

Focus

Public Management Newsletter

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Web site: <http://www.oecd.org/puma/focus>

Senior Budget Officials

The 23rd annual meeting of OECD Senior Budget Officials was held on 3-4 June in Washington, DC, hosted by the US Office of Management and Budget. This year, the SBO looked at the political economy of reforming entitlement programmes, investing in private financial assets to address longer-term needs, time horizons in budgeting, leading-edge budgeting reforms such as results-oriented budgeting and accrual accounting, and the governance of agencies and other autonomous bodies. In addition, a peer review was carried out on budgeting in Finland.

Holding the Executive Accountable

Chairpersons of Parliamentary Budget Committees meet

Forty-five Chairpersons of Parliamentary Budget Committees and other senior budget officials met in Washington, DC on 6-7 June 2002 for an international symposium on Holding the Executive Accountable. Participants came from 17 OECD Member countries, Chile, China, Israel and Slovenia, as well as the United Nations and the European Parliament. The Symposium was co-organised by the OECD and Jim Nussle, Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the United States House of Representatives; Mr. Nussle also chaired the Symposium. Geert Van Maanen, Chairman of the OECD's Working Party of Senior Budget Officials (SBO) and Secretary-General of the Netherlands Ministry of Finance, provided delegates with an overview of the 23rd SBO meeting, which had taken place in Washington earlier that week (see box).

The symposium discussed different national processes for dealing with budgeting for emergencies, entitlement reform, performance budgeting, and accrual accounting.

Budgeting for emergencies

Countries operating under a fiscal framework that controls total spending have provisions to relax the control in case of emergency. These emergency clauses have proved imperfect, or have been exploited to circumvent spending constraints. A number of countries are looking at more systematic approaches to dealing with emergencies and other unforeseen spending requirements.

This session looked at the moral hazard problem of budgeting for emergencies, and reviewed the experience in the United States and other countries. It was found that, although it presents a potentially large liability in terms of budget, there is nevertheless a wide variety of country approaches. Several countries are reviewing emergencies as part of wider projects on risk.

Reforming entitlement spending

Virtually all OECD Member countries face a situation where projected revenues are insufficient to meet current spending plans in the absence of large debts or large tax increases. This session looked at the steps Member countries have taken to address long-term funding problems through reforming their entitlement expenditure programmes. Participants noted that "the economy is our trust fund", and that pro-growth strategies are necessary. But growth alone is not enough: changes in policy are also needed. Governments must build political consensus around entitlement reform, and craft strong fiscal rules to maintain discipline.

Performance budgeting

Since the early 1990s almost all OECD Member countries have worked on improving the quality of their public expenditure by implementing a focus on results in their management and budgeting regimes (See *Focus* No. 23,

p. 4). Many of the reforms implicitly or explicitly build on the assumption that result information is ultimately reported to parliamentarians who will take an active interest in the reports and use them for decision-making or accountability purposes. However, evidence suggests that legislatures do not use the data. This session explored the challenges to the legislature in creating a results-based budget system.

Delegates pointed out that budgeting is not a purely technocratic endeavour: politicians need to receive high-quality information and to be involved in the process. Currently, parliamentarians do not receive the type of information they need to do their job, nor do they receive it in a form they can use. Delegates suggested that parliaments need to be more assertive in communicating their information needs.

US budget institutions

Two sessions were devoted to Congressional support institutions in the United States: the General Accounting Office and the Congressional Budget Office. The sessions explored the role of these supporting bodies in the budget and legislative processes. Delegates were impressed by the resources available to the US Congress and expressed interest in the role these support institutions perform, particularly in providing independent assessments of future challenges.

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●Project e-government

To promote and co-ordinate the transition to e-government across all levels of government in **Denmark**, the government has launched “Project E-Government”, which involves state, regional and local administrations (see *Focus* No. 23, p. 2). The e-government vision formulated in the strategy is to systematically use digital technologies to introduce new ways of thinking and to transform organisation and work processes, and thus improve efficiency and service. Project E-Government works with biannual project portfolios that are selected so as to maximise the impact of e-government in the public sector. The projects fall into two main categories:

- Resolving the general technical and legal issues that impede the development of e-government, e.g. initiatives to promote the diffusion of digital signatures as the basis for government web services, or the use of record management systems and electronic communication between authorities. The projects include supervising the modernisation of all government legislation to prepare it for e-government, as well as legal clarification of various e-government issues and guidelines for public-private partnerships.
- Promoting co-operation between various government authorities across all levels of government and the creation of joined-up services. So far, projects have been launched to create service communities in the areas of government-business relations, government-citizen relations, labour market activation, sickness benefits administration, electronic services to families, geographical data sharing, hospital-nursing home co-operation, immigration, occupational accident administration, car registration, agricultural regulation, and welfare benefits administration. Among other things, the work has led to a portal with joined-up services where businesses in the future will be able to solve most of their dealings with government. See <http://www.e.gov.dk/>.

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●HELP at the tobacconists

HELP is the **Austrian** government’s portal to public administration information for citizens on the Internet, channelling citizens to information on various life events such as child-birth, marriage, purchase of motor vehicles, housing, etc. Since February 2001, Austrian tobacconists and HELP have co-operated to create “*Trafiknet*”, making the benefits of HELP available to those citizens who do not have individual access to the Internet. Access at the tobacconists has the advantage of long opening hours, proximity to customers, and high customer frequency. See <http://www.help.gv.at>.

●Institute for Innovation

The **Portuguese** Institute for Innovation in State Administration (IISA) was created in late 2001 to take the place of several existing state bodies, including the Secretariat for Administrative Modernisation. Its main objectives are to:

- Promote, co-ordinate and evaluate innovation in public policy in the state administration;
- Decentralise the implementation of innovation policies;
- Increase service transparency and proximity to citizens;
- Encourage management by results.

It is structured around four activity centres: technological innovation and quality; development of models and organisational innovation; civil service management; and database management and methodological development.

The OECD Journal on Budgeting provides insights on leading-edge institutional arrangements, systems and instruments for the effective and efficient allocation and management of resources in the public sector. See <http://www.oecd.org/puma/Budget/>.

●Innovation and modernisation group

A small reform unit – the Innovation and Modernisation Group – has been established in the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration in **Norway** to assist the Minister, who has responsibility for encouraging, supervising and co-ordinating the reform effort in the public sector. The Group’s mission is to provide guidance, help facilitate reform processes across sectors, and contribute to an effective general communications strategy on modernisation efforts. Principles and reform efforts include:

- Simplifying and reducing the number of public regulations, e.g. setting an automatic expiration date for certain regulations.
- Reviewing and re-organising state supervisory authorities.
- Increasing freedom of choice of service providers, e.g. through the use of vouchers.
- Requiring public service providers to carry out systematic user surveys.
- Requiring estimates of total costs, including user costs for public tenders, investments and major re-organisations of service provision.
- Increasing delegation and decentralisation of authority and responsibility to local service providers.
- Allowing for greater competition between public and private service providers on the local level.
- Improving efficiency in the business sector by implementing an action plan to improve market competition.

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● Audit of public administration

The **Czech Republic** is developing a programme for public audit of public administration. The aim is to improve the public sector's cost efficiency and performance, as well as to support the projects and programmes for change being developed and implemented at central, regional and municipal level. Public audit of territorial self-government is seen as an independent, controlling activity, built on three main pillars:

- The audit is performed by a qualified person.
- The audited entity does not choose the auditor.
- The audited entity does not set the auditor's fee.

The Financial Audit Act (January 2002) introduces the elements of performance audit and internal audit into the mechanisms for controlling public finances administered by the three levels of government. An Act on Examination of the Financial Management of Territorial Self-Governing Units (Regions) is also being prepared. This Act aims at full harmonisation with the audit mechanisms governing the use of structural funds for local governments. It should be submitted to the government by the end of 2002.

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● Civil Service Information Centre

A Civil Service Information Centre was opened by the Office of Civil Service in **Poland** in January 2002. Its objective is to bring the administration closer to the citizen and to improve communication within the civil service corps. Information is provided on basic questions related to the type of service and the scope of individual administration offices, as well as on the civil service in general, e.g. employment and career opportunities, details of the recruitment process for higher posts, etc. The Centre provides written material (Civil Service Law, information brochures and leaflets, copies of documents and official forms, etc.) as well as a CD-ROM on job opportunities and a video on the civil service. Clients can make use of computers with a high-speed Internet link, ask staff members for assistance in accessing information about state administration, and print or copy this information on the premises. The Centre can be visited in person, contacted by mail, telephone, fax and e-mail: centrum@usc.gov.pl. Also in January 2002, the first volume of the Polish Yearbook of Civil Service was published. The Yearbook is devoted to the activity and development of the Polish civil service and public administration, and is available from the Office of Civil Service:

<http://www.usc.gov.pl/yb/2002/index.html>.

