

# **INNOVATION STRATEGY**

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**Innovation will help our organisation create and improve processes, products, services, and experiences for our customers: our people; our donors; our hospital clients**

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## 1. FOREWORD

Innovation may be defined as “*the creation of a new, viable offering that adds value*” and is deemed a critical requirement for all Public Service Organisations to progress the development and delivery of services both today and for tomorrow, as per Our Public Service ‘Making Innovation Real Strategy’ (OPS2020) and ‘Enabling innovation in the Irish public service’ (Deloitte, 2018, Report for the Structural Reform Support Service of the European Commission and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Ireland). This innovation strategy reflects the need for the Irish Blood Transfusion Service to continuously improve in providing services and products that are at the forefront of transfusion medicine and science. It will also tackle the major challenges and opportunities facing the IBTS in the future. We are supporting the innovation vision set out in the “Innovation Strategy for the Irish Public Service” and will join Public Service colleagues in aspiring to “*harness the power of innovation to deliver world-class public services in Ireland*”.

This innovation strategy is developed to enhance and embed a culture of innovation;

- To empower our leadership, teams and people to bring forward new ideas;
- To continuously improve innovation capabilities;
- To collaborate with our partners;
- To create value
- To transform our services and delivery models to meet the emerging needs of all our stakeholders.

The IBTS innovation strategy has been developed by the innovation team, which is a multi-disciplinary group of stakeholders from across our organisation.

## **2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

In 2021 the IBTS published its statement of strategy, Connections that Count 2021-2025. This statement sets out the high level intent of the organisation and references the need to encourage and facilitate a culture of innovation that is threaded throughout the pillars and enablers within the strategy. The People and Culture enabler further supports this area with the following strategic objective:

### **Encourage innovation and agility across the organisation**

**Why do we want to do this?** We want to create space for innovation and create agile ways of working in the IBTS, where our people have an opportunity to think creatively about their work and working environment so that innovation can thrive. This will help us to identify alternative processes and solutions that may not be instantly apparent, providing a solution based approach in a creative and collaborative way.

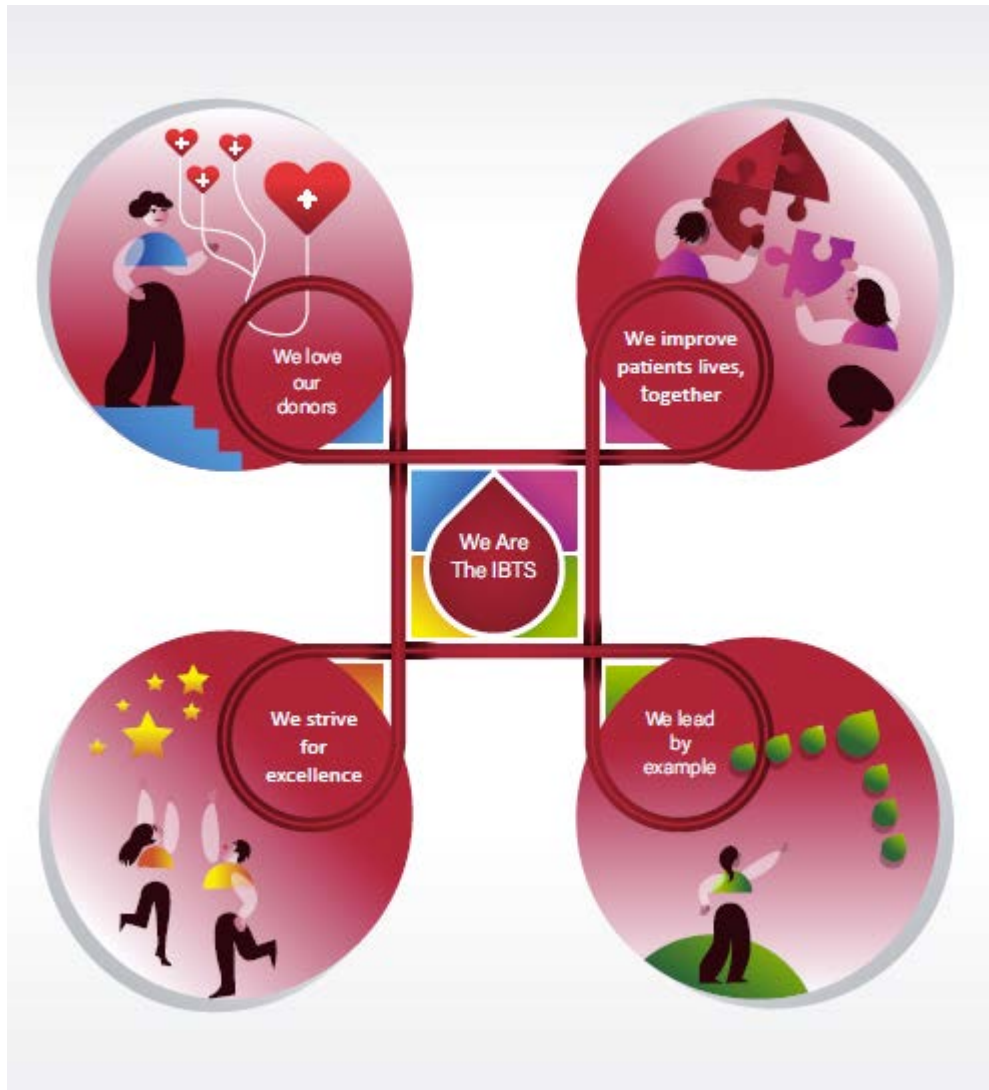
## **3. VISION**

An innovative workplace that encourages, supports and celebrates the development and implementation of innovative initiatives that ultimately add value to all the communities that we serve

