JOINT SERVICE DELIVERY IN FEDERAL COUNTRIES

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OUTLINE

- Overview of Forum of Federations comparative project
  - Dean-Boutilier report
  - October 2011 roundtable

- General observations

- Questions for discussion
WHAT IS JOINT SERVICE DELIVERY?

- Horizontal and/or vertical arrangements:
  - Horizontal: coordination or integration of services within one level of government – e.g. across a number of departments and agencies
  - Vertical: coordination or integration of services between two or more levels of government

- “Joined up” arrangements have been implemented or are being considered for:
  - Transactional services: front counter and IT-based channels (websites, call centres) for services from more than one department; integration of ‘back office’ services (e.g. IT, human resources)
  - Complex human services – e.g. homelessness, mental health – that cannot be addressed by one department/agency acting alone
DEAN-BOUTLIER REPORT: SCOPE

- Forum of Federations commissioned Tony Dean (former Ontario Cabinet Secretary) and Marie Boutilier (U of Toronto) to prepare comparative background report
- Focused on innovative examples of collaboration between national and subnational governments in Canada, Australia, Germany and United Kingdom
- 32 interviews; asked about lessons learned, challenges of current context, future of the initiative
- Draft case studies reviewed by interviewees
DEAN-BOUTLIER REPORT: FINDINGS (1)

- Constitution and its operation affect approach:
  - Germany’s quite clear distribution of law-making and administrative powers has been an impediment
  - Canadian governments (despite few areas of concurrent jurisdiction) have developed various arrangements
  - UK turning to place-based delivery, with some (but variable) collaboration with local government

- Technology is a common denominator:
  - Government-wide IT platforms are important pre-condition for portals, front counter/back office integration
  - Facilitates assessment and ongoing improvement – performance and outcome measurement, benchmarking
Joint delivery enabled by technology can improve service at lower cost
   • Can sharply reduce transaction costs
   • Clear trend towards virtual co-location – Australia, Canada, UK
   • However, limits of physical co-location may have been reached
   • Virtual integration allows integrated service bundles and one-step identity validation

Virtual co-location may be less threatening for public sector workers
   • Physical relocation and disruption less significant
DEAN-BOUTLIER REPORT: FINDINGS (3)

- Joint delivery of human services:
  - Involves joining up government departments, other level(s) of government and communities
- Entails listening to what communities need, mapping and aggregating services – e.g. for children, the elderly
- UK approach: moving beyond focus on joining up departments to better ‘wrap’ services around special needs clients, supported by case managers
- Recent major cuts in spending in UK may hamper further progress and lead to a return of ‘siloed’ behaviour
FORUM OF FEDERATIONS ROUNDTABLE (1)

- Theme: Joint Service Delivery in Canada and other Federations; Ottawa, 21 October 2011
- Some 30 participants from Canadian federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments; leading academics and researchers in public management and governance
- Dean-Boutilier report (advanced draft) distributed beforehand, focus of opening session
- Presentations on notable Canadian initiatives, including Service Canada, Institute for Citizen-Centred Service, ServiceOntario
- Report (John Langford and Leslie Seidle)
SERVICE CANADA

- Established in 2005 following experience with ‘single window’ delivery in a number of provinces
- Extensive network of front counter (more than 600 offices) and virtual services of Government of Canada. In 2009-10 Service Canada staff:
  - Served 7.7 million clients in person
  - Responded to 58.6 million telephone calls
  - Received 55.1 million website visits
- Has moved into interjurisdictional arrangements:
  - Vital events agreements (six provinces): one application to register a child’s birth municipally, get provincial birth certificate and federal Social Insurance Number and child tax benefits
  - Ottawa: office co-location with Service Ontario and city
INSTITUTE FOR CITIZEN-CENTRED SERVICE (ICCS)

- Not-for-profit organization which works with governments across Canada: centre of expertise and champion for citizen-centred service delivery
- Established by senior federal and provincial officials, supports two intergovernmental service delivery councils (composed of senior officials)
- Intergovernmental research/dissemination agenda
  - Since 1998, six comprehensive ‘Citizens First’ surveys: ratings of services provided by three levels of governments
  - Common Measurement Tool: client satisfaction survey instrument to facilitate benchmarking across jurisdictions
  - Certified Service Manager Program: certification for public sector managers responsible for external and internal service delivery
In federal countries, more than one level of government delivers services within policy fields that are important to citizens – e.g. social programs

- Citizens expect timely, accessible and transparent services – not concerned about which jurisdiction is actually responsible
- Service integration is important to business – regularly carry out transactions with more than one government level

Channel migration – moving as many services as possible online – is a clear trend

- Responds to citizen expectations for easy, 24/7 access
- Raises issues for certain segments of population – lower income, dependent elderly, Aboriginal people – who have limited access to online services
Cost is increasingly a significant factor in potential moves to joint service delivery

- Some argue that online delivery is demonstrably cheaper
- However, capital costs of building systems to support complex service transactions are often high
- Significant risks – e.g. privacy – associated with such moves

For some, cost cutting is displacing citizen-centred service enhancement as driver of reform

- Integration often seen as way to cut jobs within the units that will be integrated
- Resistance within traditional service delivery units could lead departments to retreat to protecting core activities
FORUM OF FEDERATIONS ROUNDTABLE (4)

- Challenges to further moves to joint service delivery: **within** governments:
  - Territoriality, transaction costs required to build and maintain partnerships, funding modalities that focus on traditional departments/agencies rather than joint ventures
  - Norms/culture of parliamentary systems value ‘upward’ management in support of ministers more than horizontal collaboration

- Challenges to further **intergovernmental** collaboration in service delivery:
  - In addition to the above, ministers may be concerned about loss of visibility for ‘their’ programs resulting from integration
  - Issues about who is accountable when problems arise with consolidated or integrated services
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What is the best rationale for reforms leading to consolidated or integrated delivery of public services?
  - More responsive service to citizens
  - Cost reduction
  - Both

- What are the particular challenges of/potential benefits from arrangements that join up services between levels of government?

- Who should provide leadership for such reforms?
  - Ministers
  - Senior civil servants
  - Both