



Infrastructure
and Projects
Authority



The 7 Lenses of Transformation



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Published December 2024.

Reporting to Cabinet Office and HM Treasury

Contents

Introduction	6
Overview of the 7 Lenses	8
7 Lenses	12
Using the 7 Lenses	16
Lens 1: Vision	20
Case Study: Digitising Social Care	22
Case Study: Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage	23
Lens 2: Design	24
Case Study: The Passport Service Transformation Programme	27
Lens 3: Plan	28
Case Study: Universal Credit Programme	31
Lens 4: Transformation Leadership	32
Case Study: Transformation Leadership	35
Lens 5: Collaboration	36
Case Study: The Cabinet Office Borders Group	39
Lens 6: Accountability	40
Case Study: The ONS Integrated Data Programme	43
Lens 7: People	44
Case Study: Psychological Safety in Programmes	47

Enabling Environment	48
Case Study: Places for Growth	50
Case Study: The Government's Digital Transformation Roadmap	51
Community Feedback	52



Introduction

The government's transformation portfolio includes over 60 major projects, spanning nearly all departments and agencies, and representing roughly a quarter of the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP).

This portfolio is continually evolving, but at present, it will potentially deliver over £500 billion¹ in benefits and is scheduled to deliver well into the 2030s. These projects plan to transform the relationship between citizen and state, harness new technology to improve public services and make government more productive.



¹ Data correct as of Q3 23/24. Data source transformation programme data from GMPP.

The IPA hosts the Transformation Portfolio Board, Transformation Practitioner Community and the Transformation for Senior Leaders Programme, which brings together the wider government community to support the successful delivery of these projects. At the IPA, we are continually impressed by the community's passion for strengthening the government's transformation expertise and the Civil Service's long-term commitment to this transformation journey.

In programmes as diverse as Digitising Social Care, Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage, Single Trade Window and programmes to reform the welfare system, the combined scope and scale exceeds anything we have previously seen and demonstrates what the government aspires to achieve.

While the benefits of transformation can be huge, delivering these projects can be incredibly challenging. By their very nature, complex transformations usually involve significant organisational and cultural change, new ways of

working, and experimenting with innovative technology. Importantly, much of this needs to be delivered at the same time.

The 7 Lenses provides a practical guide for understanding complex transformations. It is the result of extensive collaboration between colleagues from across government who have first-hand experience in leading large-scale transformations, supported by external experts. We have consolidated this expertise into a simple tool to guide your organisation's transformation journey.

The 7 Lenses has gained a following within the Civil Service as a tool to refer to when planning and delivering a GMPP transformation programme. The IPA has seen the transformation community grow within the Civil Service and creating tools like the 7 Lenses gives high confidence that we will continue to improve our ability to deliver the transformation of government for the benefit of citizens and businesses.



Overview of the 7 Lenses

The government is focussed on delivering major transformation, and since 2018 nearly a third of all GMPP programmes have been identified as transformational. The sheer scope, scale and complexity of this portfolio is extraordinary. We have identified a number of ways in which transformation programmes differ from others, namely:



- large transformation programmes differ from large change programmes in terms of scope, complexity, and impact
- require a broader and strategic perspective, emphasising holistic changes that have significant impact on an organisation, unit or service
- often involve a more agile and adaptive approach, requiring cultural change and have long-lasting effects on the organisation's direction
- typically need longer in the OBC to FBC stage than infrastructure projects to develop and agree defined outcomes and bring all stakeholders on board
- change programmes, on the other hand, are more specific in nature, focusing on individual areas or processes within the organisation



Five Characteristics of Transformation

In line with this, the IPA has identified common characteristics across the GMPP transformation portfolio that allow us to explore the unique nature of these projects and categorise accordingly. The IPA has agreed with the Transformation Portfolio Board and the Major Projects Portfolio Board (MPPB) the following five characteristics that determine whether or not a programme is transformational:

- **people and citizen:** the public interact with government differently to receive government services differently (e.g. faster, or

through a different channel) and public servants need to work differently to provide those services – often digitally enabled – this will mean new ways of working

- **operational environment and organisation design:** there will be changes in operating models, behaviours and/ or organisational changes, including changes in the organisation design
- **digital, technology and business processes:** there are significant new technologies, innovations and/ or processes which have not previously been used within the organisation and have widespread impact

- **connected locations:** the workforce will change the dynamic of their interactions and ways of working – this may be driven by changes in the workforce estate, either in location, size or space
- **multi-stage:** functionality or outcomes evolve on an iterative basis, and plans need to be flexible – programmes may run for longer than a single administration or Spending Review (SR) period

Transformation programmes are extremely challenging in any environment but are becoming increasingly complex as we face further delivery challenges, including supply chain restrictions resulting from COVID-19, an increasingly contested international environment and the challenge of net zero. Successful delivery requires us to work across government, to share experiences and learn collectively to improve our delivery capability and capacity.

