

Focus

Public Management Newsletter

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

Trends in budgeting: looking to the future

Senior Budget Officials meet in Paris

On 21-22 May 2001, budget directors and other senior officials from Member countries met at the OECD for their annual meeting. Participants from Brazil, Chile, Israel, the People's Republic of China, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women) also participated in the meeting.

Preparing for the future

Today's environment of relative fiscal abundance is clouded by unprecedented fiscal demands looming in future years, especially as the result of ageing populations and the concomitant expenditures for health and retirement programmes. Delegates discussed measures to incorporate a more long-term orientation into the budget process. They noted that the traditional instruments for introducing a longer-term time perspective into the budget process, even if fully and comprehensively implemented, might not be successful in the current environment.

A focus on outcomes

A major theme of budgeting reforms in Member countries has been the shift in focus away from inputs and centralised controls towards results and managerial flexibility. Delegates discussed the relative merits of focussing on outcomes and of results-oriented budgeting practices in general. Delegates also noted that there is more public attention being paid to the budget and its details than in the past. This stems from the budget's role as the government's key policy document, but is also the result of changes to the presentation of the budget, which now focuses more on results, making the budget more understandable for the public at large.

The role of parliament

Following the inaugural Symposium of Parliamentary Budget Committee Chairpersons, which took place in January 2001 (see *Focus* 19), delegates discussed the changing role of the legislature in the budget process. The tendency in a number of Member countries is for the legislature to take a more assertive role in budget policy and for parliaments to re-examine their internal organisation and processes for the discussion of the budget.

Budgeting in the Netherlands

The Netherlands was the focus of this year's country review. The country reviews are designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the budgeting process in the country under examination. For its part, the country benefits from a peer review of its budgeting system. Mexico and New Zealand were the lead examiners for the review of the Dutch budgeting system and confirmed the favourable view expressed in the Secretariat's report.

Impact analysis: gender

Delegates noted that new analytical tools for studying how the budget affects different population groups are becoming increasingly common in Member countries. In the light of the importance placed on this subject by the

Just published: **OECD Best Practices for Budget Transparency**

OECD Member countries are at the forefront of budget transparency practices, i.e. the full disclosure of all relevant fiscal information in a timely and systematic manner. The OECD's Working Party of Senior Budget Officials asked the Secretariat to draw together a set of Best Practices in this area based on Member countries' experiences. These Best Practices are now available online.

The Best Practices are in three parts. Part I lists the principal budget reports that governments should produce and their general content. Part II describes specific disclosures to be contained in the reports. This includes both financial and non-financial performance information. Part III highlights practices for ensuring the quality and integrity of the reports.

The Best Practices are designed as a reference tool for Member and non-member countries to use in order to increase the degree of budget transparency in their respective countries. It is recognised that different countries will have different reporting regimes and may have different areas of emphasis for transparency. The Best Practices are based on different Member countries' experiences in each area. It should be stressed that the Best Practices are not meant to constitute a formal "standard" for budget transparency. See <http://www.oecd.org/puma/budget/>.

recent OECD Council Meeting at Ministerial level, delegates discussed the use of such tools in analysing the budget from a gender perspective. The Executive Director of UNIFEM gave a keynote address on this topic.

OECD Journal on Budgeting

The papers presented at the meeting will be available in future editions of the *OECD Journal on Budgeting*. See <http://www.oecd.org/puma/budget/>. ■

● Modern ministerial management

The Federal Ministry of the Interior in **Germany** has chosen the field of internal security as a model project for making ministerial management more efficient and effective. Internal security is carried out together with the Federal Border Police (BGS), whose tasks include protection of railway and aviation traffic as well as federal institutions. The BGS is controlled by a Directorate-General at the Interior Ministry, where decisions must take into account long-term strategic policy, short-term responses to altered security situations, quality of performance and compliance with limited resources. The Directorate-General has developed a new ministerial management support system, integrating “business” instruments such as accrual accounting and quality management with the particular characteristics of ministerial administration. The project systematically identifies the factors that affect performance and play a crucial role in the quality of administration (e.g. staff satisfaction). It also enables adequate, target-oriented management decisions.