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Managing conflicts of interest

A recent OECD expert meeting on "Conflicts of interest: ensuring accountability and transparency in the public service" was held on 22-23 April in Paris. Participants reviewed the results of the OECD survey in this area and reached a broad consensus on key elements of the future OECD Guidelines for Managing Conflicts of Interest. Howard Wilson, the Ethics Counsellor of the Government of Canada, chaired the meeting. On the first day, participants exchanged information on their experiences, including challenges, possible approaches and existing solutions, recent initiatives and emerging trends. They also identified promising practices and examined how and why they work in the different socio-administrative-cultural contexts. Building on these discussions, the second day started with a brainstorming on the feasibility of best practice guidelines, and participants identified and discussed the essential elements of the OECD Guidelines. At the final session, on "Ensuring integrity in the public-private sector interface", participants exchanged views on challenges and existing policies and practices, particularly regarding the private delivery of public services. Participants supported a review of the most vulnerable areas and explored the feasibility of drawing up best practice guidelines for such a review, as a priority for work in the 2003-2004 work programme. The Guidelines and report on *Managing Conflicts of Interest* will be finalised over the summer for publication in late 2002.

● A clean and transparent society

The Korea Independent Commission Against Corruption (KICAC) was created in January 2002, to help eradicate corruption in **Korea**. A fully independent and politically neutral entity, it intends to tackle the corruption issue in a comprehensive and integrated manner at national level. The ultimate aim is to shift from detection and punishment of corrupt acts to the removal of their cultural, social and institutional causes. The KICAC's main functions are to:

- Develop anti-corruption policies and institutional improvement initiatives for public institutions (enforcement plans, codes of conduct).
- Conduct diagnostic surveys and evaluation of other public institutions' anti-corruption policies and their enforcement (developing a Public Institution Anti-Corruption Index and a Public Perception Index).
- Educate and campaign against corruption.
- Support non-governmental organisations' efforts to prevent corruption.
- Promote international co-operation among anti-corruption organisations.
- Protect and reward "whistle-blowers".

The KICAC has also set up an internal code of ethics covering the qualifications of its commissioners and conditions for their recusal, as well as conditions applying to all officers of the organisation. For more information, see <http://www.kikac.go.kr>.

The challenges of retirement departures in the public service

Over the next ten years, many OECD Member countries will be obliged to hire large numbers of new employees as current employees reach retirement age.

As the figure below shows, the ratio of leavers to entrants over total public employment in the 1990s in nine selected OECD countries has been increasing in the past ten years, influenced by changes such as the restructuring of government functions, privatisation, and cuts in personnel spending. Since 1996, the number of leavers has been greater than the number of entrants.

These changes were first seen as an opportunity to effect structural reforms in the public service: reducing the workforce in some sectors, using more contractual staff under general labour law, and generally increasing the flexibility of the workforce in the public service. However, many countries have started to identify structural problems resulting from the decreased competitiveness of the public employer, including:

- Difficulties in recruiting and/or retaining qualified personnel;
- Critical skills shortages with or without difficulties in recruitment and retention.

This decreased competitiveness of the public sector is related to many factors, including:

- Remuneration levels and pay systems. Salary levels in the public sector have traditionally been lower than those in the private sector for specialists and high-level staff. These differences used to be balanced by job security and a (formerly) positive image of working in the public sector; however, these two factors seem less likely to attract young employees in some countries.
- The image of the public sector. Surveys in some countries show that the public sector is increasingly seen by poten-

tial employees as dull, bureaucratic, old-fashioned, and lacking in rewards or recognition for highly motivated individuals (promotion, pay, or informal recognition).

- Recruitment methods. The public sector is not reaching students and graduates in the way most commercial companies do.
- Changes in employee attitudes and values toward work. Employees increasingly demand working conditions that are tailored to their individual situations (e.g. job content, opportunities for development, work scheduling and salaries).
- Unclear career paths and weak career planning.
- Staff development. The public sector is challenged to use better knowledge management strategies to ensure that day-to-day staff development is satisfactory.