Technological advances, innovation and improved data usage are a key element of transformation, and the government will need to improve the use of all three to achieve the outcomes expected across transformation programmes.

The 7 Lenses is a holistic tool that enables senior leaders to reflect on key areas of their programme to ensure they have covered all angles and that no red flags have been sidelined. The guide can be used in conjunction with the 7 Lenses Maturity Matrix, a practical tool for programmes to determine where they are with their transformation and measure their maturity. The framework enables you to evaluate the current state and set goals for improvement.

7 Lenses

The 7 Lenses is still as relevant as it was when launched in 2018, and updated research supports the original findings of the cross-government transformation community. This community was established to share experiences of transformation and work together to improve delivery. We wanted to learn from successful examples across government and identify areas that we collectively need to tackle to improve our chances of delivery.

“The 7 Lenses has been an invaluable tool for me to periodically assess my programme(s) against and ensure they remain on track for success. I commend it to all programme directors as an impartial and ‘psychologically safe’ way to identify and agree areas for improvement that leave teams feeling supported, not challenged.”

Jason Yaxley,
Programme Director, Integrated Data Programme (delivering the Integrated Data Service), Office for National Statistics (ONS)



The 7 Lenses emerged from discussion with experienced practitioners from within and outside government from a variety of roles, including programme directors, senior responsible owners and chief digital officers. We are grateful to them for being very candid in sharing their experiences of what has gone well, and less well, in the past. All these programmes are very different, but we were able to identify common themes that you need to get right. We have distilled this mass of learning experience into a tool that is straightforward to apply in your environment.

Using the 7 Lenses will give you confidence and reassurance that you are focusing on the

right priorities and will help you to identify which areas need more attention.

The 7 Lenses have proved successful because, although there is no single formula for success, users have found that a framework of common language, themes and success criteria allows leaders to drive a collective conversation and teams to build consensus about what is required to deliver. This enables transformation leaders and their teams to collaborate around a shared vision and set goals that empower team members to easily identify potential red flags and communicate these to the right people.

“With responsibility for a department-wide transformation portfolio, I used the 7 Lenses to provoke a conversation with our Executive Committee about the conditions for successful transformation. The Lenses made us focus on more than just the individual change programmes and helped us to understand what we needed to do to set the conditions for success.”

Suzanne Newton,
Director General Strategic Change, HMRC

This publication supports ongoing work to help people understand what the 7 Lenses are and how they can use them. Across the government, we'll be continually developing tools and products to support transformation delivery. We built the 7 Lenses with the community, and we

would value feedback based on your experience of using them. You can join the cross-government transformation community (more information can be found on the Government Project Delivery Hub – <https://projectdelivery.civilservice.gov.uk>) and find more community resources.



Using the 7 Lenses



The 7 Lenses are helpful when applied at different stages of your transformation journey to develop ideas and assess progress within the boundaries of an established framework to enable healthy debate. The Lenses can be used individually or collectively to ensure that all key areas have been considered when planning and delivering the transformation programme.

This tool is primarily aimed at departmental change leaders, including major programme project sponsors, senior responsible owners (SROs), programme directors, chief digital officers and chief information officers. It has proven to be equally applicable to any size of organisation.

The 7 Lenses are part of a package of resources available from the IPA to aid successful project delivery. Other products include Bad Omens, Transformation Diagnostic Tool, The Art of Brilliance and the Transformation for Senior Leaders programme – again, more information can be found on the Government Project Delivery Hub – <https://projectdelivery.civilservice.gov.uk>

How the 7 Lenses can help

The 7 Lenses are particularly useful to give teams a common language and consistent framework for talking about transformation. They are useful throughout the transformation life cycle.

When setting up your transformation, the 7 Lenses can help you to:

- structure your work and get started
- define success and secure commitment and support from senior leaders
- make sure you have considered all the things you will need to do to be successful

The Lenses can be used at any time as a health check to establish:

- how you are doing
- what should you focus on next – will you get there (is it realistic)?
- are you missing anything?
- are you communicating with the right people at the right time?

People who support and assure projects have found the 7 Lenses helpful to:

- learn about transformation programme management
- provide methodologies
- speak the same language and reduce the time required to become productive

The 7 Lenses can be used as part of delivery assurance at different stages of the project, and especially at major project review points. Familiarising yourself with the 7 Lenses and where you are will enable you to have better conversations at these review points.

