people actually live through.

The 2026 plan envisioned scaling service design practices into priority service areas by:

- creating shared service standards,
- building internal CX and design capability through training, coaching, and communities of practice, and
- integrating service design into policy and budgeting cycles so it isn't treated as "downstream implementation."

This pillar included concrete roles and practices, such as executive-level CX leads, Service Improvement Facilitators, regular Good Services assessments, life-event mapping, prototyping with frontline teams and service users, and shared guidelines. The intent was to build durable in-house capacity and a common language for service quality and continuous improvement, so progress wouldn't depend on external consultants or isolated design teams.

Strategic Pillar 3: Facilitate Cross-Functional, Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration

The third pillar built directly on what was learned through the 2025 Reimagine GNB workshops across policy, finance, digital, and HR. Those sessions surfaced two truths at the same time: there is strong appetite for modern practice across departments, and the system's ability to collaborate is constrained by time, mandate boundaries, and uneven access to practical support.

Pillar 3 aimed to turn that appetite into a predictable way of working by:

- strengthening capability inside each enabling function (policy, finance, HR, digital, data, governance, procurement, communications and engagement),
- enabling structured experimentation across silos so teams can co-design and test changes quickly, and
- creating coherence between enabling system reforms (funding rules, procurement, workforce design) and frontline delivery.

Practically, this would have meant embedding enabling functions in mission teams, running shared experimentation cycles (where policy, finance, digital, and service teams test aligned interventions in parallel), and introducing common collaboration practices such as sprints, discovery cycles, and

alignment sessions. It also included creating cross-department learning loops so what works in one mission portfolio can be reused and scaled elsewhere.

This pillar was designed as the “connective tissue” of the transformation architecture. Missions provide direction. Service design provides insight grounded in lived experience. Pillar 3 ensures that enabling functions move together, not in parallel. If the initiative had continued, 2026 would have focused on strengthening this connective tissue so mission teams could move faster with less friction and so learning could transfer across government instead of being lost in isolated pilots.

10. Extending Capacity While Building Capability

Section In Summary

Core claim

To deliver mission work under constraint, government needs a way to add short-term capacity while building long-term internal capability, so external support acts as scaffolding, not a substitute.

What this section establishes

Reimagine GNB's approach was "scaffold, don't substitute": use outside expertise to help teams move faster now, while deliberately transferring tools, methods, and confidence into the public service. This is why ECO moved to establish a prequalified vendor list for innovation and design expertise. Used well, the list becomes a capability flywheel that accelerates delivery while strengthening internal practice over time.

What we observed / designed

- A prequalified vendor list designed for fast access to specialized expertise (research, facilitation, design sprints, evaluation, agile coaching).
- Expectations that vendors build internal capability through pairing, coaching, and reusable playbooks—not just deliverables.
- A pathway from external support → internal consulting capacity (e.g., Project and Advisory Services) → institutionalized ways of working.
- A focus on embedding capability-building directly into mission delivery through repeatable mechanisms.

What we learned

- Without deliberate capability transfer, external support can create dependency and fragile progress.
- Capacity surges are valuable only if they strengthen the system's ability to deliver the next cycle with less external help.
- Procurement, finance, and HR must align to reward learning, iteration, and skill-building, not only compliance and outputs.

Implication for leaders

If government wants to achieve ambitious platform commitments and adapt to a rapidly changing world, external support must be structured to build internal muscle: clear learning clauses in procurement, room for iterative delivery, and HR pathways to grow and retain modern capabilities.

Reflection prompts

1. What "capability transfer" requirements will we build into vendor statements of work (pairing, playbooks, training, templates)?
2. Which capabilities must be developed internally first (service design, systems practice, evaluation, agile delivery), and where will they sit?
3. What changes to procurement, finance, and HR are needed to create a pipeline of modern skills and institutionalized roles?

A key strategy in Reimagine GNB was to increase delivery capacity without creating long-term dependency. The guiding idea was simple: **“scaffold, don’t substitute.”** In other words, bring in outside expertise to help teams move faster now, while deliberately transferring tools, methods, and confidence into the public service so the work becomes owned internally over time.

This is why Executive Council Office (ECO) moved to establish a prequalified vendor list for innovation and design expertise. The goal was to help departments access specialized support quickly and flexibly, while making it clear that vendors are expected to build internal capability, not just produce deliverables. Work products would remain owned by GNB, and language requirements would be set through each statement of work.

The prequalified vendor list as a capability “flywheel”

The prequalified list is not meant to be a standing bench of contractors. Used well, it becomes a capability flywheel. It allows mission teams to:

1. **surge capacity** for time-bound work (research, design sprints, facilitation, evaluation, agile coaching),
2. **access specialized or emerging expertise** not yet available internally (for example, foresight, systems design, developmental evaluation), and
3. **convert external methods into internal practice** through pairing, coaching, and reusable playbooks.

Put plainly: the list is designed to do two things at once: **1. deliver priority work faster and 2. build institutional muscle so the same work can increasingly be done inside government.**

What capabilities this approach is meant to unlock

The service streams in the prequalification list reflect the practical capabilities needed for modern transformation. They are how complex systems learn and improve:

- Human-Centred Design and Service Design: research, synthesis, prototyping, and service blueprinting grounded in lived experience.
- System Innovation: framing challenges as systems, finding leverage points, and shifting patterns—not just optimizing processes.
- Strategic Foresight: horizon scanning and scenarios so portfolios don’t build “perfect answers to yesterday’s problems.”
- Complex Facilitation and Dialogue: leading multi-stakeholder processes that build alignment and support decisions across silos.

- Innovation Coaching and Capacity Building: coaching teams in experimentation, agile delivery, and collaborative leadership.
- Organizational Design and Change: redesigning roles, structures, workflows, and culture to support modern delivery.
- Measurement, Evaluation, and Learning: evaluation and learning systems that turn delivery into evidence for decision-making.
- Participatory Policy Design: embedding lived experience and frontline insight so policy and delivery evolve together.
- Agile Delivery Coaching: helping teams plan and deliver iteratively through sprints, stand-ups, and retrospectives.

This frames the capability strategy as a deliberate transition: external scaffolding → internal practice → institutionalized roles and ways of working.

A pathway from external support to internal strength

A practical pathway was emerging for how to source and embed these capabilities over time:

1. External support for surge capacity and new expertise

In 2026, vendors would have helped bring leading practice quickly into mission portfolios, especially where speed mattered and internal capacity was constrained.

