

OECD OBSERVATORY FOR PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION

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The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organisation that works together with governments, policy makers and citizens, on establishing international norms and finding evidence-based solutions to a range of social, economic and environmental challenges.

The Observatory uncovers the emerging practise in public sector innovation across OECD member countries and advises governments on the former.

Placement opportunity:

Lead in Systems Thinking and Anticipatory Innovation Governance in the Division of Open and Innovative Government. The intern will be in charge of a research project with guidance from the staff of the Observatory, proposing a research approach and carrying it out with the resources made available by the OECD. This will include desktop analysis, interviews with leading experts in and outside the OECD. The intern will also participate in the day-to-day running of the Observatory, its meetings workshops and the inner work of the OECD, but the core tasks will relate to the research project agreed upon. The internship should finish with a draft working paper on the topic at hand which will be presented to the team during an internal seminar. The work will involve collaborative tasks with other OECD teams across the organisations.

Project areas:

- **New paradigm of public sector.**

The digitalisation of public sector is ushering in a new era of governance and public sector organisations are bound to fundamentally change. Automatisation, centralisation of data analytics (big data) and the decentralisation of service delivery (through hyper-personalisation, thick data and platformisation) will change how public organisations will look like in the future. What would this mean for public sector reform course beyond New Public Management, New Public Governance, eGovernment, Digital Government etc.? The research project would look at assumptions around the discourse of change in public governance and propose a new model based on the leading change factors of the 21st century.

- **R&D for public sector organisations.**

What does R&D for public sector organisations it look like, how and where does it happen? Public sector organisations require investment in future thinking and capabilities, however it can be difficult for public sector agencies to quarantine the necessary resources against BAU in the absence of a need for competitive advantage as can guide private sector R&D. Are current public sector innovation labs and digital teams enough? While public sector research

organisations and digital transformation shops can provide some capacity in this regard for public sector agencies, what does/could a more systemic approach to public sector R&D look like?

- **Evaluating anticipatory innovation in the public sector.**

The public sector is hit with a new wave of anticipatory regulation, futures thinking and futures proofing – all trying to tackle the fast paced change and uncertainty the sector is facing. Most of these approaches deal with radical change prone to failure. How should governments evaluate the success of these initiatives in dealing with uncertain futures?

- **Managing public sector innovation – the effects of professionalization**

There is a wave of professionalisation in and outside of the public sector on innovation. There are new ISO standards merging in this area concerning innovation management and skills, auditing innovation and the use of systems approaches in innovation management. For example, Sweden has adopted a formalised innovation management support program on public sector innovation. The project would look at the benefits and deficiencies of these standardisation efforts in the public sector.

- **The use of systems approaches to reach public sector missions**

Different public sector organisations are using systems thinking to address wicked challenges. The Observatory has addressed these issues in its publications in 2017 and 2019 and now countries are setting up labs and teams to work with these issues in Finland, UK, Estonia and beyond. This research project would analyse the emerging practises and organisational forms for these systems thinking teams and the tools and methods they use.

Student profile: The applicant will have some practical or theoretical knowledge about the working of the public sector, knowledge about innovation or change management in public or private sector, interest within the topic of public sector innovation and proven analytical skills.

Deadline for application: 12 April 2020

Please send a CV and cover letter to the Placements officer:

denitsa.filipova@socsci.ox.ac.uk

The cover letter need to outline briefly how you would approach the topic they want to explore or how they previous research experience relates to the project you are applying for.