The 7 Lenses Maturity Matrix sits alongside the 7 Lenses. It is a practical tool to enable teams to assess the progress of their transformation programme, identify which areas need more attention and agree on a goal over the next 6–12 months. Using both 7 Lenses and the matrix together helps ensure the transformation is delivered in the best possible way.

“In a complex transformation, like Universal Credit, the 7 Lenses give me, as SRO, a way of ‘seeing the wood from the trees’ and making sense of complex and detailed challenges.”

Neil Couling
Director General, Universal Credit Programme



Lens 1: Vision



The vision gives clarity around the social outcomes of the transformation and sets out the key themes of how the organisation will operate.

The vision is a compelling picture of the future that aligns stakeholders around the purpose of the transformation, the scale of the ambition and the nature of the benefits. It creates the case for change and describes user needs and the social and policy outcomes of the transformation. It defines how the organisation will operate.

Why you need this

Having a single view of the future can motivate people to collaborate towards shared outcomes, set the direction for subsequent transformation activities and provide a tool to ensure consistency between organisations.

The vision should be owned by those at the top of the organisation but created by people who represent the breadth and diversity of the business.

How to do this

When creating a vision:

- take time to understand the minister or most senior leader's full vision (it is rarely written down from the start)
- use a number of different ways to articulate the vision (e.g. pictures and words) – have more than a vision statement (although this is useful)
- allow space for the vision to evolve as learning is built up during the transformation (e.g. how human behaviours change with a new system)
- allow space for the vision to evolve as learning is built up during the transformation (for example addressing evolving user needs)
- recognise that transformation programmes typically take longer than a single Parliament – political and organisational priorities will change over the course of a 5-to-10-year programme, so the transformation will need to adapt as the work progresses

Trade-offs

You may need to find a balance or compromise between:

- short-term political aims versus long-term transformation objectives
- evolving the vision in response to external events versus staying aligned with the original vision
- being ambitious versus creating a vision that you have very high confidence in being able to deliver

Red flags

Watch out for:

- rushing to action before there is sufficient clarity
- proceeding with a vision which is either undeliverable or not sufficiently challenging of the current service model
- business leaders not seeing the need to change
- lack of focus on the user (be that either the citizen or users internal to the organisation) when the vision is not talked about consistently by the senior leaders in the organisation

Lens 1: Vision Case Study

Digitising Social Care

Digitising Social Care (DHSC/NHS England) is helping thousands of adult social care providers move from paper to digital care records to improve the quality and safety of care and improve productivity. At the start of the pandemic the low utilisation of digital social care records meant that data was not available on the quality and safety of care.

We undertook user research, stakeholder engagement and benefits analysis to understand the nature of the problem. We then worked with providers, local government, regulators, technology suppliers, charities and people with lived experience to co-produce a vision with strong support and buy-in from partners.

The shared vision was formalised in the adult social care reform white paper 'People at the Heart of Care' that would transform the services provided to citizens needing support.



Lens 1: Vision Case Study

Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage

Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage (CCUS) will be a game-changer for the UK's energy transition, with potential capacity to safely store up to 78 billion tonnes of CO₂. This could be one of the largest storage capacities in the world, helping us reach net zero and boosting our economy by up to £5 billion per year by 2050.

To achieve our outcomes, we set out a vision of what a market-focused CCUS sector will look like, tapping into innovation and business knowhow to drive the scale-up and acceleration of CCUS deployment. Our vision for CCUS starts with a market creation phase, transitioning into a competitive market that will ultimately transform to become a self-sustaining global industry in the future. The realisation of this vision will lead to job creation, growth in our industrial heartlands and a world-leading CCUS supply chain with strong export lines.



Lens 2: Design



The design sets out how the different organisations and their component parts will be configured and integrated to deliver the vision.

Having a coherent design is important because complex transformations need a view of how the whole picture fits together to deliver the vision – for example service design, technology architecture, people structures, processes and contracts – and how the transformation fits more broadly with other elements of the organisational context.

Why you need this

If you don't have a design in place, it can result in missed opportunities, disconnected work in different areas of your organisation, duplication and wasted effort through teams working to different goals. Operating model and agile approaches are useful tools and are complementary – the design approach must adapt to the context and operating environment. It is important to understand which elements need to be defined in advance and which must be iterated as the design progresses.