2. Transition to internal consulting

Over time, the goal was to shift from external delivery to stronger internal expertise across departments. Project and Advisory Services (PAS) is well positioned to provide this internal consulting function, reducing dependency while building cross-government capability.

3. Institutionalize capabilities into the operating system

The end state is not a permanent innovation unit running alongside government. The end state is to embed these capabilities into role profiles, training pathways, procurement templates, budgeting and business case practices, and delivery governance.

A useful analogy is clinical practice: you might bring in a visiting specialist to introduce a new procedure, but the real win is when it becomes standard practice: taught, repeatable, and owned by the local team.

What is needed to align to make it work

To execute this model in 2026, enabling functions would have needed to align around the same intent:

- **Procurement:** write statements of work that reward capability transfer (not just deliverables), enable rapid access to vendors, and include “learning clauses” (pairing, playbooks, training, templates).

- **Finance and Treasury Board:** support iterative delivery and learning cycles so teams are not penalized for adapting based on evidence.
- **Human Resources:** evolve recruitment and development pathways so these capabilities can be hired, grown, and retained (for example, service design, systems practice, evaluation, agile coaching), and ensure PAS can play a viable internal consulting role.

How capability-building could be embedded in Mission delivery

Had the initiative continued, the 2026 plan would have built capability directly into Mission delivery through repeatable mechanisms:

- Embedded vendor support with pairing: vendors working alongside public servants, transferring tools and judgment, not just producing outputs.
- Reusable playbooks and artifacts: service standards, sprint templates, facilitation guides, evidence-to-decision briefs, equity checklists, and measurement rubrics that teams can reuse.
- Communities of practice and clinics: lightweight ways to connect practitioners across departments and spread practice faster.
- Portfolio learning loops: regular cycles where results, stories, and data from prototypes inform executive decisions and budget choices, so governance becomes a learning system, not only an approvals system.

Together, these moves would have increased capacity in the short term while building capability for the long term.



11. Strategic Reflection

Section In Summary

Core claim

In complex transformation, the ability to learn and adjust is a core capability. Without it, government repeats the same patterns and progress stays fragile.

What this section establishes

Reimagine GNB built reflection into the foundational phase to stay honest about what the system could absorb and what conditions were missing for change to mature. The reflections were not academic, they were practical signals about readiness, capacity, roles, and how the system interprets change. These insights help explain why some approaches gained traction and why others stalled.

What we tried and observed

- High enthusiasm among early adopters, especially when work aligned with existing “good work.”
- Uneven readiness across departments, requiring different levels of support and pacing.
- Role and ownership ambiguity that slowed progress and increased rework.
- Capacity constraints that made “do fewer things well” a better strategy than broad rollout.
- Communications sequencing issues where messaging ran ahead of delivery readiness.

What we learned

- Moving faster than the system can absorb creates anxiety, resistance, and rework.
- Government interprets signals as commitments; messaging must match real resourcing and capacity.
- Learning does not scale unless it has a home. Without infrastructure, insight is lost and must be re-earned.

Implication for leaders

If government wants transformation to mature, leaders must protect learning loops and pace change to absorption capacity, then institutionalize how insight is captured, reused, and turned into decisions.

Reflection prompts

1. What will we stop or delay so we can experiment and build credible proof?
2. How will we sequence communications so expectations match what is actually resourced in the next 30/60/90 days?
3. Where will learning live (roles, routines, repositories, governance) so it can be retained and reused across government?

In high-stakes system change, how well government learns can matter as much as how fast it delivers. During the foundational phase, the Reimagine GNB team deliberately built in reflection so they could surface insights, adjust course, and stay honest about what the system could absorb.

This reflection mattered for one reason: it helped clarify where transformation was taking hold, where it was resisting, and what conditions were missing for the work to mature.

What patterns kept showing up

Across 2025, several repeat patterns emerged, and the team translated them into practical learning:

1. High enthusiasm from early adopters

The lesson: build momentum by aligning with “good work already in flight,” so uptake spreads faster.

2. Uneven readiness across departments

The lesson: don’t treat the system as one uniform starting point, tailor support based on readiness and context.

3. Uncertainty around roles and ownership

The lesson: ambiguity slows everything down, clarify governance, roles, and accountability to increase speed.

4. Capacity concerns under pressure

The lesson: focus on depth over breadth, support a smaller number of pilots well to build credibility.

Learning from missteps: speed without absorption

Under early delivery pressure, the team sometimes moved faster than partners could absorb. They had to recalibrate, slow down in order to go further.

The underlying lesson was structural: when speed outpaces absorption, even positive intent can create anxiety, resistance, and rework.

Communications and narrative timing

A major learning was about communications timing. In several cases, communications moved ahead of delivery readiness. In a system used to “announce and roll out,” early messaging created expectations the team could not yet meet.

That produced three predictable effects:

1. increased anxiety among teams already stretched thin,
2. reinforced the misconception that Reimagine GNB was a delivery unit “doing transformation to” departments, and
3. diluted credibility when capacity limits became visible.

The lesson wasn’t “communications don’t matter.” The lesson was: transformation communications must be sequenced like any intervention, grounded in what is real, explicit about what is not resourced yet, and disciplined about what people can expect in the next 30/60/90 days.

A maturity insight: government interprets signals as commitments

A deeper maturity insight emerged: government systems interpret signals as commitments. If transformation is described as a program with outputs, the system will demand outputs. If it is described as a new operating model, the system will demand proof that the model is protected: time, decision rights, resourcing, and alignment across enabling functions.

Structural reflection: learning needs a home

The strongest reflection was structural: learning does not scale unless it has a home. Workshops, accelerators, and pilots produced insight, but the system’s ability to retain and reuse that insight depended on sustained infrastructure to hold it.

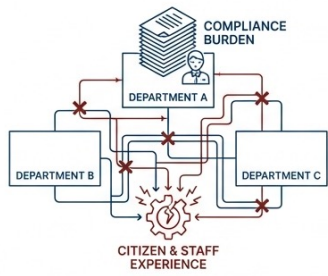
Without that infrastructure, learning stays episodic and must be re-earned each time. The foundational phase clarified what that infrastructure needs to be. A next phase would have aimed to institutionalize it.

Transformation is not about better plans. It is about a new operating model.

