



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

Building Institutions, Escaping Development Traps

New ISS Case Line Explores National Development Strategies

In today's changing world, countries, like companies, must plan how they will deliver what their citizens value. A new ISS case study series profiles governments that have built a vision, developed priorities, defined goals, and charted paths for achieving these aims. The series focuses on the design of the strategy development process, including stakeholder consultation and citizen engagement.

[Mapping a Transformation Journey: Malaysia's Strategy Development](#)

In 2009, the Malaysian elections revealed widespread citizen discontent with government performance. As Prime Minister Najib Razak took office that April, he aimed to set Malaysia on a new course. He quickly created a new Cabinet-level post---Minister for National Unity and Performance Management---and appointed Koh Tsu Koon to fill the position.

Tasked with building a more accountable government and improving citizens' standards of living, Koh and his team organized a series of Cabinet workshops to identify leadership priorities, sought input from an economic council, and engaged diverse members of Malaysian society in substantive discussions. During a two-year period, the team developed a national transformation strategy that included two parallel efforts: the Government Transformation Program and the Economic Transformation Program. [The Performance Management and Delivery Unit \(Pemandu\)](#), created in the fall of 2009 and led by [Idris Jala](#), oversaw implementation of both programs.

A [new ISS case study](#) describes the development of Malaysia's transformation strategy and offers insights about how to design a consultative strategy development process in a country with a diverse population.

Featured Interview

In an interview with ISS, [Idris Jala](#) describes the six-step approach he used to overhaul Malaysia's public sector: setting high goals, anchoring activity to key performance indicators, discipline of action, situational leadership, winning coalition and public support, and "divine intervention." Jala served as CEO of Malaysia's [Performance Management and Delivery Unit \(Pemandu\)](#) and oversaw implementation of the country's transformation programs. In the interview, he stresses the importance of soliciting the input and support of the public through town hall-style meetings that promote a transparent process.

Where ISS Has Worked

Africa: Botswana, Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somaliland, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia

Asia & Pacific: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste,

Improving Government Accountability and Leading Reform

Innovations for Successful Societies (ISS) helps public servants, policy makers, and scholars share institution-building strategies that work in especially challenging contexts. Interview-based case studies facilitate these exchanges and provide a basis for scholarly research. To date, ISS has published 128 case studies and 370 interviews, all of which are available for free on a web repository. Governments use the materials to learn from each other, inspire discussion in their ranks, and recall the steps they took to implement a reform. Universities and training programs use the case studies in the classroom to engage students in the operational and strategic aspects of public sector reform.

Join the ISS Team

ISS is currently hiring a Senior Research Specialist. The successful candidate will be responsible for researching and writing case studies about institutional and policy reform in a wide range of settings. This position is based in Princeton, New Jersey, but will involve extensive international travel to conduct interviews with reformers. [Learn more about this opportunity.](#)

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