How to do this

When developing a design:

- have clarity around the design intent and intended outcomes, and understand the boundary of where the design effort stops and how it interfaces with other designs
- before starting the design journey, understand and agree the level of ambition
- include people from a range of functions in the design team (policy, strategy, operations, digital and data)
- remember there is rarely one single 'perfect' design – instead, understand and agree where there are potential trade-offs and compromises
- bear in mind organisational readiness and capability to transform along with implications for implementation of the design, such as weighing the advantages of a big-bang implementation against an incremental approach

Trade-offs

You may need to find a balance or compromise between:

- ambition versus achievability of implementing the design, considering cost and timing constraints
- longer-term needs versus shorter-term political objectives
- consensus across stakeholders versus letting the design become watered down – building a shared understanding and trusting each other versus dividing up the work

Red flags

Watch out for:

- getting lost in the detail, losing sight of the transformation outcomes
- insufficient detail to fulfil the intended purpose, like having no actionable examples to bring the design to life

- focussing on the parts of the design we are comfortable with (like process design or technology) rather than what actually matters (for example the design of the service as a whole, what this will mean for the customer and the existing organisation, or how the design fits together)
- not having consensus around the point in time we are designing for
- not having the appropriate governance to make timely decisions

“I have found the 7 Lenses of Transformation to be a practical guide and a useful reminder of the key success criteria and on the things to avoid”

Tamara Finkelstein
Permanent Secretary, Defra

Lens 2: Design Case Study

The Passport Service Transformation Programme

The Passport Service Transformation programme demonstrates the value of getting design right early in the programme life cycle. The programme aimed to allow all British passport applications to be submitted online, processed digitally and automated where possible. This needed an architectural approach to policy to understand exactly what checks were needed for each application type to preserve the security and integrity of the end product.

Design and delivery were integrated throughout the transformation with teams working together through a 'quartet' of business design, technical design, operational service management and digital service management. The design was optimised by driving absolute clarity on the vision, policy and scope of the whole programme. This allowed the team to focus on the service design, organisational design and the technical architecture. Business change and delivery teams worked with design colleagues from the start, meaning that they could ensure the design was deliverable.



Lens 3: Plan



The plan needs to retain sufficient flexibility to be adapted as the transformation progresses while providing confidence of delivery.

The plan provides a roadmap for identifying the sequencing and interdependencies between the different elements and responsibilities across the transformation programme or activity. This helps you to understand where you are heading and have a way to measure that the transformation is on track, while understanding how any critical services will be sustained during the change.

Why you need this

All projects need a plan, but for transformation the plan must reflect the complexity of the programme and accommodate the fact that not everything can be known upfront. It is not just about creating the roadmap as a one-off activity, but about the process of iterating and maintaining it within a constantly evolving environment that cuts across organisations. This takes skill. To be successful, organisations need to invest in both adaptive leadership skills and intelligent programme management capability.

How to do this

Invest time and effort upfront in developing a credible plan. This will save time and avoid delay at a later stage. Plan the transformation in chunks or phased outcomes that are achievable and can demonstrate incremental success – you can rarely do everything at once.

Ensure that the plan is achievable given the constrained delivery capacity. Use the planning process to detail the resourcing requirements, support understanding of the readiness of the organisation to transform, and plan internal and external communications.

Join project plans up within and across the organisation. Operating model changes and other transformational changes need to map to policy commitments.

Regularly review and update the plan in response to user feedback, technological advances and societal changes. This can be achieved by agreeing a set of core measures of success and continually

reviewing progress against this data, as well as regularly analysing the environment the project is operating within and agreeing if work should continue or evolve as a result.

Trade-offs

You may need to find a balance or compromise between:

- keeping flexibility to adapt the plan to emerging changes in the design versus maintaining key milestones and managing more immovable targets such as people relocations
- making plans easy to communicate versus providing detail to gain deliverability confidence
- responding to the pressure to start delivering versus the need to take sufficient time to develop a robust, deliverable plan

Red flags

Watch out for:

- organisations or business areas working towards shared outcomes not aligned on the same roadmap

- only focussing on the start of the plan and losing track of the end of the plan (the outcomes and benefits)
- the plan not being owned at a senior enough level
- potential tension between political imperatives and wider transformational priorities attempting to predict the future with too much accuracy and detail, or onerous bureaucracy which is not justified

“The 7 Lenses of Transformation has helped support a collective vision for digital transformation across government, and is a useful framework for assessing success”

Mike Potter
Government Chief Digital Officer

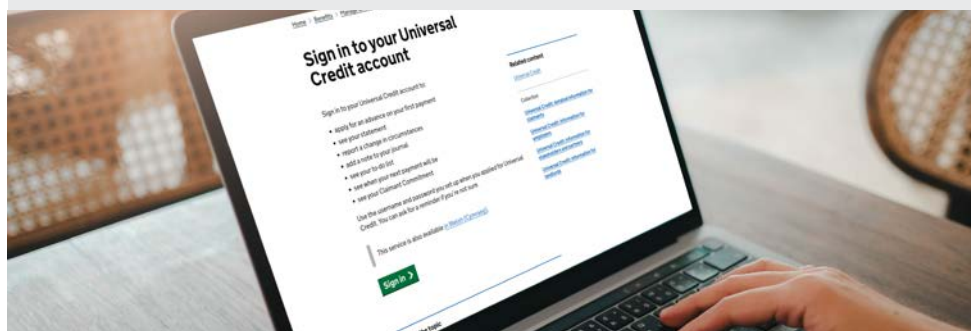
Lens 3: Plan Case Study

Universal Credit Programme

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Universal Credit programme replaces six previous benefits to support people who are unemployed, need employment support or receive tax credits.

