COURSE BROCHURE

Innovation in the Public Sector

A practical course on building government innovation labs, applying design thinking to policies and services, and testing ideas before scaling them up.

Code	HT-GOV-107
Category	Government & Public Sector
Duration	1 week
Level	Intermediate
City	London

Introduction

Public servants often hesitate to try new things because mistakes in government are costly and visible; yet disciplined innovation, run as small experiments, lowers risk and shows what works before money is spent at scale.

Objectives

- Diagnose the barriers that hold back innovation in government bodies and ways past them
- Choose a suitable innovation lab model and set its governance and funding
- Apply design thinking to policy and service challenges together with users
- Design prototypes and experiments that measure an idea's effect before adoption
- Plan how to scale and sustain successful innovations within and beyond the agency

Who should attend

- Staff of government innovation labs and units
- Service and policy development managers in ministries and agencies
- Leaders of improvement teams in municipalities and local bodies
- Strategy office staff assigned to new initiatives

Skills you will develop

- Innovation lab management
- Design thinking for policy
- Government experiment design
- Scaling innovation

Learning Outcomes

- Prepare a proposal for an innovation unit or lab defining its mandate, governance and resources
- Reframe a government challenge as a design question grounded in field research
- Design an experiment for a new idea, specifying the comparison group and success measures
- Prepare a scaling plan that sets the conditions for moving from pilot to rollout

Course Outline

Day 1: Innovation in a Government Setting

- Types of public innovation: incremental, radical and systemic

- Common barriers: risk aversion, procedural constraints and working in silos
- A mandate to innovate and a safe space for experimentation

Day 2: Innovation Labs and Portfolios

- Lab models: in-house, arm's-length and cross-government
- The innovation portfolio and balancing low- and high-risk ideas
- Governing and funding innovation through challenge funds and small grants

Day 3: Design Thinking for Policy and Services

- Field research with citizens and frontline staff
- Reframing the challenge as a how-might-we question
- Co-design with users and stakeholders

Day 4: Experimentation

- Prototypes and small-scale field pilots
- Randomized controlled trials and comparing alternatives in public services
- The ethics of experimenting with public services and protecting users

Day 5: Scaling and Sustaining

- From pilot to rollout: when the evidence is enough to scale
- The role of data and digital tools in testing ideas quickly
- Applied project: an innovation proposal for a government challenge with an experiment design and scaling plan

Training methodology

Short field interviews conducted by participants with real users of a public service
Building paper prototypes of a redesigned service and testing them with peers
Cases of government experiments that succeeded and others that were stopped, with their lessons
Final proposals pitched to a simulated innovation funding panel

Certification

Participants receive a Harbor Training Center certificate of attendance on completing the course.

Upcoming dates

City	Dates	Language	Fee
London	21 – 25 June 2027	EN	EUR 5,700

Fees are per participant.

Contact us

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To register and for details, scan the code or visit:

https://harbor4training.com/en/courses/public-sector-innovation