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● Innovation in the public sector

Norway has launched a programme for innovation in the public sector, to increase the efficiency of the public administration and adapt it to the needs of citizens and the economy. One of the structural reforms of the programme is the creation in January 2001 of a new Directorate of Police under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice. The new directorate was created to strengthen the overall national leadership of the police and contribute to making Norway’s effort to combat crime more focused. Other government proposals include:

- Creating a new court administration outside the Ministry of Justice. This authority will be governed by its own board of directors, making clearer the separation of powers between the judiciary and the executive.
- Transferring ownership and control of hospitals to the central government under one central authority. At the same time, a series of regional health authorities will be created. These would be wholly state-owned and have their own boards of directors. The individual hospitals in each region would become subsidiaries of the regional health authority, with separate boards of directors. The central government would provide the overall framework and give the regional health authorities broad powers to make their own decisions on organisation and day-to-day operations.
- Restructuring of the armed forces, simplifying the military chain of command, with fewer levels and extensive delegation and decentralisation of authority. The expanded Ministry of Defence will handle the overall leadership of Norway’s armed forces at a strategic level.

● Modernising the state

The Ministry of Public Administration and Administrative Reform of **Luxembourg** is giving top priority to three areas of the government programme: setting the boundaries of the state and redefining its responsibilities and tasks; administrative modernisation using information and communications technologies (ICT); and helping citizens with administrative procedures. Initiatives include:

- A symposium organised in June 2000 by the Ministry, together with the European Union, on “Best Practices in e-Administration”, to analyse the administration’s relationships with citizens and public enterprises through an exchange of the best ICT practices.
- The “e-Luxembourg” initiative (www.eluxembourg.lu), which will lead to numerous electronic services for citizens in the coming years.
- The creation of “*Bürger-Büro*” offices, a new government telephone service and an e-government portal page, all offering citizens help with administrative procedures.

● Restructuring the electricity sector

The **Turkish** government enacted a new Electricity Law in March 2001, which introduces the following elements:

- separation of the generation, transmission and distribution functions;
- establishment of the Electricity Market Regulatory Authority and the Electricity Market Regulatory Board;
- licensing (e.g. separate licenses have to be obtained for every single activity to be carried out);
- procedures and provisions for price structure/tariffs;
- privatisation (assets will be privatised according to the Privatisation Law by the Privatisation Administration, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources);
- third-party access to transmission and distribution systems;
- bilateral contracts between market participants;
- customer freedom of choice of supplier.

● Central government reform

In January 2001, **Japan** launched its central government reform. The 22 former ministries and agencies and the Cabinet Office were reorganised into 12 ministries and a new Cabinet Office, strengthening the leadership role of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. As part of the reform, a new system of Independent Administrative Institutions (IAIs) — semi-governmental entities organisationally separate from the government — was also launched in April 2001. The reform also introduced a government-wide policy evaluation system for a more effective, efficient and citizen-oriented government. The government produced guidelines for the ministries to implement their policy evaluations, which include their objectives and evaluation criteria as well as standard evaluation formulas for project, performance and comprehensive evaluation.

●ICT in public administration

Poland has developed a “Strategy for Information Society Development in Poland in 2001-2006 - ePoland”. A high-level Forum for the Information Society will monitor progress in implementing the strategy in the public administration. Other ICT developments include the establishment of a Telecommunications Regulatory Office (URT), the proposed Digital Signature Act to give legal recognition to electronic signatures, and the adoption of PIONIER – the Polish Optical Internet. It is proposed that by 2005, PIONIER applications should cover telecommunications, computer sciences, Internet-based training, tele-education, environmental resource management, tele-medicine and group working. The Polish public administration has already implemented a national personal registry system; a new Identity Card and Passport Issuing System with machine-readable cards; a Polish Tax Administration Registration System; a secure network and e-mail system for the public administration; and the automation of labour and social welfare administration. All public administration offices have their own Internet sites giving information on their structure and activities, and some have put official forms on-line. All staff vacancies, examinations for management positions, and information on training for civil servants are published on the web page of the Office of the Civil Service. It is planned to create a central database for employees and posts, and to exchange information on educational profiles and staff development possibilities.

