

Focus

Public Management Newsletter

Sept.-Nov. 1999
Number 14

This newsletter is prepared by the Public Management Service (PUMA)
with guidance from the OECD Public Management Committee.
Web site: <http://www.oecd.org/puma/focus>

Shaping the government of the future OECD Symposium considers challenges to good governance

On 14-15 September 1999, senior government officials from 27 OECD Member countries gathered at a symposium organised by the OECD on "Government of the Future: Getting from Here to There". Other participants included representatives from the Asian Development Bank, the European Commission, the Commonwealth Secretariat and PricewaterhouseCoopers LLC.

High-level reformers met at this symposium to examine the governance challenges facing both political and administrative leaders, and to look at ways of addressing them. To reflect the diverse systems and circumstances of the OECD membership, preparations for the symposium drew upon reports from nine countries representing a broad mix of reform experiences. In addition, reports prepared by seven experts in public management reform provided the basis for the five sessions, which are summarised below.

Governing into the future

The first session looked at the pressures governments are likely to face in the decades ahead, and at how governments will have to change to respond to them. Participants identified future challenges, including:

- a decline in trust in government;
- a better educated and more knowledgeable citizenry;
- increasingly diverse and fragmented societies;
- greater authority given to supra-national and subnational bodies;
- changing patterns of employment and lifestyle.

Efficient approaches to reform

Session two focussed on approaches to reform: what had and had not worked in the past, and what is likely to work in

the future. During the plenary session and later in four working groups, participants discussed issues such as how to build public confidence in government and meet rising citizen expectations; the need for flexibility and continuous improvement, and how to overcome "reform fatigue"; how different cultural and political circumstances required different approaches. Strong leadership, the involvement of citizens and staff, effective accountability systems, comprehensiveness and coherence were all identified as important elements of successful reform.

"Successful reform ... depends on leaders who exploit openings and give impetus and direction to change. Strong leaders do not just "read" opportunities; they make them." -- Allen Schick

Building coherence

The third session considered how governments could ensure the coherence of reform, and how evaluation could help achieve it.

A country's institutional context is a determining factor. The size, strength and function of the centre of government vary widely among countries, and result in different approaches to building coherence both within and across

levels of government. One strategy cited by many countries was inter-ministerial co-operation, through cross-ministerial units, initiatives, task forces.

Managing change

Session four looked at how to implement and manage significant change: change that reaches an organisation's systems, processes, behaviours and values, and touches its very core and culture. Participants broke into working groups to discuss how public sectors can create a change-enabling culture, and how to implement, manage and sustain change. Leadership, clear communication, training, and incentive and reward systems were among the mechanisms identified.

Developing leadership

The final session of the symposium dealt with how governments can identify future effective leaders, develop their skills and retain them.

New public sector environments involving constant change, higher expectations and rapid communications require new types of leaders, with skills that go beyond technical expertise and managerial ability. It was stressed that these leadership skills cannot be learned in a classroom; they must be acquired through real-life experience.

Participants discussed tools such as 360-degree feedback (assessment by peers and subordinates as well as by superiors); incentive and promotion systems; training; and performance management systems. They pointed out the need for leaders at all levels of an organisation to be involved, and warned of the dangers of "anointing" leaders rather than providing opportunities for leaders to emerge.

Next steps

PUMA is preparing a publication that will include the key points emerging from the symposium, drawing on the papers presented as well as on the discussions in plenary sessions and working groups. This publication will be released in early 2000.

For more information

Papers for the symposium, including the nine country reports, are available on PUMA's website (www.oecd.org/puma). ■

●Quality for the citizen

The **Greek** Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation has launched a “Quality for the Citizen” project Measures to improve the quality of public services include:

- Simplifying administrative procedures;
- Redesigning administrative forms to improve and simplify content, structure and language used;
- Giving legal weight to electronic communications (fax and e-mail) both among public services and between public services and citizens;
- Establishing Charts of Citizens’ Rights for public services at all levels of government.

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*More detailed information
 on country initiatives
 is available on PUMA’s website:
<http://www.oecd.org/puma/country/>.*

●Surveying customer satisfaction

In December 1998, the **United States** Vice President asked the leaders of the 30 agencies that represent 90% of the federal government’s interaction with citizens to compare their services to the private sector and to each other. A baseline survey is being carried out by the American Customer Satisfaction Index out using interviews with randomly selected agency customers, and should be completed by end November 1999. A federal advisory board of experts in customer service will review and verify the quality of the results.

