



OECD/GOV Webinar Series: OECD Building A New Paradigm For Public Trust

Webinar 4: Crisis as Engine of Public Sector Trust: Opportunities for COVID-19 Recovery

**Opening Remarks by Jeffrey Schlagenhauf,
Deputy Secretary-General
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(As prepared for delivery)

Good afternoon,

Many thanks to the speakers and participants for joining today's webinar.

This is the fourth webinar in our series "Building a new paradigm for public trust". Today we will focus on the public sector's capacity to address the crisis and the changes required to foster public trust.

The COVID-19 crisis has put a spotlight on the critical role of public institutions, highlighting how a trusting relationship between people and their administration can make all the difference when addressing societal challenges.

Evidence shows that the effectiveness of measures designed to address the COVID-19 crisis often depends on the levels of trust in public institutions. For example, results in 233 regions in 19 European countries show that in high-trust regions, mobility related to non-necessary activities was significantly lower than in low-trust regions, showing better compliance to national health policies.

At the same time, the choice of policy alternatives during the pandemic is linked to how people perceive **government competence** - meaning its responsiveness and reliability - and **governance principles** – that is its integrity, openness and fairness. For example, in Finland and Korea, the reliability and responsiveness of service delivery were found to have significant influence on people's trust in government, according to OECD surveys.

Management of the COVID-19 crisis can provide useful reflections about the future of public administrations in terms of adapting the design and delivery of public services to best advance recovery packages.

The crisis has forced the public service to become more flexible and resilient.

For example, information and communication technologies have enabled public employees to work remotely without affecting delivery and performance of services. These changes can foster **innovation** by facilitating exchange and collaboration across government organisations to address the complex challenges related to the recovery. In order to realise this innovation potential, **civil servants need to be able to network both inside and outside the public service**, incubating social innovation and leveraging the government as a platform.

The webinar series “**Building a new paradigm for public trust**” is helping us – through a dialogue with policy makers, data providers, academia and civil society – to revisit the way we understand public trust to help countries respond to the COVID-19 crisis in the short and long term.

In this respect, let me **highlight two important findings**.

First, the need to **collect and “unpack” more internationally comparable data on citizens’ perception, evaluation and experience with the public sector**. For example, in the previous webinar we heard that young people are affected by the COVID-19 crisis in a different way than older generations, while they tend to have higher levels of trust in government and international institutions. Such data would provide countries with benchmarks to improve the implementation of recovery plans. **The OECD supports the dialogue on relevant data and evidence.**

Second, in addition to monitoring the main drivers of trust in government identified in the **OECD Trust Framework**, it is important to understand **whether people trust recovery policies to be sustainable in the long term**. For example, if people expect that the government will change the way public services are provided, they may decide not to rely on these services in the first place.

The OECD will launch a **“Trust during a crisis” publication**, gathering data and lessons learned through this webinar series, to support design and implementation of the recovery policies of OECD countries.

I want to thank you all for joining us in today’s webinar. I now give the floor back to **Janos Bertok**, Deputy Director of the OECD Public Governance Directorate, who will moderate today’s discussion.

Thank you.