The programme originally suffered from having delivery timetables and costs committed to and announced before having properly engaged with delivery teams. This resulted in an over-ambitious plan that did not fully recognise what was required to achieve its transformational aims on the scale envisaged.

This led to a reset and a rethink of the entire delivery approach to enable a more realistic prospect of successful delivery. Its deadline was changed from a complete roll-out within two years to a new 'test and learn' approach built into the plan. This enabled the project to be successfully rolled out, safely and securely, in incremental stages, iterating the plan and the service based on what they learned.



Lens 4: Transformation Leadership



Delivering a transformation often means motivating into action a large network of people who are not under the direct management of the transformation leader.

Whereas leadership of traditional projects tends to be about minimising uncertainty, transformation leadership is about creating the right amount of uncertainty to generate productive organisational distress. This requires a higher appetite for risk and an understanding that transformation can take a significant amount of time.

Alongside specific programme delivery, transformation leaders need to bring together multiple interrelated disciplines, which will typically include organisation design, culture change and human resources (HR) activity.

There is greater recognition of the complexity of delivering transformation programmes and the leadership qualities required to achieve success. IPA has introduced a number of initiatives to instil the leadership characteristics needed in future SRO and project directors through various training pathways.

The IPA Transformation Practice runs the Transformation for Senior Leaders programme for SROs and project directors. This immersive, two-day course provides a deeper understanding of the challenges faced within transformations and how to resolve them with the application of core government transformation tools and techniques. To develop a pipeline of qualified and experienced transformation leaders, the IPA has commissioned a dedicated module for the government's Project Leaders Programme (PLP).

Contact the Government Project Delivery team for more information: For PLP email – plp@ipa.gov.uk and for MPLA – mpla@ipa.gov.uk

Why you need this

Strong leadership is critical to the effective delivery of transformation. The complexity of transformation places a high demand on the leader and transformation leaders need to recognise this by employing an adaptive leadership style

that sustains energy, manages uncertainty and drives a common purpose.

How to do this

The transformation leader:

- forms a compelling vision
- aligns people around the vision and builds community
- is highly digitally aware
- is appropriately disruptive but recognises where structure is required
- creates momentum and demonstrates early wins
- supports people in navigating ambiguity and uncertainty

One leader cannot do everything. Good leaders are aware of their capabilities and bring in the right people to support them to generate better solutions than they could on their own.

Leadership consistency through the pivotal transformation phases is critical.

Leaders need to be supported by a strong enabling environment with strong sponsorship from the top. The senior team needs to be

in agreement around what the transformation vision is and lead from the front in communicating this to the organisation and its stakeholders.

Trade-offs

Leaders are often required to deal with other business pressures outside their transformation role. This competition for focus and time can be a distraction to successful programme leadership.

There are not yet enough experienced transformation leaders in government to meet current demand. Very senior leaders must balance the needs of getting early momentum on the programmes with the need to secure the right calibre of SRO or programme director.

Red flags

Watch out for:

- leading the way we have always done, not acknowledging that transformation needs a different, more adaptive leadership style
- leaders not being open to support, coaching and authentic conversations with peers about what is and is not working
- insufficient support for the transformation from the executive team
- external, newly promoted or inexperienced people being expected to hit the ground running without enough support around them
- senior leadership not being willing to encourage or tolerate productive organisational distress as necessary

Lens 4: Transformation Leadership Case Study

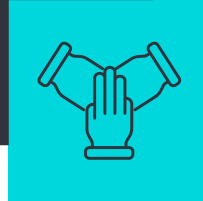
Transformational leaders need to inspire and motivate team members to achieve exceptional results and adapt to changing circumstances. A skilful leader also enables and empowers others within their team to act as leaders and carry the vision forward.

The transformation portfolio exhibits a large number of programmes that have exceptional leadership – a few examples that stand out are Universal Credit, Farming and Countryside, and Digitising Social Care. These programmes are led by people who embody the qualities and behaviours of transformational leaders and have significantly enhanced the performance, engagement and satisfaction of their project teams.

These programmes have achieved success by the leaders clearly articulating a strong vision which was easily understood by all and inspiring their teams by clearly communicating high expectations, fostering optimism and providing meaning and purpose to their work. These leaders take time to engage and work in close partnership with those affected by their programmes and their delivery to ensure that user needs are considered and included.