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●Information “hypercentre”

Spain has created an “information hypercentre” providing information on and access to all public administration services on the Internet. National, local and Autonomous Community administrations are linked in a single network, which will enable them to conduct business electronically both with each other and with the public.

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●Simplifying government

Norway has launched a two-year programme called “Simplifying Norway”. Its objective is to strengthen and co-ordinate the government’s efforts to create a better functioning public administration. The programme includes three main initiatives:

- Simplifying regulations for the business sector;
- Making the public administration more citizen-oriented and user-friendly;
- Simplifying regulations concerning municipalities, allowing them to devote more resources to service delivery.

The programme is co-ordinated by a cabinet committee chaired by the Prime Minister.

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●Improving customer relations

In 1999, the **French** Ministry of Infrastructure asked each of its local offices to create a customer relations function to develop, promote and co-ordinate measures to improve responsiveness to users. The person assigned to this task would work with unit heads, receptionists, complaint services and others to ensure quality of service and attentiveness to user needs. He or she would also act as mediator in disputes with customers. To support this initiative, the Ministry has organised mediation training activities and set up a network for the exchange of experience and best practices.

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● Developing quality management

As part of the 1999 agreement between the **Danish** Minister for Finance and the public service labour unions, a new Centre for Development of Human Resources and Quality Management will be established by 1 January 2000.

The Centre will promote and facilitate the development of human resources and quality management in central government by co-ordinating existing activities, providing advice to central government institutions and labour unions and serving, among others, the Evaluation Committee of the Public Sector Quality Award.

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● New Civil Service Commission

In May 1999, **Korea** established a Civil Service Commission as the central agency for personnel management. Its main tasks are:

- to formulate basic policy concerning personnel management and the pay system;
- to make appointments to and review promotions in the senior civil service;
- to develop and implement an open competition recruitment system;
- to supervise personnel management.

● Improving recruitment procedures

The **Irish** civil service is taking steps to improve recruitment procedures so as to attract more high-calibre candidates. These include a short-term programme to address current supply problems, a medium-term strategy on manpower planning, and more targeted and frequent recruitment competitions. For the longer term, a new organisational model for recruitment, underpinned by new legislation, is being developed.

● Promoting gender equality

In **Ireland**, the government has approved a strategy to further promote gender equality in the civil service, including:

- The development of a new Equality Policy to be drafted by a high-level management group;
- A programme of affirmative action in the areas of recruitment, placement, mobility, training and development, work and family responsibilities, language and sexual harassment, and policy implementation;
- The setting of specific equality goals at department and office level to be achieved over a stated period of time.

● Partnership structures

Ireland has set up partnership structures in each government department and office to promote the active involvement of management, unions and staff in carrying forward the Strategic Management Initiative/Delivering Better Government programme of change and to address operational issues and challenges. A Departmental Partnership Committee directs the development of the partnership process and the drawing up of action plans to further the change programme. It is proposed to review the process at end 1999 to determine the best structures for the long term.

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● Performance management system

Ireland plans to introduce a new performance management system that will apply to staff at all levels in the civil service. It involves the setting of objectives and targets at individual and team levels based on departmental business plans. In contrast to previous performance appraisal systems, the new system places increased emphasis on the identification and development of the knowledge, skills, and other competencies needed to perform effectively. An extensive training programme will underpin the implementation process, which should be launched later this year once agreements with the trade unions are finalised.

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● A single agreement for staff

In November 1998, the **Spanish** administration and the trade unions signed the Single Agreement for staff in the national general administration. The Agreement unified 53 Common Agreements, and affected more than 100,000 workers. The Agreement reduced the number of professional categories to eight homogeneous groups, specifying the professional skills and education related to each one as well as the general content of the corresponding jobs. This framework allows a greater functional mobility of personnel. The Agreement also covered issues such as working hours, training, vacations, promotion and dismissal, and simplified the wage system.

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Budget presentation and fiscal transparency

Fiscal transparency — the full disclosure of all relevant fiscal information on a systematic and timely basis — is fundamental to sound economic and fiscal policy. It is increasingly recognised that fiscal transparency supports policy credibility and contributes to macroeconomic stability, fiscal discipline and fairness.

The table below presents an excerpt from the OECD Budgeting Database. This information is collected by comprehensive surveys sent to Member countries each year in connection with the meeting of Senior Budget Officials organised by the OECD Public Management Service (see *Focus* Number 13).