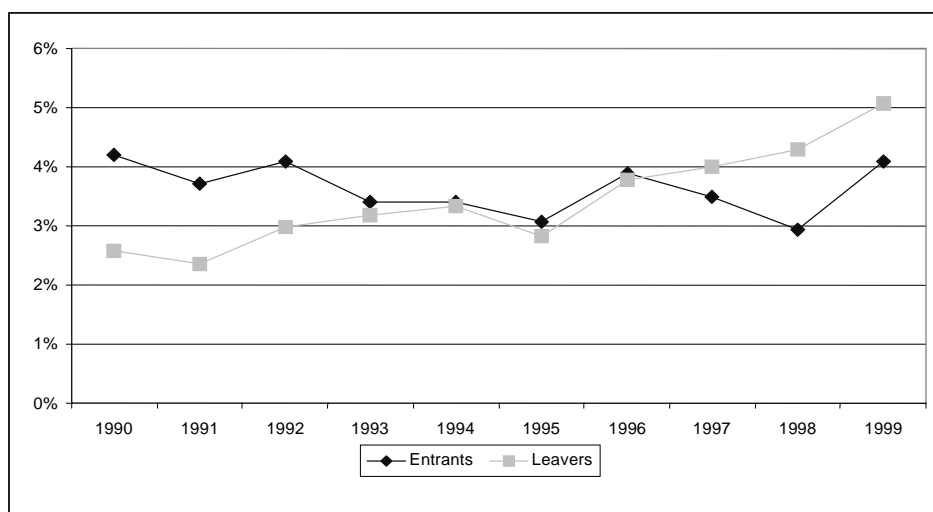
These structural problems become even more important in combination with the demographic changes that are starting to affect the public sector in most OECD Member countries. Besides the shrinking number of employees entering the labour market, the age structure in the central government will result in a significant outflow of knowledge and experience over a short period with large departures to retirement.

To face these challenges, some countries are making major efforts to improve both the attractiveness of the public sector as an employer of choice and the quality of its staff:

- Building a more positive image of the public sector.
- Reforming human resources management systems.
- Creating better working conditions.
- Improving professionalism in the public service.

For more information on this subject, see the new OECD Policy Brief on “Public Sector as an Employer of Choice”: <http://www.oecd.org/>, under Documentation, Policy Briefs. ■

Ratio of entrants and leavers (1990-1999) in nine selected OECD Member countries



Source: OECD Public Management Service, 2001. Copyright OECD 2001. All rights reserved.

Note: This indicator covers nine selected OECD Member countries. It is designed to provide cross-country trends of turnover rate of public employment, and is thus not weighted for the nine countries.

● A progressive Civil Service Act

The Parliament of the **Czech Republic** has recently approved a draft Civil Service Act. The Act will provide greater stability for civil servants by creating conditions for their neutrality, more clearly defining their rights and duties, providing compensation for extra duties and demands and creating a comprehensive education system. This draft also covers the organisation of administrative authorities, e.g. the status and scope of the powers of the state secretary, director general, and human resources director. The Act also sets civil servants' remuneration, and will only apply to state officials carrying out administrative activities; other employees will continue to be covered by the Labour Code. This draft Civil Service Act strictly separates the professional and political levels and introduces a system of selection and appointment for positions in the civil service, including senior-level posts. This, together with proposed pay rises for civil servants and other benefits, will help make the civil service a more attractive place to work. The Civil Service Act should come into force by 1 January 2004.

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• ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM •

● Central responsibility for hospitals

On 1 January 2002, responsibility for all public hospitals was transferred to the central government in **Norway**. These hospitals are to be operated as health enterprises and will be wholly owned by central government. The two main elements of the reform are:

- Responsibility for the hospitals is transferred to a single owner: the central government.
- The hospitals are organized as enterprises; they are separate legal subjects and thus not an integral part of the central government administration. The central government will determine the principal health policy objectives and frameworks, which will form the basis for management of the enterprises.

The reform also includes most county municipal specialist health services – both physical and psychiatric health care – and the ambulance service.