## **4. MISSION**

To create a working environment that supports innovation in order to maximise the benefits and value of change initiatives

## 5. OUR VALUES



## 6. OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following three principles are key to the progress of our strategy. They help nurture a culture of innovation:

- Encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration in a supportive community
- Give people the skills and resources to be innovators
- Drive success by supporting failure

It is critical our people have the appropriate space, whether it is physical or cultural, to be innovative. We will strive to share information so our people have what they need to develop

innovative theories and practices. This feeds into cross collaboration and working with colleagues from other business units and departments. By encouraging collaborations and partnerships we will help facilitate innovation and improve networking supports within the organisation. It is also important that our people know failing is part of innovation, we will create a space where there is courage to fail and to fail better.

## **7. OUR OBJECTIVE**

The primary objective is to ensure a coordinated and strategic approach to embedding innovation within the IBTS. , Our strategy will align with 'Connections that Count' and enhance the alignment to OPS2020 wider innovation strategy. The innovation team will achieve this by encouraging innovation and agility across the organisation. We will identify, coordinate, and support implementation of key areas of work to embed innovation in the IBTS.

## **8. HOW DO WE DEFINE INNOVATION IN THE IBTS?**

Innovation is the creation and implementation of new, viable products and services that adds value. Specifically, in our hands, this refers to something that is new or different and / or improves the experience of our service users (donors, hospital clients, clinicians, scientists, our own people). Ideally an innovative offering combines elements such as platforms, business models and service-user experiences and is not just a single "product".

### **8.1 What innovation is:**

To define an initiative as innovative, the following needs to be considered;

- Stakeholders; How many stakeholders and departments are impacted? Innovative changes usually impact more than one stakeholder
- Service Users; Will the proposed innovation change how service users interact with our organisation for the better?

- Novelty; How novel is the proposed change in the context of our organisation and others?
- Benefit realisation; What is the possible added value and can this be quantified?
- Communication; How do we communicate the change to the public or users?

## 8.2 What innovation is not:

- Implementing a new process, equipment, or procedure as part of routine continuous development.
- Improvements to efficiency or effectiveness through business as usual.
- Ideas and creativity without an outcome. Innovation must be accompanied by implementation.

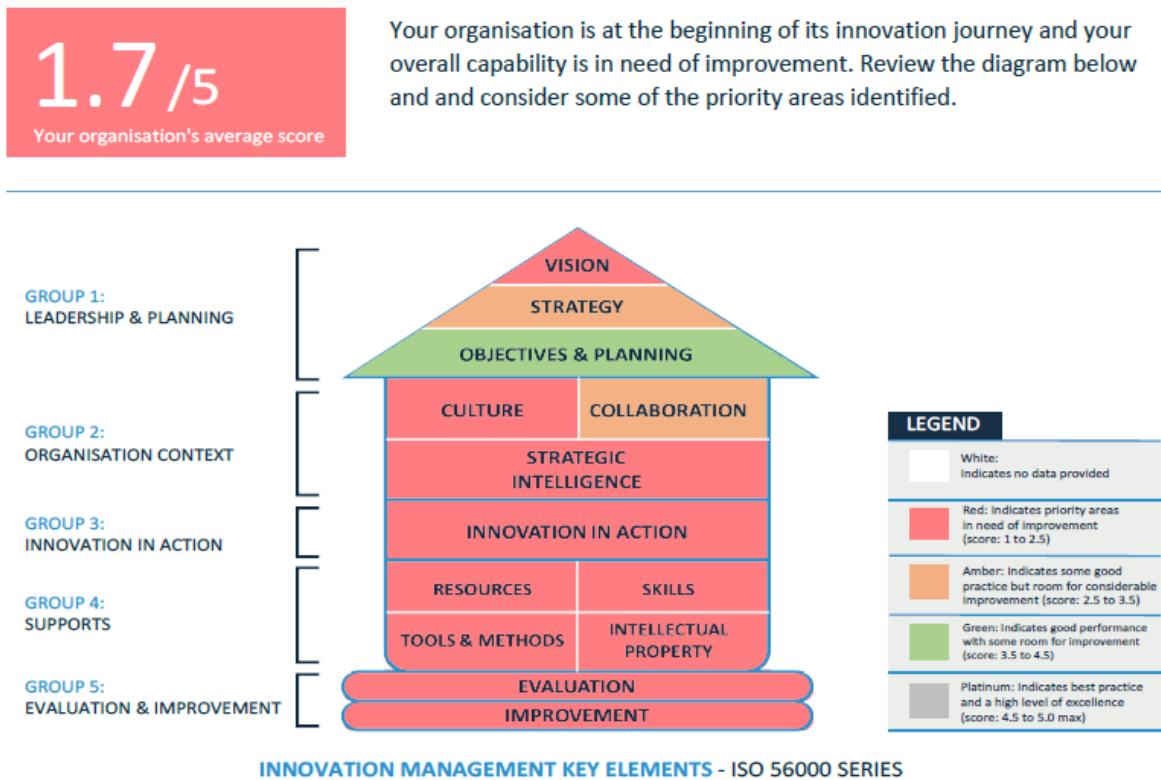
## 9. SUPPORTS WE NEED TO ENCOURAGE INNOVATION:

In order to be successful in our innovation vision, mission and objective, the team has identified a number of supports that aide progress and help nurture an innovative culture:

- **Silo disruption** - collaboration on cross-functional projects so personnel can practice working across departmental lines.
- **Space and Connection** - encourage the active sharing of information.
- **Curiosity** - analytical curiosity to ask 'why', leads to innovative problem-solving solutions.
- **Shared purpose** - Innovation must be approached from a shared purpose user-centric perspective.
- **Environment** – create a space where there is courage to fail, and fail better, knowing this process supported.

## 10.INNOVATION TEAM

The innovation team was established as a first step in response to addressing the strategic goal in our People and Culture enabler. The team engaged with Our Public Service which is the framework for development and innovation in Ireland’s public service, led by the Public Service Reform team at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The first step for the innovation team in developing this strategy was to benchmark the innovation level of the IBTS. On completion of the self-assessment tool the IBTS were given a score of 1.7/5 representing our innovation capability as of August 2021. Diagram 2 below provides an overview of the areas for the assessment reviewed.



**Diagram 2: Key Elements of Innovation Management**



## 11. KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

The self-assessment report highlighted eight areas for us to improve in the IBTS. Some areas achieved a higher result than others, for the first two years we will focus on improving the lower scores. However if there are simple improvements we can make in any area the team will move to support actions.



Leadership and  
Planning

Top management should demonstrate leadership and commitment with respect to innovation management. Score: 2.7/5



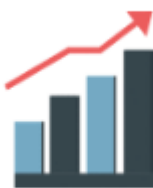
Culture

Organisations should promote a culture that supports innovation activities, with the aim to enable the coexistence of creative and operations-oriented mind-sets and behaviours. Score: 2.3/5



Collaboration

Organisations should establish an approach for the management of internal and external collaboration as both are needed to innovate. Score: 3/5



Strategic Intelligence

Organisations should establish an approach for capturing and managing strategic intelligence. Score: 1/5



Innovation  
in Action

Organisations should plan, implement, and control innovation initiatives, processes, structures, and supports needed to address innovation opportunities, meet requirements and to implement actions. Score: 1.5/5



Resources, Skills  
and Actions

Organisations should determine and provide the resources, skills and tools needed for the establishment, implementation, maintenance, and continual improvement of the innovation management system. Score: 1/5



Intellectual  
Property

Organisations should establish an IP strategy aimed at efficient management and deployment of IP in support of the innovation strategy and to maximise competitive advantage. Score: 1.5/5



Evaluate  
and Improve

Organisations should evaluate performance at planned intervals and drive continual improvement of the innovation management system. Score: 1/5

The innovation team has developed a series of actions in relation to each area (please refer to appendix 1 for 2022 actions). The group will use these areas as a benchmark, and will review actions and deliverables on a regular basis. The next section outlines a number of actions that will help innovation become part of everyday working life in the IBTS and enable us to ultimately achieve our vision, mission and objective.

## 12. Appendix 1: Action Plan 2022

Innovation Scorecard - Actions for implementation in 2022				
Element	Ref	Recommendation	Status	timeframe
Culture	2.1	Consider initiatives to encourage ideas from staff	Review bright ideas	Q3 2022
Culture	2.2	Consider allowing staff to input on planning and decision making	Org structure review - decision making framework to be developed Q3 & Q4 2022	Q3 & Q4 2022
Collaboration	2.4	Increase participation in at least one group perhaps with a sectoral focus to build innovation awareness and increase influence of information and insights gathered on innovation projects	2 seminars per annum	On-going
Innovation in Action	3.2	Put in place methods to identify innovation opportunities proactively	Review of existing PM templates to ensure alignment with innovation practice	Q4 2022
Resources Skills and Tools	4.1	Include innovation as part of the organisation planning process and assigning budgets for certain innovation projects	Assess how many projects are innovative over 12 month period. Amend project database to include innovation check box to track spend on innovation projects.	Q4 2022
Resources Skills and Tools	4.3	Develop a simple library of tools and methods for innovation	Links to intranet - tools are already there	Q1 & 2 2023
Resources Skills and Tools	4.4	Assess existing innovation skills of staff and offer basic training in some key areas to address these gaps	L and D 2022	Q4 2022