Mechanisms to increase fiscal transparency (values expressed in percentage of countries surveyed*)

Mechanism	Countries applying this mechanism	Countries not applying this mechanism	Is mechanism a legal requirement ?	
			Yes	No
Formal announcement of government's medium-term (3-5 years) fiscal policy objectives	100		50	50
Budget documentation presented to legislature:				
- Detailed estimates of revenue and expenditure presented together	35.7			
- General overview of revenue and expenditure + separate detailed estimates of expenditure	60.7			
- Other	14.3			
Budget documentation includes non-financial performance data	75	25	35.7	57.1
Budget documentation contains a comparison with actual expenditure during past years	82.1	10.7	64.4	50.0
Special report on fiscal outlook released prior to elections	14.3	82.1	10.7	78.6
Regular report on the long-term outlook (10-40 years) for public finances	14.3	85.7	7.1	67.9
Regular report on tax expenditures	75.0	21.4	42.9	50.0
Citizen's guide to the budget on Internet	67.9	32.1		--
Budget documentation on Internet	85.7	10.7		--

* Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

Note: As responses were not received by all countries in some cases, percentages may not add up to 100%.

●Partnerships with the private sector

Since 1996, **Australia's** Department of Finance and Administration (DoFA) has been developing relationships with private sector partners, outsourcing corporate support functions such as internal communications services and management of property and facilities. Recently, DoFA signed a contract with PricewaterhouseCoopers for its personnel, payroll and recruitment services. DoFA has found that these strategic partnerships provide benefits such as cost savings and improved service as well as access to the expertise and resources of their private sector partners. In addition, they give managers more time to concentrate on policy issues.

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●Budgeting and financial management

Ireland is introducing the third and final phase of its multi-annual budget process this year. As of 2000-2001, each ministry will have a global budget for both current and capital expenditure. This will allow overall budgetary, taxation and expenditure priorities to be considered in a medium-term context. Furthermore, a new model for financial management will be developed and implemented in a five-year action programme. The new model will enable full costing of programmes and provide the information needed to measure and evaluate the achievement of departmental strategic objectives.

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●Endorsed supplier arrangements

The **Australian** government has developed a new system to approve suppliers of information technology, office machines and furniture for government buyers. Under this Endorsed Supplier Arrangement (ESA), suppliers can use the Internet-based application and assessment system to apply for endorsement. Once endorsed, a supplier can directly update the information on his or her company. An online search facility allows buyers to find information on suppliers, outlet or dealer networks and the products and services offered. ESA also provides businesses with formal recognition that they conform to industry standards and meet a satisfactory level of financial viability. For more information, see <http://www.ctc.gov.au/esa/>.

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●Change Management Fund

A central Change Management Fund has been set up in the **Irish** Department of Finance to provide financial assistance to individual government departments (ministries) and offices in launching initiatives under the SMI/Delivering Better Government programme of change. The Fund was set up in recognition of the need for such assistance in the crucial start-up phase. Subventions of up to 40 to 50% of the cost of change projects will be made; the level of subvention may be higher in the case of departments and offices with limited resources. The Fund, which will run for five years, will be administered jointly by the Departments of Finance and *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister). It is proposed to review the Fund annually. The sum allocated for 1999 is IR£5 million.

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●Increased budgetary flexibility

Austria is taking steps towards introducing global budgeting. A new "experimentation clause" is being piloted whereby agencies can use savings partly at their own discretion. Pilot agencies drew up programmes including a budget for the years 2002-2003 and a list of outputs to be produced. Within these budgets, agencies are allowed a certain degree of flexibility.

OECD Reviews of Regulatory Reform

The OECD Reviews of Regulatory Reform in **Japan**, **Mexico**, the **Netherlands** and the **United States** are the first of a series of country reports carried out under the OECD's Regulatory Reform Programme, launched in 1998 in response to a mandate from ministers. This Programme is aimed at helping governments improve regulatory quality -- that is, reforming regulations that raise unnecessary obstacles to competition, innovation and growth, while ensuring that regulations efficiently serve important social objectives. It is a multi-disciplinary process of in-depth country reviews, based on self-assessment and on peer evaluation. The country Reviews are not comprehensive, but rather targeted at key reform areas. Each Review has the same structure, including three thematic chapters on the quality of regulatory institutions and government processes; competition policy and enforcement; and the enhancement of market openness through regulatory reform. As of October 1999, Reviews of Japan, the Netherlands and the United States have been published, and can be purchased from the OECD Online Bookshop: <http://www.oecd.org>.