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● Surveying public servants

New Zealand has just released the results of its first-ever survey of public servants, The Career Progression and Development Survey. A stratified random sample of public servants was invited to respond by questionnaire to a broad range of questions related to their work environment and career progression opportunities. Key findings included:

- 60% of public servants aspired to a higher-level job, with 16% wanting to become a chief executive. Yet half considered their opportunities for advancement to be “poor”, citing flat management structures and a lack of organisational emphasis on staff development.
- Public servants valued development opportunities in their day-to-day work more than formal training. They rated their managers highly for overall support and for allowing them to use their initiative, but were less satisfied with their managers in terms of encouraging career development or giving feedback on performance.
- One quarter (men and women equally) said they had been stopped from applying for a more senior job for fear of being unable to balance their work and family commitments. While public servants were generally satisfied with leave and other provisions related to family responsibilities, they did not appear to be satisfied that their jobs were conducive to achieving a good life/work balance. Three-quarters of public servants reported that they already worked more hours than they were employed for.
- Public servants indicated clearly that equity and fairness were highly important workplace factors. Having challenging work that gave them a sense of accomplishment and involved quality management was more important to them than the pay and benefits attached to their jobs.

The survey report includes specific chapters on women in the public service, Maori (the indigenous people of New Zealand), Pacific peoples, people with disabilities, and public service managers. Individual reports were also produced for each public service department. The full survey report is available on line at: http://www.ssc.govt.nz/documents/career_progression_survey200.htm

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Anti-Corruption Network

The annual meeting of the Anti-Corruption Network for Transition Economies (ACN-TE) was held in Istanbul, Turkey on 26-28 March 2002. For the first time, the annual meeting provided a forum for countries in transition to report and peer-review the achievements of their anti-corruption efforts. The meeting also allowed more than one hundred participants from the region to exchange information and experiences on recent initiatives, and to discuss future priorities and projects with donor agencies and international organisations.

Regulatory Policy Forum

On 15-16 April, the fourth cycle of the OECD Review of Regulatory Reform was concluded at the Regulatory Policy Forum, with reviews of Canada, Poland, Turkey and the United Kingdom. For the first time, participants included the Business and Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC). Canada and the United Kingdom, as the leading regulatory policy countries, were of particular interest, demonstrating the continuing challenges faced by mature policies. Questions on the Canadian review addressed, for example, federal/provincial relationships and the Agreement on Internal Trade. In the case of the UK, discussion focussed on the potential tension between a more legalistic approach and the informality of the British political system. For both countries the contribution of regulatory reform to higher productivity was discussed. In the review of Poland, the focus centred on the need to implement past reforms and finalise the ones launched in the key economic sectors. The Turkish review highlighted the need for building administrative capacities and better regulatory governance -- as well as pursuing structural reforms -- as solutions to the current economic crisis. The reviews will be published in a new, more user-friendly format later in 2002.

For information on the latest OECD publications on public management and governance, see the OECD Online Bookshop: <http://www.oecd.org/bookshop/>.

APEC/OECD Co-operative Initiative on Regulatory Reform

The second workshop of the APEC/OECD Co-operative Initiative on Regulatory Reform was held on 24-25 April in Merida, Mexico. The workshop was opened by Mr. Luis Ernesto Derbez Bautista, Minister of Economy of Mexico; Ms. Margarita Trillo, Convenor of the APEC Competition Policy and Deregulation Group; and Mrs. Odile Sallard, Director of PUMA. It brought together more than 20 countries as well as representatives from business (e.g. BIAC), labour (i.e. TUAC), and several international organisations, including the European Commission and the World Bank. In addition, the Mexican federal government invited representatives from the Mexican states to participate in the two-day meeting. The discussions focused on the design and practical operation of regulatory impact analysis as a necessary tool for sustaining regulatory reform, and on the integration of market openness into the regulatory systems as an important component of regulatory reform. The proceedings and all presentations made at the workshop will be posted on the Internet: www.oecd.org/puma/regref/. The third workshop will take place in Korea in October 2002.

Building Open Government in South East Europe: Information, Consultation and Public Participation

This international roundtable, held in Ljubljana, Slovenia on 23-24 May 2002, aimed to foster policy dialogue among OECD Member and non-member countries of South East Europe (SEE) on building open government, as well as between practitioners from both government and civil society. It drew over 80 participants from 28 countries (16 OECD Member countries, 12 from Central and South East Europe) with roughly equal numbers from government and civil society.