The Challenge

The System is Failing People

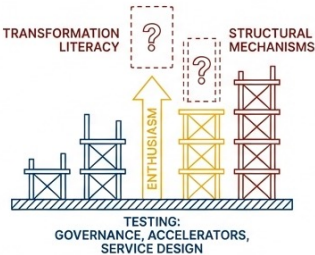
The current operating model creates silos and compliance burdens that frustrate citizens and burn out staff, despite the best intentions of public servants.



The Diagnostic (2025)

Reimagine GNB Phase 1

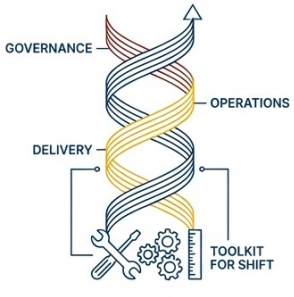
A year of testing governance, accelerators, and service design revealed that while enthusiasm is high, the “transformation literacy” and structural mechanisms to support change are missing.



The Blueprint

The Triple Helix

The path forward requires synchronizing Governance, Operations, and Delivery. We leave behind a toolkit to enable this shift.



“Reducing resources to the status quo without shifting to a defined future state will produce worse versions of today’s results.”

12. Conclusion: Stewardship, Not Just Strategy

Section In Summary

Core claim

Reimagine GNB showed that the need for transformation is real and that progress depends on leaders converting intent into protected priority, not relying on enthusiasm or a central team.

What's true now,

Reimagine GNB launched in April 2025 as a whole-of-government effort to improve New Brunswickers' experience, reduce the cost of delivering services, improve employee experience, and strengthen outcomes for people and communities. The foundational phase produced practical assets departments can use now (tools, methods, pilots, and procurement pathways). In February 2026, the dedicated reimagine team concluded its work in favour of individual departments leading transformation.

What we have

- Cross-functional workshop methods and shared learning across policy, finance, digital, and HR
- Learnings and outputs from accelerators (mission-style collaboration prototypes)
- Service design tools, including the Good Services framework and service effectiveness review tools
- A prequalified vendor pathway to access innovation/service design support with a capability-building focus
- Internal examples and stories that demonstrate people-centred, outcomes-based practice

What we learned

- Transformation cannot survive as "extra work"; it must be built into how government operates.
- Cutting the status quo without investing in a defined future state creates worse outcomes, not transformation.
- The shift to department-led implementation is a test: either learning compounds or it gets lost.

Implication for leaders

If government wants services and outcomes to improve at scale, leaders must steward the enabling conditions: protected capacity, clear decision rights, cross-functional teams, modern procurement pathways, and shared measurement that links investment to outcomes.

Reflection prompts

1. What will we stop or pause to protect capacity for outcomes-based work that crosses departments?
2. What governance and decision rights will ensure learning turns into action, not reports?
3. Which assets from this foundational phase will we adopt as standard practice, and who is accountable for doing so?

Reimagine GNB was more than a transformation program. It was a signal that the status quo is no longer enough for the complexity New Brunswick faces, and that the public service must be equipped, not just instructed, to deliver a government that is coordinated, people-centred, and outcomes-focused.

This work began with a clear mandate. In a memo dated April 24, 2025, Judy Wagner, then Clerk of the Executive Council and Head of the Public Service, launched a whole-of-government initiative to improve efficiency and build a more person-centric organization. **The initiative was anchored in four goals: improving residents' experience, reducing the cost of delivering programs and services, improving employee experience, and improving outcomes for people and communities.**

During the foundational phase, the team made meaningful progress and created practical assets that departments can use right away. These include: **workshop tools and collaboration methods** developed with senior policy, HR, finance, and digital leaders; **learnings from the innovation accelerators**; an **intranet page to share internal success stories and examples** of teams prioritizing user needs; **service design tools** such as the tested Good Services framework and the Project and Advisory Services **toolset for service effectiveness** reviews; a plan to test and scale **outcomes based budgeting**, a plan to evolve a **social policy office**, a plan to test and scale **modern policy capacity**, and a **prequalified vendor pathway** (RFP #6236004-26) to enable faster access to innovation and service design support focused on customer-first solutions. These outputs are scaffolding that departments can build on.

At the same time, the bigger lesson of Reimagine GNB remains unchanged. **Moving beyond foundation-building required difficult choices:** freeing capacity where it existed, sequencing priorities, and protecting transformation work during fiscal constraint. **Those choices were not made.** Without clear prioritization and structural reinforcement, Reimagine GNB remained “extra work” rather than becoming part of how government operates. In February 2026, the dedicated reimagine team concluded its work, with individual departments taking the lead on transformation.

The transition from a centralized team to department-led implementation is not just an organizational change. It is a test of whether the transformation has been integrated deeply enough to survive without a dedicated centre. The lesson is clear: **transformation cannot run on enthusiasm alone. Leadership has to convert intent into a protected priority.**

This report is therefore both a record of a year of effort and an invitation. It invites Cabinet, senior executives, and public servants at all levels to **treat transformation as a discipline of stewardship.** Stewardship means making deliberate choices about what government will stop doing, what it will protect, and what it will build. It means naming and reinforcing the enabling conditions missions need

to succeed: time, decision rights, cross-functional teaming, modern procurement pathways, and shared measurement that links investment to outcomes.

It also means being honest about a practical truth: **reducing resources to the status quo without shifting them into a desired future state will simply yield weaker versions of today's results.**

As the work shifts to departments, **sustained leadership will be the difference between momentum fading and momentum compounding. Deputies need to recognize that they are leading the system and, therefore, it is their responsibility to support alternatives to the status quo.** By using the tools already created and applying the lessons captured here, departments can continue to improve services and outcomes while strengthening the public service for the long term.

Transforming New Brunswick's public service won't happen overnight, and it won't follow a neat, predictable path. Real transformation—the kind that changes how decisions get made, how services are delivered, and how learning happens across an entire system—takes time, courage, and a willingness to try things that might not work. What follows are recommendations for Deputy Ministers and senior executives ready to start that work today, while contributing to something much bigger than any single initiative.

Recommendations

1. To support evidence-based decision-making: strengthen policy as a strategic function and build on formal academic partnerships that deliver applied evidence on a continuous cycle.

Across government, policy teams are being asked to respond to increasingly complex challenges, often without the time, tools, or capacity to do so in a deeply evidence-informed way. Too often, policy is developed reactively, with limited opportunity to test assumptions, draw on existing evidence, or learn from what has already been tried.