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●E-government for a modern administration

On 14 May 2001, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder of **Germany** brought together over 200 heads of federal administrations at a conference to discuss the federal e-government initiative BundOnline 2005. With this initiative, the federal government aims to provide online, by 2005, all federal services that can be delivered via Internet. For further information, in English and German, see www.bundonline2005.de. At the conference, the Minister of the Interior referred to Germany’s new Act on Digital Signatures and to the development of security products for encrypting electronic communications. He noted that trustworthiness and security were necessary if an administration was to provide services not only faster, more simply and more cheaply via Internet, but also as reliably as before. The Minister also presented the new e-government manual for the administration, which will be published exclusively on the Internet (www.bsi.de). The manual presents solutions to typical problems linked to the implementation of e-government projects, and is primarily aimed at those responsible for projects in the Federation, *Länder* and municipalities.

●ICT in local and central government

In **Norway**, the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration has prepared an action plan to meet the need for ICT competence among government employees. The plan makes local employers responsible for developing the competence of their own employees, while the Ministry will contribute by developing a suitable framework and any measures and initiatives needed in common. ICT specialists at all levels – university graduates as well as skilled workers – will be needed in the near future, as well as in all areas. The plan points out that to recruit and retain ICT specialists in the government sector, local employers should use the comparative advantages of the government sector: interesting jobs, a family-friendly personnel policy and good training opportunities, and emphasise that the workplace is also a learning arena. In addition, the plan proposes the recruitment of skilled workers as ICT network operators, and to offer them training in more qualified subjects when circumstances permit. Other proposals are an e-learning network based on Internet, where all employees can achieve competence levels in computer skills equivalent to the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), as well as suitable courses for top and senior civil servants.

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●Leaders@e-Government

The Centre for Management and Policy Studies (CMPS) in the **United Kingdom** has planned a range of events under the title “Leaders@e-Government” to raise awareness of the human and organisational issues involved in implementing e-government. A short series of three-day programmes have been held for those who have strategic responsibility for addressing the challenges of change resulting from advances in the use of electronic media. They focussed on the strategic issues that government faces in relation to business processes, and the impact on organisational structures and on the people who work in government. They also provided an opportunity to think through the issues with colleagues and experienced people from e-businesses and to determine the key internal challenges to be addressed in implementing e-government. The first series of programmes were aimed at members of the UK senior civil service, at director general/director level. Future events will include seminars for the wider senior civil service and possibly further conferences to build on the success of the initial event.

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Improving decision-making for sustainable development

How can we meet the needs of today without diminishing the capacity of future generations to meet theirs? This is the central question posed by sustainable development, which requires effective integration of environmental, social and economic policies. Almost ten years after OECD countries committed themselves to sustainable development at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio, progress remains partial and uneven. Over 1998-2001, OECD carried forward work on sustainable development, and this will continue in preparation for the 2002 Earth Summit to be held in Johannesburg.

Results of the OECD's effort in this field include the recent report on *Policies to Enhance Sustainable Development* and the forthcoming analytical report on *Sustainable Development: Critical Issues*. The former raises key policy questions and provides concrete recommendations, while the analytical report offers more in-depth analysis of the main issues. The questions to be urgently addressed

include key governance concerns and require a strong focus on institutional issues.

One critical challenge that policy-makers face when making efforts towards sustainable development is to strengthen decision-making, for two main reasons. The first is that how governments organise their own activities related to sustainable development sends strong signals to society about the priority attached to it. The second, even more important, is that all levels of government require specific management improvements for meeting the challenge of sustainable development effectively. The public sector is not only a major economic operator, thus required to "green" its own operations, but also has the responsibility to formulate and develop sustainable development policies. Government has the potential capacity to give impetus, define the right regulatory frameworks, facilitate conflict resolution among stakeholders, and raise citizens' awareness.