The roundtable focused on how to develop robust laws, institutions, tools and partnerships for building open government, and was organised by PUMA with the Government of Slovenia, the World Bank Institute and the Open Society Institute. Representatives of the United Nations Development Programme and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe also attended. PUMA's contribution was made possible by a grant from the Government of Denmark to the OECD under the Stability Pact Anti-Corruption Initiative (SPAI).

Speakers offered several reasons why governments invest in openness, such as: to tap a greater range of policy-relevant information (e.g. Canada); to modernise the public administration (e.g. France); to ensure greater accountability to stakeholders (e.g. Slovenia); and to fight corruption (e.g. Croatia).

Three parallel workshops on "Access to information", "Consultation and Participation" and "Building Effective Partnerships" identified a set of priority areas for action. These included: ensuring consistent legal frameworks for access to government information (freedom of information, privacy, and data protection); building capacity for effective consultation; developing mutually acceptable rules for government engagement with civil society; enhancing the transparency of the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector.

As follow up, PUMA will publish the proceedings of the international roundtable later this year. The Government of Slovenia will hold a national roundtable in late 2002. The World Bank Institute plans to invest in online information exchange through the dedicated website and to organise a distance learning event for the region in September 2002, with PUMA's input. The Open Society Institute proposes to fund translations of the OECD report and handbook 'Citizens as Partners' (2001) into languages of the region. Several NGO participants from SEE plan to hold national debriefing meetings or disseminate the main conclusions of the roundtable in their local languages via their own web sites.

For more information on the international roundtable visit the web site: <http://www1.worldbank.org/gdln/roundtable.htm>, or contact Joanne Caddy (joanne.caddy@oecd.org) and Christian Vergez (christian.vergez@oecd.org) at PUMA.

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World Public Sector Report: Globalization and the State 2001

Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations,
December 2001 (ISBN 92-1-123145-0, 184 pages)

The report analyses what opportunities globalisation presents, why some countries have been able to take full advantage of globalisation while others have lagged behind, and how to make globalisation work for all. This analysis brings to the forefront the role of the state in a globalising world and underscores the importance of strengthening the state and its institutions. Three basic dimensions of the state are reviewed: institutions, administrative capacity and social policies. In addition, the report looks at defining and measuring the size of the state, and provides comparable data and indicators on the size and structure of the public sector.

Available from:

Public Economics and Public Administration Division
United Nations, One UN Plaza New York, NY 10017
Tel:+1-212-9633393 Fax:+1-212-9639681
E-mail: gautier@un.org
<http://www.unpan.org/dpepa.asp>

Modern State – Modern Administration. Progress Report 2002

Federal Ministry of the Interior, February 2002 (71 pages)

The Federal Government of Germany adopted the programme "Modern State – Modern Administration" in December 1999. Measurable success has been achieved with reforms, including controlling schemes, accrual accounting, restructuring of financial administration, reduction in the number of authorities, withdrawal of federal regulations, new forms of co-operation between the state and the private sector, and modern information technology (the BundOnline 2005 e-government initiative). Available from:

Secretariat Modern State – Modern Administration
Federal Ministry of the Interior, D-11014 Berlin
<http://www.staat-modern.de> <http://www.bund.de>

Accrual Accounting in Swedish Central Government

Swedish Financial Management Authority, May 2001
(ISBN 91-7249-112-4, 46 pages)

Full accrual accounting was implemented in Swedish central government in 1993. In response to the need for information for non-Swedish-speaking people, this document was prepared. It describes government accounting, presents some of the reasoning behind the ideas and methods, and conveys the experience of eight years of accrual accounting.