● Comparing public service accessibility

Since 1997, **Denmark** has been using a structural monitoring system to compare its performance in a number of areas with that of seven other OECD countries. In 1999, one area studied was the accessibility of public authorities and institutions for citizens and businesses. The following four indicators were used to measure accessibility in twelve public services:

- Number of public authorities that a citizen or business must contact to obtain a certain service.
- Time elapsed before the service is delivered.
- Extent of freedom to choose among suppliers of public services and the possibility to withdraw when service or accessibility is not satisfactory.
- Extent of electronic accessibility.

The results, which indicate that Denmark is doing well overall, are published and made available on the website of the Ministry of Finance (<http://www.fm.dk>).

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● Performance indicators on taxation

Following a European Union project on the use of performance indicators, "learning laboratories" are being set up to allow countries to carry out more detailed benchmarking in specific sectors of the public administration. **Austria** has initiated a learning laboratory on taxation, focusing on a small number of indicators concerning tax assessment and audit:

- files processed per staff member;
- additional tax revenue due to tax audit;
- indicators related to the quality of decisions, such as rate of dismissals of court appeals;
- average duration of a tax audit;
- opening hours of revenue offices.

● Evaluating public service quality

As part of Phase Three of its Public Sector Benchmarking project (see *Focus* Number Ten), the **United Kingdom** is encouraging self-assessment in public sector organisations using quality schemes such as the EFQM's Excellence Model© (BEM), Charter Mark, Investors in People and ISO 9000. To ensure that the schemes are used most effectively, the Cabinet Office has published a guide to the schemes and how they interrelate. This guide is accessible via the Internet at <http://www.servicefirst.gov.uk/1999/guidance/quality.htm>.

Esquema general para impulsar las acciones de modernización en las dependencias y entidades de la Administración Pública Federal, en el periodo 1999-2000 (Programa de Modernización de la Administración Pública 1995-2000)

Ministry of the Comptrollership and Administrative Development, Mexico, December 1998 (120 pages)

To complement the Modernisation Programme for the Public Administration 1995-2000 (PROMAP), the Mexican Ministry of the Comptrollership and Administrative Development produced an outline of actions to carry forward modernisation in the ministries and agencies of the federal public administration. The focus now is on strategic planning within each institution to determine the fundamental elements of its mission and strategic objectives, and on functional and operational diagnosis of the priority projects, processes and services so as to identify weaknesses and areas for improvement. Available in Spanish only from:

Secretaria de Contraloria
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Col.Guadalupe Inn
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The European Way to Excellence: How 35 European manufacturing, public and service organisations make use of quality management

T.S. Hardjono, S. ten Have, W.D. ten Have, for the European Commission
ISBN 1-901305-007, 215 pages, 1996

This book is based on actual case studies of 35 European manufacturing, service and public sector organisations ranging in size from very small to large. Public sector organisations include health care, economic development, and electricity supply. The fact-based analysis examines what quality management and the quest for excellence means to European organisations. It describes how they have managed both business and organisational challenges and paints a picture of the approaches chosen. The emphasis is on providing insights, rather than developing "recipes" or "how-to" models. It is thus descriptive, not prescriptive. Available in English from:

European Commission
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Unit A/3 Industrial Competitiveness
Office: SC 15 5/140
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Canada Year Book 1999

Minister of Industry, 1998, 552 pages, ISBN 0-660-17479-0

Organised under four general headings — the environment, the people, the economy, the nation — the 15 chapters and 240 tables provide analysis and data on all elements of national activity in Canada. Source pages offer a selection of the publications and agencies consulted as part of the research. Available both in CD-ROM and print format, in English and French, from:

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 E-mail: order@statcan.ca
<http://www.statcan.ca>

La Organización de la Administración Pública en México

National Institute of Public Administration, A.C., 1999
 ISBN 968-6403-72-8 and 968-18-5857-3, 586 pages

This Manual of the Organisation of the Centralised Federal Public Administration of Mexico presents organigrammes for the ministries and agencies and describes their roles. The origins and evolution of the federal administration are explained, the legal texts that underpin the structure are listed, and contact information is included. Available in Spanish only from:

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Performance Plans: Selected Approaches for Verification and Validation of Agency Performance Information

United States General Accounting Office, July 1999
 GAO/GGD-99-139, 48 pages

This report to Congress identifies reasonable approaches that the 24 agencies covered by the Chief Financial Officers Act (CFO) have proposed or adopted to verify and validate performance information. It describes these approaches in order to help agency managers select appropriate techniques for assessing, documenting, and improving the quality of their performance data. Available in English only from:

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 E-mail: info@www.gao.gov
<http://www.gao.gov>