Lens 5: Collaboration



Collaboration is key to transformation in a multidimensional environment that increasingly cuts across organisational boundaries.

People's expectations are high, and they often require services from different parts of government at the same time. It is critical that leaders from all the organisations involved design shared outcomes and services together. This means their vision and plan increasingly need to be actively shared and joined up across multiple organisations.

Sometimes, different parts of government require the same component to deliver the service, for example Identity

Assurance at GOV.UK One Login (<https://www.sign-in.service.gov.uk/>). Sharing components may be an opportunity to be more efficient and deliver a better outcome for users of the service. Delivery teams need to be incentivised to collaborate to build these once, in a way that works for everyone.

Successful outcomes can only be achieved when people across organisational boundaries are doing the right work at the right time. This requires a shared view of sequencing and prioritisation. This will help avoid the unintended consequences which can arise when ongoing active collaboration is not in place.

Why you need this

Within an ambiguous and changing environment such as the delivery of government services, successful transformation requires effective collaboration across multiple different groups, such as other government departments, agencies, third and private sector partners, citizens, service users, suppliers and international partners.

How to do this

There is no single formula for how you should collaborate across stakeholders. However, the first step is understanding the stakeholder and organisational landscape, whom you need to collaborate with, how and when. You'll also need to acknowledge that 'you may not know what you don't know' and recognise that it can take time to identify stakeholders.

Ministers and senior officials play a very important role in encouraging leaders to collaborate across organisational boundaries – they role model behaviours that set

the right context for others in the organisation to follow. Transformation leaders need to be skilled at leading beyond their formal authority, influencing people who don't report to them directly.

Collaboration is about supporting teams to have authentic and open conversations with stakeholders. This can help unlock challenges through different perspectives and insights that move the programme towards its intended outcomes. Ideas and lessons from other transformational leaders are often a valuable source for effective collaboration.

Structured collaboration will identify opportunities to share across organisations by mapping out and comparing the components required for services. Doing this will help avoid duplication and repetition, and deliver the transformation more quickly and cheaply. It can also help achieve a more consistent experience for users.

Collaborating and testing services with users is key to success as it increases the likelihood of acceptance when in the implementation and delivery phase of the programme.

Trade-offs

Collaboration requires compromise by its nature. Different parties with different priorities and perspectives will need to take joint decisions.

Collaboration takes time and effort – this can feel like a compromise between making tangible programme progress and building consensus. Experience shows that teams that invest in collaboration from an early stage of the project life cycle invariably have better outcomes.

Red flags

Watch out for:

- not considering the end-to-end customer journey and not paying sufficient attention to the wider context or operating environment
- collaboration being an 'add-on' rather than being central to the project plan and explicitly included in relevant roles and processes
- few incentives to collaborate across organisational boundaries and accountability, lack of meaningful conversations across organisations and other bodies to ensure operating models and change portfolios align
- only investing in collaboration for key pain points and missing out on the full benefits of collaboration throughout the project life cycle

Lens 5: Collaboration Case Study

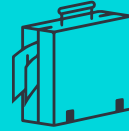
The Cabinet Office Borders Group

The Cabinet Office Borders Group drives the design and delivery assurance of a modernised UK border. The border is critical national infrastructure, with over 30 agencies and government departments involved in a complex combination of processes and systems.

The Borders team convenes interested players across Whitehall and beyond, promoting the shared goal of a border that does its job – keeping us safe from a range of harms – while minimising costs and burdens for those who use it. The border worked after Brexit through collaboration with all partners to make sure it worked from an ‘end-to-end’ perspective. Strategy is now being driven to transform the border, using joined-up policy, data and technology through the Borders Target Operating Model. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-border-target-operating-model-august-2023>)



Lens 6: Accountability



Having clear accountability for transformation within an organisation enables productivity and improved decision-making and leads to better outcomes.

Accountability is about clearly defining the roles within the organisation and the transformation – knowing who is ultimately accountable for what, empowering people to deliver and holding them to account, internally and externally. As complexity goes up, the need for clearly defined governance becomes more important to deliver a successful outcome.

Why you need this

Every organisation needs clear, dedicated senior accountability for the leadership and organisation of any transformation activity. Having the right organisational and transformation programme structures in place will help you make faster, better decisions as well as making it easier to involve the right people throughout the process. The governance structure needs to encourage the flow of information vertically and horizontally and provide incentives for different parts of the organisation to behave in a collaborative way.

How to do this

People will be accountable for delivering specific outcomes. Over time, other people may be made accountable for the overall transformation. In complex transformation programmes, it is essential to be clear how the accountabilities work with each other, particularly when programmes straddle organisational boundaries.