Available from:

Swedish Financial Management Authority
Box 45316 S-104 30 Stockholm
Tel:+46-8-6904300 Fax:+46-8-6904350 or 6904101
<http://www.esv.se>

Annual Report 2000 (April 2000 – March 2001)

National Personnel Authority, Japan
December 2001 (115 pages)

This year's annual report contains a special topic entitled "Towards realising a gender-equal society within the public service". The report also describes principal activities during fiscal year 2000, areas of personnel administration being addressed, and the activities of the National Public Service Ethics Board, with a statistical appendix. Available from:

International Affairs Division
National Personnel Authority
1-2-3 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku 100-8913, Tokyo
Tel:+81-3-35815324 Fax:+81-3-35806092
http://www.jinji.go.jp/top_e.htm

Towards Better Regulation: Consultation Document

Department of the Taoiseach, February 2002 (68 pages)

The Government of Ireland set up a high-level group in 2001 to promote better regulation and specifically to examine regulation in the various areas of national economic and social life, why the government regulates, and the choices that are made on how to regulate. Based on the results of this public consultation process, the government intends to publish a National Policy Statement on better regulation and regulatory management. This consultation document is structured around three main themes: performance of the economy and consumer welfare; quality of governance; efficiency and effectiveness of the public service. Available from:

Better Regulation Unit, Department of the Taoiseach
Government Buildings, Dublin 2
E-mail: betterregulation@taoiseach.irlgov.ie
<http://www.betterregulation.ie>

Public Administration Reform in the Czech Republic

Ministry of the Interior, 2002 (ISBN 80-238-8419-0, 48 pages)

Public administration reform in the Czech Republic is built on a broad platform encompassing: the modernisation of central state administration (e.g. horizontal co-ordination, internal restructuring, regulatory reform, Institute of Public Administration); the reform of territorial public administration (e.g. decentralisation, financing, self-governing units); and improving the quality of public administration operations overall (e.g. standardisation, public audit, relations with the non-profit sector, e-government). International co-operation is also highlighted. The report includes basic facts on the Czech Republic and information on regions and districts. Available from:

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Modernising Human Resource Management Korean Government and OECD host international conference

120 participants from government, academia, and the private sector met in Seoul on 2-3 May to discuss modernising human resources management (HRM), under the overarching theme of "The Person, the Core of Future Government". The objectives of the conference were: to enable participants to exchange lessons in modernising HRM; to review and evaluate the HRM reforms initiated by the Korean Civil Service Commission (CSC) during the past three years; and to search for directions and strategies for HRM of the 21st century.

Modernising human resources management has been at the heart of public sector reform in OECD Member countries for the past two decades, not only because HRM is a basic constituent of public management, but also because civil servants are the main actors in bringing about reforms. HRM is seen as a cornerstone for achieving "enabling" and "empowering" government. Some governments see HRM dynamically, as a way to enrich their human capital assets; others see it more as a strategic tool for equipping governments for the challenges of the new century. As joint hosts of the conference, the OECD and the CSC recognised that effective management of the "person" is a building block for the sustainable development of government. The conference comprised four main sessions, summarised below.

HRM and leadership

Participants discussed the future role of public sector leaders, as well as strategies for developing future leaders. They also looked at how to prevent the corruption of public sector leaders - a topical issue in Korea. The discussion showed the severe consequences for a country if a group of public sector leaders begins to pursue its own interests rather than the national interest.

HRM and high performance

This session examined a variety of HRM tools for enhancing performance in public administration, including policies on recruitment, evaluation, remuneration, and promotion. The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Model and CAF (Common Assessment Framework) were introduced to the conference as

a means of enhancing performance. There was also an evaluation from the performance perspective of Korea's HRM reforms during the present administration.

Organisational structure

In this session, China's HRM and management reforms were presented. The Chinese government has implemented bold HRM reforms in recent years, including the revision of the Civil Service Act, the incorporation of information and communications technologies (ICT) into HRM, and increased focus on client satisfaction. Another paper discussed the role and structure of the central HRM agency and HRM services in line ministries.

Open and closed government

The main topic of this session was the degree to which government posts are open to all qualified citizens. Three country cases were presented, including the United States, the United Kingdom and Korea. Korea has recently introduced the Open Position System (OPS), which allows for open competition for high-level vacancies. After three years of implementation, participants concluded that, while the institutionalisation of OPS was in itself a great change towards an open government, government needed to do more to promote external recruitment and mobility among ministries.

Conclusion

The two days of discussions illustrated that human resources management should not be seen as a free-standing dimension of public management. Rather it should be integrated into many other management issues such as

leadership, performance, and organisational management. Different countries face different kinds of risk from a public management viewpoint. The main challenge for Korea has been to combat a tendency towards patronage in public sector employment, and it was widely agreed that the Civil Service Commission had carried out very positive innovations in this area.

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