



POLICY *Brief*



JOHNSON
SHOYAMA

WE CAN'T SEEM TO GET THINGS DONE IN CANADA ANYMORE: HOW CAN WE FIX IT?

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Context

- Canada is underperforming its potential
 - OECD predicts Canada will have weakest growth in per capita incomes among all advanced countries over next decade
 - Weak corporate investment, anemic productivity growth, a policy and regulatory environment threaten our competitiveness
 - Cost of living is high but growth in per capita income is negative.
 - Government spending soaring, but delivery of essential government services is sputtering, procurement is a quagmire
 - Perplexing policy choices are contributing factors to this national malaise
- Canada suffering from a worrisome combination of parochialism, complacency and short-termism.
 - Champion free trade abroad, but maintain internal trade barriers

Considerations

- Social media has had profound effects on government
 - Citizens are connected like never before
 - Creates expectations for immediate solutions to complex problems
 - As a result, public/political attention to long-term issues is a challenge
 - Social media gives everyone a voice, but nurtures “short-termism” thinking
- Rise of both right- and left-wing populism has led to polarized politics
 - Hollowing out of centrist politics
 - Pragmatism seems no longer viable in the new governing environment
 - Canada is not immune from these trends and forces
- Must double down on:
 - improving our competitiveness, resiliency, productivity and security
- Effective government is key to such a national response

Questions

- What are the causes for the public's loss of confidence in government?
- How can public trust be restored in the federal government?
- Is a pragmatic, less ideological approach needed?
- If so, what key policy areas must be addressed?
- How can short-termism be overcome to address longer-term issues?
- What are the public service challenges as part of the solution?