[In **Canada**], the most visible illustration of federal commitment to sustainable development was the creation of two dedicated institutions, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy and the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the latter being an independent position that reports directly to Parliament. These have provided impetus and helped promote action and awareness for raising issues, finding new approaches, reaching agreements and fostering action. (*Excerpt from Canadian case study*)

By March 2001, **Germany** had not yet fully developed a national sustainable development strategy, although it should be stressed that concrete initiatives have been taken in the last few years, one of the most significant being the October 2000 Programme on Climate Protection. (*Excerpt from German case study*)

'Joining-up Government' and promoting the integration of policy necessary to support sustainable development is an inherent part of the [**United Kingdom's**] policy-making process and a major focus for sustainable development as a 'catalyst' for integration. Another initiative designed to foster policy integration is the 'Green Ministers' initiative, which attempts to ensure that sustainable development is a cross-cutting theme across all departments, allowing co-operation and the potential to learn from best practice. (*Excerpt from United Kingdom case study*)

It is becoming apparent that, if not carefully designed and coherently managed, sustainable development policies could easily become ineffective. Sustainable development is about designing effective, integrated policies to meet economic, environmental and social goals: policy integration can only be achieved if the machinery of government is adapted to find the right balance between central steering capacities and local creativity. Sustainable development also implies the involvement of several governmental and non-governmental actors, and therefore calls for improved transparency and effective citizen participation. Sustainable development is typically a long-term issue, whereas governments are often under pressure to react in the short term. This tendency is reinforced by the pace of electoral cycles. Achieving sustainable development therefore requires specific efforts from governments to improve their capacities to deal with longer-term issues.

Over the past two years, the OECD Public Management Service (PUMA) has highlighted the most pressing needs in terms of improving institutional frameworks and strengthening decision-making mechanisms for sustainable development. PUMA is now contributing to the evaluation of existing "best practices" of sustainable development management and their implications in terms of policy-making.

In addition to its contribution to the OECD policy and analytical reports in 2001, PUMA is developing up-to-date case studies on selected OECD countries to illustrate efforts to respond to the sustainable development challenge. These have been carried out in selected OECD countries with various economic, environmental and social conditions and cultural patterns.

For more information, including the country case studies, see <http://www.oecd.org/puma/>. ■

● The public sector labour market

In the **Netherlands**, a working group was set up to examine the public sector labour market and address the difficulty of attracting and keeping enough qualified personnel. The group consists of members of several Dutch ministries, representatives of the different public sub-sectors and several experts, and was chaired by the Director-General for Management and Personnel. Informal consultations were held with representatives of public sector personnel organisations. The working group submitted a report in early 2001. It concluded that “the public sector will need to recruit on a large scale in the coming five years.” It recommends a range of actions to avert increased costs, delays or substandard performance:

- Actions to address sector-specific problems, including improving career prospects, creating a more family-friendly workplace, encouraging later retirement, reducing absence due to illness, and improving recruitment and communication with the labour market.
- Sector-specific collective labour agreements on the above issues as well as on extending the working week while protecting employees’ right to choose.
- The creation of task forces to draw up improvement programmes on management and guidance, using modern ICTs, and overhauling human resources management.

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● Protection for whistleblowers

The Public Interest Disclosure Act, which came into force in the **United Kingdom** in 1999, complements the existing “whistleblowing” procedures within the civil service. The Act enables workers who “blow the whistle” about wrongdoing to complain to an Employment Tribunal. The legislation covers workers in the public sector (with some exceptions, e.g. those who work in the security services) as well as the private sector. The Act does not introduce a general protection for whistleblowers in all circumstances. It provides protection for whistleblowers and their disclosures only if they correspond to one or more conditions set out in the Act. In deciding the reasonableness of the disclosure, an Employment Tribunal will consider all the circumstances (e.g. the identity of the person to whom the disclosure was made, the seriousness of the concern, whether the failure is continuing or likely to occur, breach of confidentiality, etc.). The legislation provides for the payment of compensation if a Tribunal finds that an individual was unfairly dismissed for blowing the whistle. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 is available at <http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1988/19980023.htm>.

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● Trainee programme in the Civil Service

The **Norwegian** Ministry of Labour and Government Administration is launching a trainee programme in ministries. The programme aims to retain and develop talented people in the civil service, and is directed towards people with at least four years’ academic education. The trainees must be under 35 years old, with less than four years’ ministerial service. The programme will last 14 months, and will focus on learning by experience, with trainees serving in three different ministries. In addition to the periods of service, six thematic seminars will be arranged, focussing on such issues as public administration, economy, relevant laws, challenges in the public service, project management, international reforms, personal development such as presentation and negotiation techniques, networking and the development of career plans. Each trainee will be assigned a personal mentor throughout the training period. Eight trainees will be recruited from the civil service, while another ten trainees will be recruited from elsewhere.