A practical place to begin is for Deputy Ministers and Directors of Policy to take stock of the current strength of their policy function. This includes looking at whether the right mix of skills, tools, and relationships is in place to support advice that is strategic, forward-looking, and grounded in evidence rather than primarily administrative.

Where gaps are identified, departments can build capability in targeted ways. This may include investing in professional development for existing staff, making use of the Prequalification List, and embedding roles such as data analysts and designers directly within policy teams so that evidence shapes advice from the outset rather than being added later.

Departments would also benefit from building more sustained partnerships with institutions such as UNB, Université de Moncton, and DataNB, structured around priority questions rather than one-off contracts. This kind of model can help ensure that useful evidence arrives in time to inform decisions and supports a more continuous cycle of learning. This is the model used by What Works Centres in the UK, where government departments co-fund applied research units that provide ongoing, practical evidence rather than academic reports that arrive too late.

There is also value in making assumptions more explicit. Including a short assumptions log with major policy proposals could help teams clarify what is being taken for granted, what needs to be tested, and what should be tracked once implementation begins.

At a system level, the Executive Council Office could play a useful convening role by establishing a Policy Community of Practice for senior policy leaders. This would create space to share methods, compare challenges, and strengthen policy as a more connected and strategic function across government.

2. To be open by default: create clearer standards for open data and equip public servants to work in the open with confidence.

GNB holds significant public data and knowledge that is not shared often enough, and many public servants are not yet well supported to work in the open. This limits the quality of decision-making, reduces opportunities for collaboration, and can weaken public confidence.

One useful step would be to provide clearer guidance on what can be shared proactively, what requires review, and what is legitimately protected. Reducing ambiguity would make it easier for departments to act with confidence and would help shift the default away from caution-driven non-disclosure.

This work could be advanced through a practical directive under the Digital First Policy, developed by the Office of the Chief Information Officer in collaboration with the Clerk. A directive of this kind could clarify expectations while giving departments a more workable basis for releasing data, publishing updates, and sharing information that supports public understanding and accountability.

Departments can also strengthen their internal culture by giving staff practical guidance on how to work in the open. This includes sharing draft thinking where appropriate, documenting decisions clearly, and publishing progress updates in plain language. The goal is not simply better communications. It is to build a culture where transparency is understood as part of good public service and where people feel supported rather than exposed when they share their work.

Recognition will matter as much as rules. Departments that model openness well could be acknowledged and celebrated, helping to create positive incentives and practical examples for others to learn from.

3. To engage authentically with New Brunswickers: build stronger roles, mechanisms, and routines for meaningful public participation across the policy lifecycle.

Engagement in the public service is still too often treated as a procedural step near the end of the process, once options have already been shaped. When this happens, public input may be gathered, but it is less likely to influence the design of the solution in a meaningful way.

A stronger approach would be to treat participation as part of how problems are defined and decisions are improved. For initiatives with direct public impact, departments can build in an early engagement checkpoint to confirm that structured input was gathered before solution options were finalized. This would help create a more consistent expectation that public participation happens upstream, not only after the fact.

Departments would also benefit from maintaining standing relationships with people who bring lived experience of the issues government is trying to address. Small, compensated advisory panels, recruited through trusted community partners, could provide a more grounded and continuous source of insight than one-time consultations or open calls alone.

There is also value in giving this work a clearer institutional home. Designating a Public Participation Lead within each department could strengthen continuity, improve the design of engagement processes, and ensure community relationships are maintained over time rather than rebuilt from scratch for each initiative.

After engagement takes place, departments can help build trust by closing the loop more clearly. Publishing a short “What We Heard, What We Did” summary would make it easier to show how public input shaped decisions and, where it did not, explain that transparently. This kind of practice can improve accountability and increase people’s willingness to participate again in the future.

4. To design for unique differences and be a government that cares: embed human-centred design in the day-to-day work of government.

Many public services are still organized around program boundaries and departmental structures rather than the actual lives of the people using them. The result is often a service experience that feels fragmented, difficult to navigate, and slow to improve.

A practical place to start is by focusing on a small number of high-impact life events that cut across departments, such as losing employment, navigating disability, or aging into long-term care. These journeys can become shared design challenges, with cross-departmental teams brought together to understand the experience from the user's perspective and identify where the system is creating avoidable friction.

For this work to be effective, journey mapping will need to go beyond internal process review — following the model used by the UK's Department for Work and Pensions when redesigning its Universal Credit service, where extensive user research revealed that the service's design assumptions were wrong in ways that internal review had entirely missed. The most useful insights often come from working alongside real users and seeing where assumptions about access, timing, language, and coordination break down in practice.

Departments can strengthen this capability by embedding service design roles directly within policy and program branches rather than relying only on central or project-based support. When design is part of day-to-day work, it is more likely to shape decisions early and improve services continuously.

This approach will be strongest when it is guided by those who face the greatest barriers. People with low digital literacy, those in rural and remote communities, and those navigating multiple systems at once can help reveal where services are hardest to access and where design improvements will matter most.

Progress can then be tracked by Deputy Ministers against a shared set of service measures, such as the Good Services Framework, including ease of access, time to service, task completion, and equity across language, geography, and income. This would help shift attention from whether a service exists to whether it actually works well for the people who need it.

5. To take a balanced approach: connect finance, policy, and delivery more directly to shared outcomes.

At present, budgeting, policy development, and service delivery operate on parallel tracks. As a result, funding decisions can be made without a clear view of their downstream effects, and policy priorities do not always translate into what gets resourced or measured in practice.

One promising step would be to pilot an outcome-based budget envelope in a priority area. This would not need to replace the existing estimates process immediately, but it could add a more strategic layer of accountability by asking what measurable change in people's lives the funding is expected to support and how that change will be tracked.

This kind of approach can help create a stronger connection between spending and results. It also opens up a more useful conversation about whether resources are flowing to the areas most likely to improve outcomes rather than simply reinforcing historic allocations.

Departments can further strengthen decision-making by making trade-offs more explicit. A short trade-off brief accompanying major reallocation requests could help clarify what is being reduced, deferred, or stopped, what impacts are expected, and what evidence supports the choice. This would give decision-makers a fuller view of the consequences, not just the cost.