It is important to create a culture which empowers people to make appropriate decisions and make progress themselves - while at the same time keeping senior leaders and ministers informed. Accountability for spending money, allocating people and resources, and managing risks needs to be articulated clearly. Accountability is not just about taking responsibility at the end of the process or when something goes wrong. It is about taking ownership throughout and collaborating transparently and openly.

An increasing number of programmes require cross-department collaboration. In these cases, it is essential

to build an operating and accountability environment that supports ownership of transformation outcomes across organisations, with a shared understanding of the boundaries and interdependencies.

Trade-offs

Senior leaders are often simultaneously accountable for transformation initiatives and delivery of critical day-to-day services. This tension can produce conflicting priorities. Organisations should expect to compromise when defining accountability in an environment that cuts across organisational boundaries.

Red flags

Watch out for:

- not having accountability for transformation at board level
- spending more time discussing who is accountable than delivering
- having lots of people with shared responsibility but no one with ultimate accountability for outcomes

- having multiple roles within an organisation delivering transformation (like transformation director, chief digital officer and chief operating officer) without clarity around their specific responsibilities (for example, separating responsibility for developing strategy and for the delivery of transformation)
- not giving the accountable person the right levers to change the status quo (for example not having flexibility to change supplier contracts or to control budgets)

“Carbon capture technologies will transform the way we produce and use energy in the UK. As a ‘first-of-kind’ complex programme, we found the 7 Lenses of Transformation to be a valuable guide at the design stage, and continue to use its methodology as we progress through delivery.”

Alex Milward, Paro Konar and Stef Murphy

Joint SROs Carbon Capture Usage & Storage Programme, DESNZ

Lens 6: Accountability Case Study

The ONS Integrated Data Programme

The ONS Integrated Data Programme is a good example of integrating accountability holistically into the programme to achieve delivery aims.

Inwardly, within the programme, accountability was promoted alongside empowerment by creating multi-disciplinary teams, bringing together diverse but complementary subject matter experts who were empowered to make decisions in alignment with strategy. This demonstrated the trust and confidence that programme leadership had in their team of experts, improving the quality and pace of delivery.

Outwardly, the programme leads engaged the partners and government departments, seeking shared accountability for the design and delivery of the Integrated Data Service, while also identifying, defining and realising programme benefits for the public good.



Lens 7: People



Transformation will require people in your organisation to be engaged and to change their ways of working – you need to communicate effectively with them at every stage of the transformation. If the transformation affects wider society, thought needs to be given to the end users and how effectively they are being engaged in the complete process, from design to testing.

Engagement starts with those people who are affected by the programme and those that are supporting the transformation. Planning and implementing a comprehensive communication campaign is essential to keep internal and external stakeholders engaged.

It is important to have the right people with the appropriate skills and mindset to support your transformation. You will require skills from a number of government functions

like policy, finance, project delivery, commercial and digital to work together on your transformation. Multi-functional and multidisciplinary teams with the right qualifications, skills and experience are fundamental for success. Successful transformation needs innovative thinkers who are willing to listen, challenge and break groupthink. Diversity of thought is crucial to building a successful team. People need to feel heard, trusted and given autonomy to deliver at their best.

Why you need this

Leaders cannot do transformation on their own. They need to bring those affected by the change with them, making sure they have the right skills and are able to work in new ways. This often requires long-term culture change, which takes time and requires active listening and feedback on both sides.

How to do this

- transformation across government takes a lot of people power – over time, government needs to invest in building a pool of people capable and confident in delivering transformation
 - the skill set and behaviours required to support transformation can be very different from the skills for traditionally highly valued civil service roles (like policy)
 - transformation requires judgement, the ability to deal with ambiguity and above all the ability to guide people through evolving thought and changing contexts
- draw on expertise from outside government. There are innovative models and approaches we can take to support those delivering transformation
 - people need to feel safe, respected and heard in the transformation process
 - develop a learning environment where taking risks is seen as an opportunity to learn and grow
 - ensure that teams are diverse, multidisciplinary and multi-functional to enable innovation and avoid groupthink and stagnation

Trade-offs

You may need to find a balance or compromise between:

- recruiting talent versus upskilling employees – where do you focus your effort? Individual career development versus your organisation's desire to hang on to skilled people – what is the right balance?
- having the right people in the right roles to drive the transformation versus maintaining business as usual

- recruiting what is familiar versus taking a risk on new thinking
- governance and accountability versus allowing people to be innovative and learn from taking risks

Red flags

Watch out for:

- having people carry out transformation roles as well as business-as-usual roles selecting the same team of 'the usual suspects' to work on every critical project people being reassigned to work on transformation projects but continuing with established ways of working
- teams talking in different languages and working to different programme objectives or functional norms – for example policy versus digital versus programme management – without a common understanding of the desired outcomes
- no consistent, strategic approach to workforce planning
- groupthink and a lack of diversity of thought in your team
- tightly controlled working environment that does not allow for innovation or contrary views to be heard
- psychological welfare of your colleagues – is there a high staff turnover rate or sickness absence?