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● Gender equality in the Irish civil service

The development and adoption of a new equality policy was one key measure proposed in the *Gender Equality in the Civil Service* report on the under-representation of women in senior grades in the **Irish** civil service. A high-level Gender Equality Management Group, chaired by the Revenue Commissioner, is at an advanced stage of developing this policy.

The group has decided to produce three documents relating to revised policy and procedures for addressing gender equality:

- A new gender equality policy;
- A guide to government departments on affirmative action, entitled *Making it Happen*; and
- An outline of mechanisms for allocating responsibility, accountability and monitoring in respect of gender equality.

In June 2000, the government approved the new gender equality policy in principle and directed that consultations with the staff unions begin on its implementation. These consultations are now at an advanced stage. At the same time, the government set a target of one-third of posts at Assistant Principal level to be filled by women within five years. It is anticipated that the new gender equality policy will be agreed and formally launched by the government later this year.

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●The Partnership Programme

In the **United Kingdom**, the Centre for Management and Policy Studies (CMPS) has created a new leadership development programme built around a partnership case study. The Partnership Programme brings together senior managers from the civil service, local government, the National Health Service, police, education and the voluntary sector. A choice of 'live' case studies is offered, providing participants with the opportunity to look at the issues from the point of view of service users and providers, managers and policy makers. The programme comprises three modules, totalling eight days, and is collaborative in style. The case study draws out lessons from different sectoral, organisational and individual perspectives. Workshops help participants to develop skills that will be useful in partnership working and leading change. The programme is aimed at members of the UK senior civil service, at deputy director level, public sector leaders such as local authority directors and deputy directors, health service directors, police officers of ACPO rank, head teachers and senior managers in further and higher education.

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II Global Forum on Fighting Corruption

More than two thousand experts from 180 governments met at the II Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity on 28 - 31 May in The Hague, The Netherlands. On the last day, ministers adopted a Final Declaration that gives content for a future UN convention against corruption. It is based on the outcomes of the discussions in five workshops where participants reviewed national anti-corruption strategies and selected best practices. For further information on the Forum, see www.gfcorruption.org/index1.htm and PUMA's website.

●Online e-Learning Package

Following its new "Leaders@e-Government" programme (see page 3), the United Kingdom's CMPS is developing an on-line package to enhance learning on leadership. Using multimedia technology, the new package will consist of self-paced activities that enable current and aspirant members of the senior civil service to complete modules on leadership at their convenience. It will also include recommendations for complementary offline activities to further enhance learning. These activities might be delivered by the College Directorate of CMPS, individual departments, or external providers, supplemented by activities for users to organise for themselves, such as mentoring. An essential element in ensuring that the package meets user needs will be effective consultation and user testing. CMPS will therefore run a number of workshops and interviews with potential users. It is anticipated that the package will be launched by the end of 2001.

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Generationally-aware Policy: Summary of the 55th Report to the Government

Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy, 2000 (70 pages)

This book is a summarised translation into English of the report on the sustainability and justice of government policy in relation to intergenerational transfers, as submitted by the Scientific Council for Government Policy in December 1999 to the Dutch government. The report examines the challenges that government policy will face as a result of the combination of two phenomena: the ageing of the population and changes in the life cycle of successive generations. The main theme of the report is that the Dutch system of intergenerational transfers is sustainable provided that a generationally-aware policy is conducted. Available from:

Scientific Council for Government Policy
P.O.Box 20004 NL-2500 EA The Hague
Tel.+31-70-3564600 <http://www.wrr.nl>

Values in the Australian Public Service

Public Service and Merit Protection Commission, Australia, 2000 (38 pages, ISBN 0-642-54396-8)

This booklet is part of a new series entitled "Values and Conduct" issued by the Public Service and Merit Protection Commission following the passage of the Public Service Act 1999. This booklet provides agency heads and staff with advice and guidance on how the values might be applied in the workplace under the legislative framework for public sector employment. Available from:

Public Service and Merit Protection Commission
Edmund Barton Building, Barton, ACT 2600
Tel.+61-2-62723699 Fax:+61-2-62723763
<http://www.psmpc.gov.au/publications/index.html>

Comparative Performance Measurement

by Elaine Morley, Scott P. Bryant, Harry P.Hatry
The Urban Institute, Washington DC, 2001
(112 pages, ISBN 0-87766-700-4)

Performance measurement has exploded at all levels of the public and nonprofit sectors. As agencies collect data, they — and the citizens they serve — have begun asking how their agency is doing compared with similar agencies. This book is a step-by-step guide to using comparative performance measurement techniques to improve the management and operations of a particular agency or function, to improve policy and resource allocation decisions, and to communicate to the public what is being accomplished and what community needs should be addressed. Available from:

The Urban Institute Press
2100 M Street, N.W. Washington DC 20037
Tel.+1-202-2615744 Fax:+1-202-4675775
<http://www.urban.org>

Market Orientation in the Finnish Public Sector: From Public Agency to Privatised Company

by Ari Salminen, Olli-Pekka Viinamäki
Ministry of Finance/University of Vaasa, Finland, 2001
(83 pages, ISBN 951-804-194-6)

Market orientation is a big challenge to all governments. What are the international backgrounds and the national effects of market orientation in the public sector? The study deals with five country comparisons (Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States) and eleven Finnish sample organisations. Available from:

Public Management Department
Ministry of Finance, Helsinki
Tel.+358-9-160.32.66 <http://www.vn.fi/vm>

Structure and Operation of Local and Regional Democracy in Greece

Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation, 2000 (26 pages)

This short document describes the structure and organs of local authorities and regional administration in Greece. The first level comprises municipalities and communities, the second level is prefectural self-administration. Details are given of the legal basis (constitutional provisions) and main legislative texts, provisions for direct citizen participation in decision-making (for example, local and regional referenda), the status and duties of local elected representatives, the distribution of powers between the various categories of local authorities and regional administration, co-operation between levels, financing, controls, personnel, and reforms. Available from:

The OECD Public Management Service
Email: pum.contact@oecd.org

Performance Examination: A Means to an End. Contracting Not-for-Profit Organisations for the Delivery of Community Services

Office of the Auditor General of Western Australia,
Report N°3, June 2000 (38 pages, ISBN 0-7307-5609-2)

This report to the Parliament of Western Australia assesses the effectiveness with which selected public sector agencies have managed key aspects of the process of contracting not-for-profit organisations (NFPOs) for the delivery of community welfare services. Such aspects include contract planning, procurement planning, the tendering process, contract administration, contract evaluation and renewal, and service monitoring. Recommendations are included. Available from:

Office of the Auditor General of Western Australia
2 Havelock Street West Perth, WA 6005
Tel.+61-8-92.22.75.00 Fax:+61-8-93.22.56.64
Email: info@audit.wa.gov.au
<http://www.audit.wa.gov.au>

Quality in Social Public Services

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2001
(138 pages, ISBN 92-897-0066-1)

This report examines the impact of quality improvement initiatives on both services to clients and working conditions. It represents a synthesis of studies from field research in ten EU Member States with supplementary research from the remaining five. It documents and assesses service improvements which aim to meet the needs of client groups who typically have multiple needs. The report focuses in particular on measures for co-ordinated and integrated service delivery, for user empowerment and for quality assurance. It examines how these changes can lead to better quality services, and also looks at the implications for workers. Finally, the report gives recommendations and strategies for the future development of social public services in the EU. Available from:

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
Wyattville Road, Loughlinstown, Co.Dublin, Ireland
Tel.+353-1-2043100 Fax:+353-1-2826456
Email: postmaster@eurofound.ie
<http://www.eurofound.ie>

An index of Focus articles, cross-referenced by subject keywords and country, is now available on the Focus website. See <http://www.oecd.org/puma/focus/>.