There is also a strong case for creating more protected space for prevention and early intervention in budget planning. Without that discipline, preventative investment is often crowded out by short-term pressures, even when those short-term pressures are being made worse by the lack of earlier action. Making prevention more visible in the budget process would help government make more balanced choices over time.

6. To become adaptive and future-ready: create a central Transformation Office and build standing capability in foresight, innovation, and systems thinking.

Transformation efforts often lose energy because they do not have a lasting institutional home, shared methods, or enough people with the time and skill to carry the work forward. When this happens, promising initiatives can remain isolated, and learning is easily lost between projects, leaders, or mandates.

A useful next step would be to establish a Transformation Office within the Executive Council Office, supported by seconded staff from across departments. Its role would not be to control all change from the centre, but to provide a backbone for cross-government work by supporting mission teams, tracking progress, helping remove barriers, and building capability over time.

Alongside this, departments can strengthen their own internal capacity by identifying senior leaders who are responsible for innovation and foresight as an explicit part of their role. Giving this work named ownership would make it more likely that experimentation, horizon scanning, and structured learning become part of routine practice rather than side-of-desk activity.

A government-wide Foresight and Innovation Network could then connect these leaders, creating a shared space to compare signals, test ideas, and spread useful methods. This would support a more consistent approach to learning across government and reduce the risk that innovation remains fragmented or personality-driven.

Finally, publishing an annual State of Transformation report could help make progress and learning more visible. A report of this kind would allow GNB to name what is working, where barriers remain, and what the system is learning as it goes. That would reinforce the idea that transformation is not a one-time initiative, but an ongoing public leadership responsibility.

None of this will be linear, and not every experiment will succeed. But by giving these recommendations real owners, real structures, and real accountability, the Government of New Brunswick moves from aspiration to building a public service that is more open, more human, and genuinely ready for what comes next.

Appendix A: Transformation Case Studies Summary

The table below summarizes key aspects of each case study discussed, including the jurisdiction, timeframe, scope, tactics used, and the results or outcomes achieved.

Location & Initiative	Timeframe	Scope of Transformation	Key Tactics and Levers	Results / Outcomes
<p>United Kingdom – Government Digital Service (GDS)</p>	<p>2011 – present (national)</p>	<p>Whole-of-government digital service delivery; consolidation of UK government websites and online services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a central digital agency (GDS) with cross-functional teams • User-centric design and agile development of services en.wikipedia.org • “Digital by Default” standard mandated across departments • Strong Cabinet support and spending controls to enforce compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched GOV.UK single portal (replacing 1000+ sites) en.wikipedia.org • Improved online service usability and accessibility (millions of users) • Significant cost savings by eliminating duplicated IT projects • Faster policy implementation via digital channels; higher citizen satisfaction in service surveys.

<p>New Zealand – Better Public Services (BPS) Targets</p>	<p>2012 – 2017 (national)</p>	<p>Cross-agency outcome targets in 10 priority areas (education, employment, crime, digital services, etc.) spanning multiple ministries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set 10 clear outcome targets publicly reported treasury.govt.nz (5-year goals) • Appointed lead ministers/CEOs for each target; formed interagency teams • Integrated policy and delivery by joint accountability • Realigned funding to support target achievement; functional leaders drove efficiencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved measurable improvements in most areas (e.g. crime down, educational attainment up, more services online) treasury.govt.nz • Broke down silos – ministries collaborated regularly on shared goals • Greater transparency and outcome focus in budgeting and reporting • Informed the design of NZ's later Wellbeing Budgets linking spending to outcomes.
<p>Malaysia – PEMANDU and Gov't Transformation Programme</p>	<p>2010 – 2015 (peak period; national)</p>	<p>Whole-of-government performance improvement on National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) – crime, corruption, education, infrastructure, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established PEMANDU delivery unit under Prime Minister en.wikipedia.org • Ran cross-sector “labs” to co-create solutions (public, private, civil society input) • Set KPIs for each ministry aligned to NKRAs; weekly progress monitoring • Premier and Cabinet conducted regular performance reviews (“stock-takes”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid impact in targeted areas (e.g. sharp drop in street crime, infrastructure targets met) due to focused efforts • Public annual reports increased accountability and trust • Enhanced inter-ministerial coordination; a results-oriented culture in civil service • Model was emulated by other countries (as a “delivery unit” exemplar).

<p>Australia (NSW) – Service NSW One-Stop Service</p>	<p>2013 – present (state/provincial)</p>	<p>Integration of service delivery for an entire state: one-stop digital portal and in-person centers for all citizen services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merged dozens of agency service channels into one Service NSW platform • Employed user journey mapping and service design to simplify transactions • Launched new Service NSW centers with cross-trained staff and “digital kiosks” • Political champion at ministerial level; used metrics (wait times, satisfaction) for accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 95% customer satisfaction achieved in service centers (a major uplift) • Hundreds of legacy websites and hotlines consolidated, saving costs • Transactions sped up dramatically (e.g. business registrations in minutes) • Cultural change: “customer-first” mindset adopted across NSW agencies, inspiring similar models elsewhere.
<p>Scotland – National Performance Framework (NPF)</p>	<p>2007 – present (devolved national)</p>	<p>Whole-of-government outcomes framework aligning central and local government to broad national outcomes (social, economic, environmental).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined national outcomes and indicators (Scotland Performs) gov.scot • Replaced siloed targets with unified performance scorecard • Created Single Outcome Agreements with local authorities – encouraging joint action • Institutionalized via law and continuous improvement of measures; strong leadership from First Minister and finance ministry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic view of progress increased policy coherence (all working toward shared outcomes) gov.scot • Improved cross-department collaboration, especially on preventative initiatives (e.g. early childhood investments) • Greater transparency on how budget decisions impact long-term outcomes • Framework sustained across administrations, embedding outcome-based culture in government.