Working Together: A Government of Canada/Voluntary Sector Joint Initiative

Report of the Joint Tables, Government of Canada
 August 1999, 69 pages

In the spring of 1999, the Canadian federal government and the voluntary sector launched a joint initiative to improve and strengthen their long-standing relationship. The initiative was designed to develop new and increasingly strategic ways of achieving their mutual goal: improving the quality of life for Canadians. Joint Tables, composed of government officials and leaders from the voluntary sector, were assigned to address three primary issues: building a new relationship, strengthening capacity, and improving the regulatory framework. Preliminary findings were presented to a roundtable meeting of ministers, secretaries of state and voluntary sector leaders in June 1999. This report presents the ideas that emerged and the options put forward. Available in English and French from:

Voluntary Sector Task Force
 Privy Council Office
http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/prog_e.htm

PUMA publishes reports on a wide range of public management topics. For listings of PUMA publications (both free documents and for-sale books), see <http://www.oecd.org/puma/>.

Managing for Results: Opportunities for Continued Improvements in Agencies' Performance Plans

United States General Accounting Office, July 1999
 GAO/GGD/AIMD-99-215, 124 pages

As part of the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, this report to Congress provides summary information based on a review and evaluation of the fiscal year 2000 performance plans of the 24 government agencies covered by the Chief Financial Officers Act (CFO). Three key elements are: clear pictures of intended performance; specific discussions of strategies and resources; and confidence that performance information will be credible. Available in English only from:

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● Administrative transparency

To help prevent corruption and improve service to citizens, the **Korean** capital, Seoul, launched its Online Procedures Enhancement (OPEN) system for civil applications in April 1999.

Twenty-seven procedures are covered by OPEN, including permits for construction, land development and business start-ups; requests for compensation for damages caused by a city project, etc. Citizens can use OPEN both to obtain detailed information on application procedures and to monitor applications via the Internet. As soon as an application is filed, its details are entered into the system. Citizens can then track the application through each stage of processing, learning who is handling the case, when a permit or compensation will be granted — or, if rejected, for what reasons. Results so far are positive, and the central government is reviewing the possibility of extending the system to all administrative organisations. For more information see <http://www.metro.seoul.kr/>.

● Preventing corruption

The **Mexican** government has established a Working Group on Prevention and Action against Corruption for the internal organs of control (OIC) of all federal government branches. This group has three objectives:

- To strengthen the function of the OICs, fostering a common language and outlook on prevention, as well as actions against administrative corruption;
- To improve investigation and monitoring of corruption in the federal government branches, with emphasis on prevention strategies;
- To create an information network to share experiences and good practice in fighting corruption.

Public Sector Corruption: An International Survey of Prevention Measures

Integrity is a fundamental pre-condition for governments seeking to provide a trust-worthy and effective framework for the economic and social life of their citizens. It is now widely recognised that countering corruption and promoting public integrity are critical for sustained economic development. Corruption, however, is not a cause but a consequence: as much the result of systematic failure as of individual dishonesty. It is therefore invaluable, in taking action against corruption, to have an understanding of the relevant legal, civil service and management systems employed by a range of countries to counter corruption. This recent publication surveys the measures currently being used by 15 OECD countries to protect their domestic public institutions against corruption. For more information, including the Executive Summary of the publication, or to order a copy of this book, see <http://www.oecd.org/puma/gvrnance/ethics>.

PUMA's website contains information on current OECD activities in the field of public management, including public sector ethics and corruption. OECD reports, information on Member countries, links to other relevant sites, and more can be found at <http://www.oecd.org/puma>.

International Workshop on Combating Corruption in Asia/Pacific Economies

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the OECD organised an anti-corruption workshop on 29 September-1 October 1999 in Manila. Over 160 senior officials and leading business and civil society representatives from 35 ADB and OECD countries discussed efforts to fight corruption on the national and international level. The objective of the workshop was to raise awareness of the seriousness of the corruption problem and to identify effective anti-corruption strategies. Workshop participants agreed on the need to fight all types of corruption on all levels, and recognised the progress made in some countries to develop anti-corruption programmes. The international dimension of corruption, organised crime and money laundering was also acknowledged. Participants identified priority measures to fight corruption, and agreed on sets of implementation strategies for fighting corruption in the public sector, the private sector and the media and civil society. Finally, participants urged that another meeting be held within a year to review progress. For more information on the conference, including conclusions and recommendations, see <http://www.oecd.org/puma/gvrnance/ethics/>.

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Printed by Actuel Graphic

91969 Courtaboeuf Cedex France

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