The New Public Organization

by Kenneth Kernaghan, Brian Marson, Sandford Borins
Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 2000
(368 pages, ISBN 0-920715-95-8)

This book explains concepts and practices that are changing dramatically the structure and culture of public organisations. It also describes innovations that public service managers may adapt to their own organisations and that may prompt them to take a more innovative approach to managing. The authors examine the movement towards the new public organisation through such means as citizen-centred service, restructuring, employee empowerment, partnerships, citizen engagement, continuous learning, information technology, and strengthened policy capacity. The book differs from most writings on public service reform in two ways: it examines the barriers as well as the avenues to successful reform and it explains not only the political and managerial dimensions of reform but also its often-neglected value and ethical dimensions. Available from:

The Institute of Public Administration of Canada
1075 rue Bay Street Toronto, Ontario M5S 2B1
Tel.+1-416-924.87.87 Fax:+1-416-924.49.92
Email: ntl@ipaciapc.ca
<http://www.ipaciapc.ca>

Co-operation with China on budget reform

During the past two decades, the People's Republic of China has embarked on a series of profound economic reforms aimed at transforming a centrally planned economy into a market-based economy. The modernisation of budget institutions and processes has, however, lagged behind in the overall economic reforms in China. The current system thus reflects more the systems traditionally in place in planned economies. The Chinese budget does not have the same stature as it does in OECD Member countries, where the budget is generally the single most important policy document of governments and is the primary vehicle for reconciling policy objectives and

implementing them in concrete terms. The importance of the budget is, however, increasing significantly and rapidly as China moves away from the planned economy. Since the Asian financial crisis, China has relied more and more on budgetary support of internal demand to achieve growth.

In 1999, the OECD and the Chinese authorities launched an extensive co-operation programme in the field of budgeting in the framework of the overall OECD-China programme of dialogue and co-operation, managed by OECD's Centre for Co-operation with Non-Members (CCNM). This programme is based on bringing together senior officials from OECD Member countries and the Chinese government to engage in policy dialogue and to exchange

expertise and experience. The OECD — and its Member countries — share their rich and varied policy experiences with China. The OECD's Working Party of Senior Budget Officials (see page 1), a subsidiary body of the OECD's Public Management Committee, is closely involved in monitoring this activity.

On average, six events have been conducted each year as part of the OECD-China dialogue in budgeting. The main partner organisations in China are the Ministry of Finance, the Budget Commission of the National People's Congress and the State Council Commission for Public Sector Reform.

The support of the Government of Japan for this activity is gratefully acknowledged. For more information, contact jon.blondal@oecd.org.

Forthcoming report on Government-Citizen Relations

On 21-22 June 2001, the PUMA Working Group on Strengthening Government-Citizen Connections met to review the final draft of PUMA's report on *Engaging Citizens in Policy-making: Information, Consultation and Active Participation in OECD countries*. The report is a unique source of comparative information on measures for strengthening citizen access to information, consultation and participation in policy-making in OECD countries. The report offers an overall framework within which to examine a wide range of country experiences, identify examples of good practice and highlight innovative approaches - including the use of new ICTs. The report is accompanied by a Policy Brief as well as a practical "Handbook on Strengthening Government-Citizen Relations" developed for government officials in OECD Member and non-member countries alike. The report and accompanying handbook will be published in early October 2001 and the Policy Brief will be made available free of charge on the PUMA website.

Devolving power to and controlling autonomous public bodies: The governance of public agencies and authorities

On 19-20 April 2001, the OECD Public Management Service organised an expert meeting on the governance of public agencies and authorities, with representatives from Canada, France, Germany, Iceland, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States. The goal of the meeting was to examine ways of strengthening the governance arrangements (transparency and accountability mechanisms) of public bodies which have been given a certain level of managerial autonomy or political independence to carry out public tasks, including service delivery, regulatory functions or advisory activities. Conclusions of the meeting as well as country reports will soon be published. PUMA intends to organise a high-level forum for heads of public agencies of OECD Member countries in the first semester of 2002. A meeting focussing on the same issues will also be organised for Central and Eastern European countries on 22-23 November 2001, and hosted by the government of the Slovak Republic in Bratislava. For more information, please contact elsa.pilichowski@oecd.org or hae-sang.kwon@oecd.org

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