Lens 7: People Case Study

Psychological Safety in Programmes

Recognising the importance of psychological safety for team performance and wellbeing, the Ministry of Defence commissioned research into the impact of psychological safety in major programmes. One team involved, Programme HYDRA, went on to commission support to identify opportunities to use psychological safety to deliver sustained high performance.

Initiatives introduced included development of a team charter which they integrated into team inductions and applied every day, team profiling focused on how to best work together, and coaching for team leaders. As a result, the team not only delivered critical infrastructure against significant challenges, but sustained high wellbeing and positive relationships throughout.





Enabling Environment

Transformation does not happen in isolation but as part of a broader environment. Creating an enabling environment is crucial for the successful delivery of a transformation programme. An enabling environment provides the necessary conditions and support structures that empower teams to carry out their roles effectively and to successfully implement and sustain transformative changes within an organisation.

When we created the 7 Lenses, the community found that the broader environment for every transformation in government has common features which affect all of us. The enabling environment includes:

- the political environment, ministers and Parliament
- central government, including HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office

- governance, approvals, scrutiny, assurance and support functions, including the National Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee
- the Civil Service modernisation and reform programme

The enabling environment is the foundation of a successful transformation programme as it fosters a culture of collaboration, innovation, learning and adaptability. It addresses the

human and cultural aspects of change, ensuring that the organisation is well-positioned to navigate challenges and fully realise the benefits of the transformation.

The Cabinet Office's Modernisation and Reform (M&R) team and the functions are leading on initiatives that will improve the enabling environment required for successful transformation. The M&R team is focusing on five key missions for reform which will unlock improvements across the Civil Service:

- **capability:** a skilled Civil Service that is able to adapt to the needs of the public we serve
- **place:** representative of the communities we serve and with a thriving presence across the country
- **delivery:** collaborative, routinely working across organisational barriers, with a culture of excellence in service delivery
- **digital and data:** able to harness the power of digital and data to make better decisions, improve service delivery and enhance user experience, and

as part of this work, CDDO is delivering against a digital and data transformation plan for government, Transforming for a Digital Future. This focuses on improving digital, data and technology foundations across central departments, as well as changing Civil Service processes and ways of working to ensure digital and data can be used effectively

- **innovation:** rewards and encourages our staff to find innovative solutions to problems to deliver better outcomes for the public. The cross-government Transformation Portfolio Board is working to make systemic improvements to the enabling environment across government. Contact the Transformation Practice for advice on engaging with the broader cross-government community: transformation@ipa.gov.uk. The team runs events to help share where transformation is working well and welcomes contributions to the reference library of good work from around government. They are also able to help with specific issues your GMPP transformation programme may be facing.

Enabling Environment Case Study

Places for Growth

Places for Growth (PfG) is delivering the government's commitment to move 22,000 Civil Service roles from London and the Southeast by 2027. PfG is led by a Cabinet Office team at the centre of government which acts as a lynch pin for delivery by supporting, challenging and collaborating with departments. Robust multi-layer governance systems provide scrutiny of policy and departmental performance, while feedback loops at a regional and working level amplify effective practice across departments.

These mechanisms ensure strong relationships with departments and strong ministerial and permanent secretary support. Cumulative, quarterly data returns provide a rigorous assurance mechanism for delivery. The programme successfully relocated more than 16,000 roles within the first three years of delivery.



Enabling Environment Case Study

The Government's Digital Transformation Roadmap

The government's digital transformation roadmap is a collaborative effort between the Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO) and government departments, championed by ministers and senior civil servants across HMG, aiming to achieve a common vision for 2025 by taking specific actions to improve the way the government uses digital and data. The roadmap has been developed with government leaders and digital experts, and it includes commitments that are concrete, measurable and ambitious.

These include transforming digital services and products to be user-friendly and cost-efficient, and working to empower delivery teams and establishing the right structures to ensure accountability. Using digital and data more effectively will help departments deliver their priorities faster and more effectively, and to operate more efficiently, with the roadmap commitments holding departments to account.



Community Feedback

We built the 7 Lenses with the community, and we welcome feedback on:

- how using the 7 Lenses has helped you with your transformation
- how we can iterate the 7 Lenses to help the transformation community
- examples of work you have done in your transformation which we can share with the community

Join the community mailing list by contacting the Transformation Practice:
transformation@ipa.gov.uk

