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Principles for running a successful mission

Advice from the Government Chief Scientific Adviser and the Prime Minister's Council for Science and Technology on the implementation of Industrial Strategy missions.

Missions should be ambitious, transformative programmes that address grand challenges. They must have a clear vision, be problem-led without pre-defined solutions, and have a quantifiable outcome. They should not consist of existing Government policy re-branded. Successful delivery of a mission will require a different approach to management and delivery and bring together support from relevant stakeholders. Key principles for running a successful mission include:

1. An empowered and accountable mission leader

- a) A single, accountable mission leader, appointed by the Perm Sec of the lead department, with a direct reporting line to relevant Ministers.
- b) The mission leader has the skills and expertise to lead a multidisciplinary mission team and their single role, on which they will be assessed, is to lead the mission.
- c) The mission leader has the authority and autonomy to make decisions, within agreed risk parameters as laid out in the governance structure.
- d) The mission leader is directly supported by a core mission team of sufficient critical mass from across Government departments. The mission leader should have final decision on the appointment of team members.

2. A flexible and empowered core team of sufficient critical mass

- a) A dedicated full-time core mission team, of around 8-10 people, with appropriate expertise that spans the breadth of the mission and exists for the lifetime of the mission.
- b) The mission team consists of members from across the key departments involved in the mission to ensure representation and buy-in from departments.
- c) Each department should have a senior sponsor (e.g. Perm Sec or Director-General) to act as a mentor for team members and unlock additional resources when required.
- d) The mission team is formed solely to deliver the mission and therefore has a lifetime that spans the duration of the mission.
- e) The ambition and profile of the mission will attract the best talent to join the mission team.
- f) It should be possible to appoint external experts to the mission team if required.

3. A whole systems approach to delivering the mission

- a) Mission teams should include dedicated systems capability to ensure a holistic systems approach to scoping the problem at the start of the mission and throughout its lifetime to support prioritisation. Team training on systems approaches, together with access to relevant systems planning tools will usually be required.
- b) Mission teams should be externally focused and well-connected to ensure that the broadest possible solution landscape is being examined prior to narrowing in on delivering specific solutions.
- c) Agile, iterative project management should be deployed to ensure that the mission takes account of new evidence and changing situations and can change direction when necessary.

4. Resources to deliver transformative change

- a) Departments should commit sufficient ring-fenced funding for missions to ensure success – this includes both programme/capital budget as well as admin budget to access talent and skilled professionals. This does not preclude senior sponsors (point 2c) from enabling access to further resources, in addition to the core budgets.
- b) Budgets should be sufficient to manage resource intensive work across departmental and function boundaries.
- c) Each mission team should have a dedicated resource for engagement and communications to ensure excellent engagement with stakeholders (and those within the team).
- d) The mission team is supported by dedicated HR and financial support functions to deliver these resources quickly and flexibly.
- e) Mission teams should be empowered to pilot and develop new procurement methods and commercial approaches that allow for the engagement of multiple parties in building solutions (e.g. across firms - both large and SMEs).

5. Clear and simple governance structures

- a) Simplified governance, with a clear escalation route, which holds the mission leader to account without stifling risk-taking (**Figure 1**).
- b) A governance structure which has representation from relevant departments (e.g. a cross-Whitehall Board) giving it the authority to operate across departments.
- c) A governance structure that defines a limited number of key decision points and allows autonomy and risk-taking by the mission team in between these points.
- d) Governance is responsible for collective ownership of the vision, objectives, outcomes and defined timescales.
- e) A governance structure that empowers mission teams to build new regulatory sandbox environments to enable solutions in areas where the regulatory context makes mission-oriented solutions hard to develop by third parties (e.g. around data privacy).

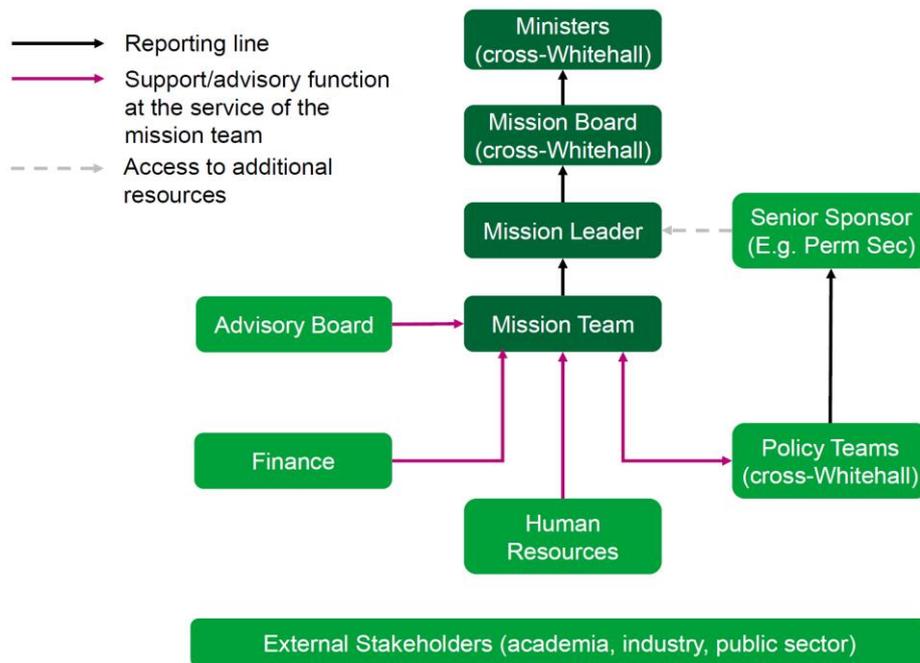


Figure 1: Proposed Governance Structure

6. Well defined delivery framework

- The mission team is accountable for delivering the mission against the missions' ambitions and is rewarded for success, or for reaching a rapid 'no-go' decision.
- The mission will have a delivery framework, which will allow progress towards the overall ambition to be monitored and tracked.
- The ambitious nature of missions means that there is a risk that missions may not succeed, and this should be acknowledged.
- Mission teams should use best practice and lessons learned from previous complex, successful projects.

7. Access to expertise

- Access to expertise or specific skill sets that can be drawn from departments or from outside the Civil Service to support delivery, including UKRI and business.
- Access to an advisory board that provides advice to the mission team when required and requested. This should include external representation to provide a range of expertise and support, but also to challenge and advise. It should include specific industry sector knowledge relevant to the mission and input from non-Whitehall stakeholders.
- Mission teams need an understanding of and engagement with relevant industrial and business companies to leverage investment and capacity for innovation in the private sector, and to maximise the impact of the mission.

- d) Mission teams should consider how best to generate interest in the missions from a wide variety of stakeholders from various disciplines (e.g. academia, SMEs, large corporations) and the motivations and modes of engagement for each.