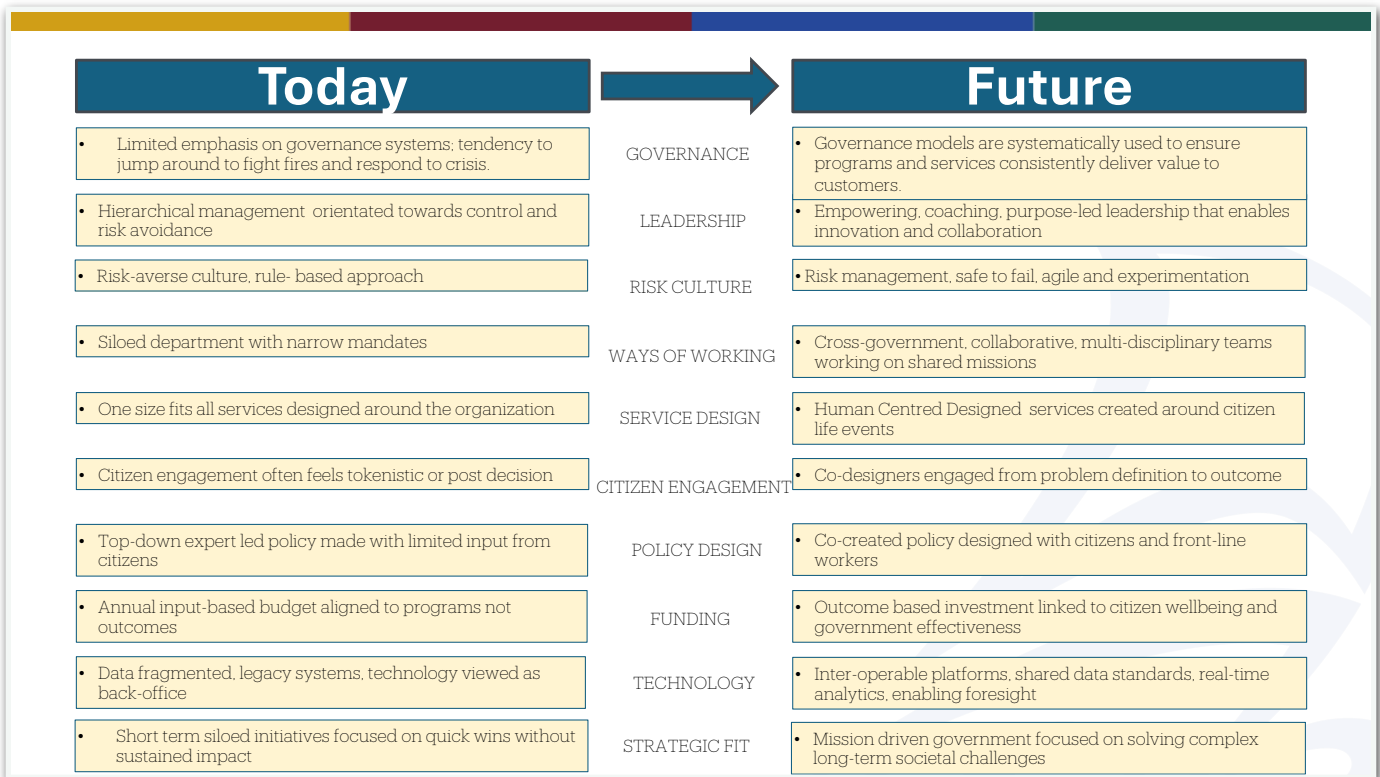
<p>United States – Cross-Agency Priority Goals & US Digital Service</p>	<p>2010 – 2018 (national)</p>	<p>Federal interagency goals and digital service fixes targeting priority areas and flagship services across the US government.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) Goals with designated leads and teams for each (e.g. veterans’ services, job training) • Used Performance.gov for public tracking and quarterly interagency reviews • Created US Digital Service and 18F with agile SWAT teams to redesign critical services in agencies • White House backing and OMB oversight ensured agency participation; recruited private-sector tech talent into government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notable improvements on several national priorities (e.g. faster infrastructure permitting, reduced veteran backlogs) through joint effort • Successful turnarounds of IT projects (e.g. HealthCare.gov) built credibility for agile methods • Set foundation for ongoing digital innovation offices in agencies (many persisted beyond 2018) • Demonstrated that even a large government can tackle silos with clear goals and empowered teams, saving money by avoiding failed projects and duplication.
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Appendix B: Theory of Change

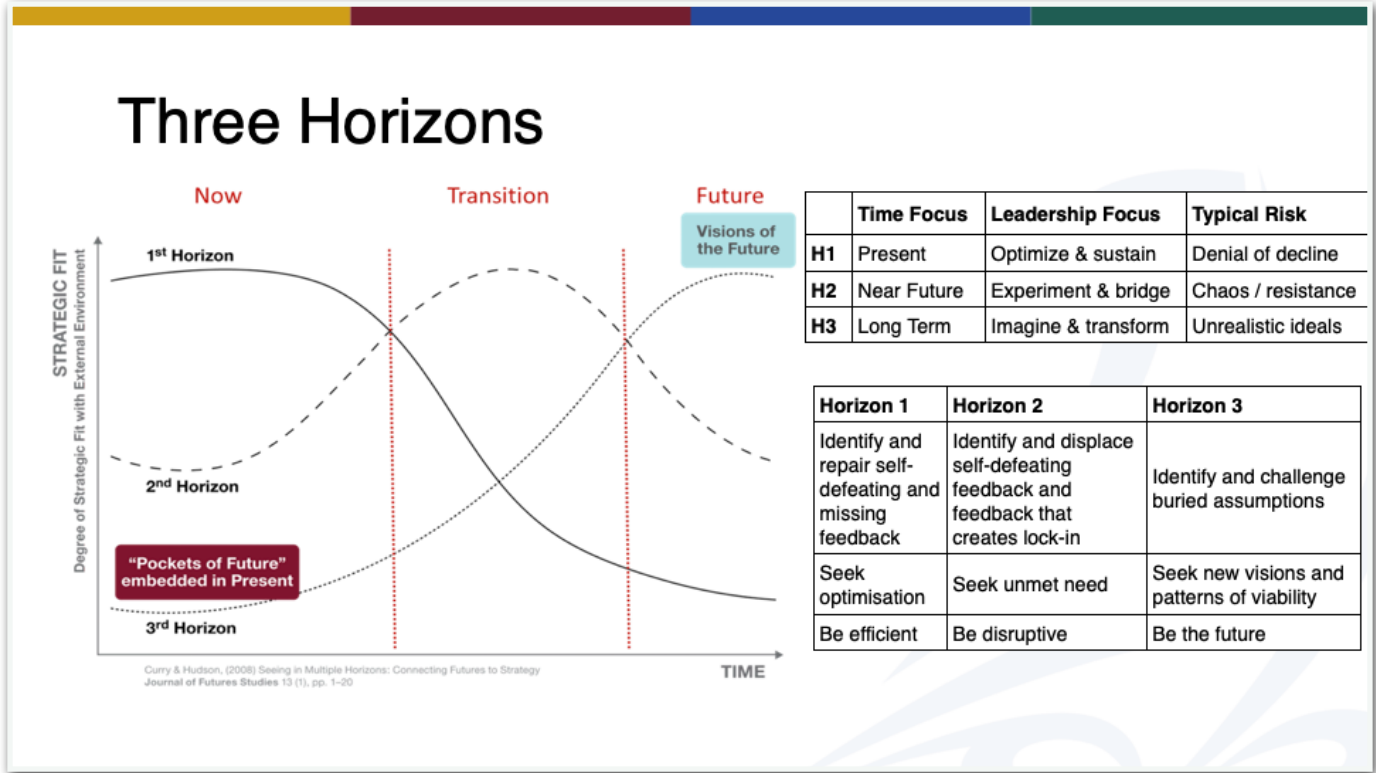
To close the gap between **policy and delivery**, and between **budgets and outcomes**, we must rethink government at every level: its purpose, its methods, and its culture. We believe that transformation happens when:

If we...	Then we will...
Centre government around <i>real-life experience</i> programs or silos	Deliver more seamless, dignified, and accessible services
Equip public servants with <i>tools, permission, community</i>	Unlock everyday leadership and accelerate learning at the front lines
Treat the system as a <i>portfolio of missions & experiments</i>	Focus attention and resources on solving the most important problems, adaptively
Use budgets as <i>levers for change</i> , not just cost centers	Fund what works, retire what doesn't, and align money with meaningful outcomes
Engage people not just as <i>users</i> but as <i>co-designers & producers</i>	Build public trust and craft solutions that reflect the lived realities of communities
Shift from planning for certainty to <i>navigating complexity through action</i>	Move faster, reduce waste, and scale what matters through agile, iterative work
Replace isolated reform efforts with <i>whole-of-government transformation</i>	Build coherence, resilience, and long-term impact that endures beyond election or budget cycles

Appendix C: Transformation Agenda



Appendix D: Three Horizons

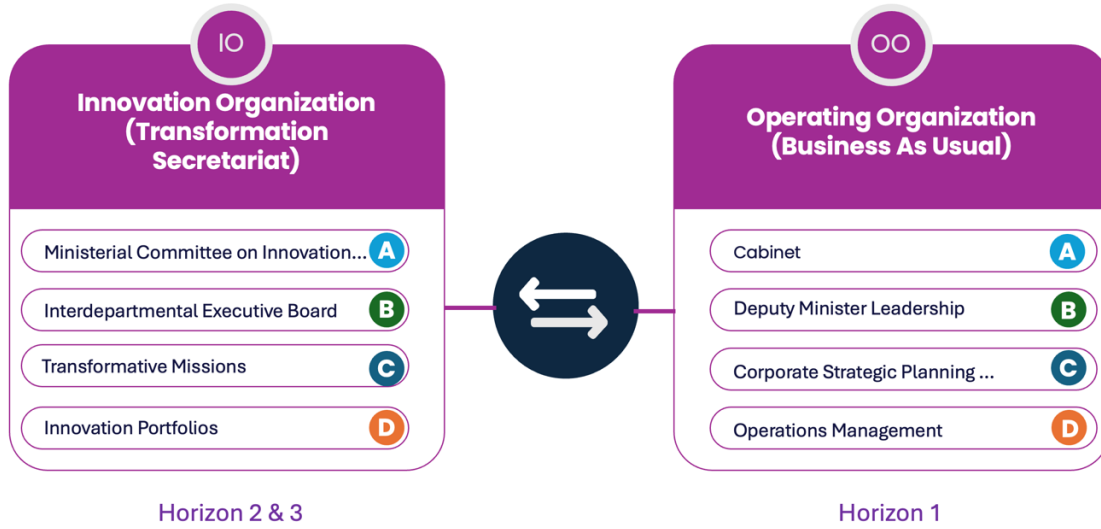


Horizon	Description / Focus	Stage Over Time ($t_1 \rightarrow t_2 \rightarrow t_3$)	Dynamics & Challenges	Outcomes / Examples
Horizon 1 (H1)	The current dominant system or pattern – the “business as usual” model.	t_1 : Dominant but beginning to fail. t_2 : In serious decline. t_3 : Residual elements persist as infrastructure.	Viability decreases due to mismatch with external conditions. Organizations may double down on outdated success formulas, ignoring need for change.	Can sustain innovation that reinforces the status quo but risks collapse if change is resisted (Sterman, 2000).
Horizon 2 (H2)	The transition space – a turbulent and experimental phase between old and new systems.	t_1 : Emerging innovation gains attention. t_2 : High variety of experimentation; tension between H1 and H3 advocates. t_3 : Begins to stabilize as H3 takes hold.	Characterized by creative innovation and resistance ; messy compromises between maintaining old systems and exploring new ones.	Represents disruptive innovation (Christensen, 1997). Not culturally feasible to jump directly to H3; organizations must navigate tensions.
Horizon 3 (H3)	The emerging future system or paradigm – a transformed, more adaptive pattern.	t_1 : Fringe idea, largely unnoticed. t_2 : Gains attention and resources, starts displacing H1. t_3 : Becomes the dominant paradigm, stabilizing new norms.	Initially seen as unrealistic or risky; grows as alignment with changing external conditions becomes evident.	Represents long-term transformation and new viability. Eventually, this new paradigm will itself become the next H1.
Overall System Pattern	All three horizons coexist at any point in time , reflecting parallel dynamics of decline, transition, and emergence.	—	The system evolves as tensions play out among the horizons. Strategic leadership requires balancing short-term viability with long-term transformation.	Each horizon represents a potential future , and the balance between them determines the system's evolutionary path.

Bringing foresight into systems thinking: a three horizons approach
Anthony Hodgson and Gerald Midgley

RESPONSIBILITY INTERACTION MATRIX

Relationship between Operating Organization (OO) and Innovation Organization (IO)



Appendix E: Foundational Levers

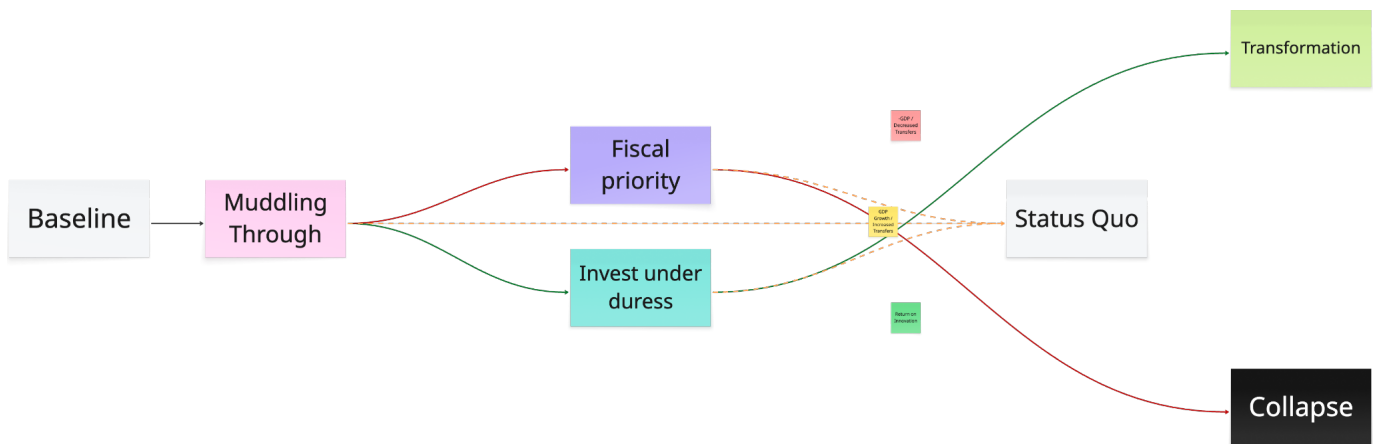
Foundational Levers

Governance	Grants & Contributions	Human Resources	Policy	Finance	Service & Digital	Data & Technology	Communications & Engagement
The structures, decision rights, and accountability mechanisms that determine <i>who sets direction, how priorities are aligned across institutions, and how public value is stewarded over time</i> . In a portfolio context, governance encompasses cross-departmental steering, public oversight, and adaptive decision-making.	Mechanisms for <i>resourcing external partners</i> , typically in non-profit or community sector, to deliver public outcomes. In portfolios, this includes redesigning for trust-based funding, outcome-oriented partnerships, collaborative accountability, and multi-year agreements.	The systems, policies, and practices that shape <i>how people are recruited, deployed, supported, rewarded, and developed</i> . For portfolios, HR includes workforce planning, new roles (e.g. service designers, data translators), flexible deployment models, and culture change strategies.	The formal articulation of government intent, including rules, incentives, and mandates that shape system behavior. In portfolios, policy includes <i>co-designed, iterative, and embedded policy</i> , with a strong connection to service delivery, data feedback loops, and lived experience.	The allocation, flow, and monitoring of public resources to enable delivery and incentivize outcomes. In transformation portfolios, this includes <i>budget models that support experimentation, outcome-based funding, financial reporting reform, and adaptive finance tools</i> (e.g., budget sandboxes).	The design and delivery of services across physical and digital channels, grounded in user needs and life-event logic. This function includes service standards, journey mapping, platform integration, human-centered design, and the digital infrastructure for seamless experience.	The architecture, governance, and use of data, platforms, and digital tools that enable service integration, decision-making, and learning. Portfolios draw on this function to support <i>interoperability, real-time insight, and strategic foresight</i> through dashboards and data loops.	The practices, channels, and narratives through which <i>government builds legitimacy, invites participation, and shares learning</i> . In a transformation portfolio, this function includes storytelling, symbolic leadership, civic rituals, internal comms, and participatory design facilitation.

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Appendix F: Executive Foresight Exercise



Appendix G: Proposed Rubric for Transformation Proposals

For every proposal, assign a score from **1 to 5** for each of the **five dimensions** listed below. Total the scores (out of 25) to understand whether the proposal supports systemic transformation.

Dimension	Score (1–5)	Rationale / Notes
Fiscal Stance		
Social Outcomes		
Public Service Capacity & Morale		
Public Mood & Opinion		
Core Government Function		

Total Score (out of 25):

- **5–10:** Short-term / reactive — risks reinforcing Muddling Through.
- **11–15:** Incremental / stabilizing — modest progress within existing logic.
- **15–20:** Adaptive / reform-oriented — supports Transitional logic.
- **21–25:** Regenerative / systemic — aligns with Transformation logic.

Dimension	1 – Short-term	3 – Transitional	5 – Transformative	Guiding Questions
Fiscal Stance	Cuts or cost-shifting framed as reform. Focus on budget optics or annual cycle savings.	Responsible fiscal management with selective reinvestment, but limited to departmental silos.	Strategic use of fiscal levers Multi-year, multi-capital investment thinking; fiscal choices strengthen resilience, capacity, and outcomes.	Does it create future value or only short-term savings? Are costs deferred to other systems or future years?
Social Outcomes	Targets narrow, short-term metrics. Benefits a few or shifts burdens downstream.	Provides tangible service gains, but not systemic integration. Partial attention to equity or prevention.	Improves wellbeing, equity, and prevention systemically. Strengthens interconnections across silos.	Does the proposal solve symptoms or root causes? Who benefits and who bears the risk? Are equity and prevention core design principles?
Public Service Morale & Capacity	Will likely strain workforce; removes capacity for learning or adaptation; demoralizes staff.	Some efficiency or digital gains, but no reinvestment in people or culture.	Builds workforce capability, collaboration, and meaning; contributes to an adaptive learning culture.	Does it grow or erode institutional capacity? Does it make the public service stronger and prouder?

<p>Public Mood & Opinion</p>	<p>Will likely generate public frustration, backlash, or distrust; harms legitimacy.</p>	<p>Public sees competence but not care; mixed reactions; neutral legitimacy.</p>	<p>Transparent, participatory, and trustworthy; citizens experience co-ownership and see tangible improvement.</p>	<p>How will the public perceive this decision?</p>
<p>Core Gov. Function</p>	<p>Off-mandate; distracts from core responsibilities; weakens foundational capability.</p>	<p>Adjacent or supportive; helpful but not essential; value depends on execution.</p>	<p>Strengthens mission-critical responsibilities such as service delivery, evidence, policy, regulation, stewardship.</p>	<p>Is this what government <i>should</i> be doing? Does it enhance government's constitutional, fiduciary, or societal purpose?</p>