Human Resources Management Working Party

ANNOTATED DRAFT AGENDA

MANAGING SENIOR MANAGEMENT: SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE REFORM IN OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES
Experts Meeting

OECD, Paris
6 October, 2003

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NOTE FOR THE EXPERTS MEETING ON
MANAGING SENIOR MANAGEMENT:
SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE REFORM IN OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES

OECD, Paris, 6 October, 2003

Background

1. Reform of the management of senior civil servants has been on the agenda of OECD member countries for a long time. More particularly, senior civil servants are seen as a crucial element of most public management reforms. Recently, reports show that countries are striving to make their civil services more responsive to both policy decisions and the needs of citizens through more emphasis on “performance” rather than on compliance with processes. This has meant some decentralisation of managerial decision making and more emphasis on the individual responsibility and performance of top managers. While the challenges are of a different nature for career-based senior civil services and position-based ones, the focus is increasingly turning towards leadership and change management as well as human resources management.

2. It seems that governments are faced with three major challenges that have fundamental consequences for the management of senior management:
   - The increasing demands of modern government for knowledge and skill – and the increasing difficulty of government in attracting and keeping high quality staff.
   - The inter-connectedness of key public problems, the fragmentation of public action and the individualisation of public service responsibilities and incentives.
   - The problem of attracting and motivating senior executives who meet the demands of a modern ministry for high performance, while keeping them in a wider cross-government culture dedicated to the public interest.

3. The Secretariat’s early findings in the initial report are that the reforms of the two fundamentally different systems across OECD member countries have resulted in an integration of some of the organisational principles of each, even though they are different.

4. “Career-based” systems with a tradition of centralised recruitment, promotion, and training are introducing reforms like external competition for open positions, ministerial management by objectives and life-long training programmes.

5. “Position-based” systems with a great extent of decentralised management of appointment, promotion, and training are increasingly introducing central guidance on appointments, talent pools and inter-ministerial databases of present and potential senior civil servants.

6. The early examination of management reforms across 12 OECD member countries seems thus to reveal that the two main senior civil service types are evolving while the classic typology seems limited and might need refining.

Project objectives and outcomes

7. The objectives of this project are to conclude on the respective strengths and weaknesses of the career-based, department-based and position-based systems of management of senior civil servants, to
address the new management and policy goals of public organisations. Based on the experiences of countries in reforming their systems, the project aims to make final recommendations on how to address the new challenges within the different types of system.

8. The meeting will review the conclusions of the draft note circulated by the Secretariat entitled “The New Public Executive: Reforming the senior civil service in 13 OECD member countries”. Discussions will be based on individual contributions by countries.

Organisation

9. The meeting will take place on 6 October 2003 at OECD Headquarters in Paris, Room E (2, rue André Pascal, 16th arrondissement. Metro: La Muette; RER: Henri Martin). Please note that security formalities at the entrance to the OECD may take 10-15 minutes.

Contact

10. For further information or questions about the meeting please contact Elsa Pilichowski at email elsa.pilichowski@oecd.org or telephone +33(0)1 45 24 76 12.
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DRAFT AGENDA

9:00 – 9:30  Coffee and croissants outside the meeting room

9:30 – 10:00  Introductory session

General overview by the Secretariat: first findings, governance issues
  ➢  Opening Remarks by the Chair and the OECD Secretariat
  ➢  Discussion

10:00 – 11:30  Session 1

Assessing the achievements, challenges and difficulties of position-based systems
  ➢  The examples of Denmark and Norway
  ➢  Lead commentator
  ➢  Discussion

Assessing the achievements, challenges and difficulties of whole of government career-based systems
  ➢  The example of France
  ➢  Lead commentator
  ➢  Discussion

11:30 – 12:00  Coffee break

12:00 – 12:45  Session 2

Assessing the achievements, challenges and difficulties of department-based systems
  ➢  The example of Germany
  ➢  Lead commentator
  ➢  Discussion

12:45 – 14:15  Lunch
14:15 – 15:15  Session 3: Reforming the system

Opening up/increasing competition within career-based systems
➢  The example of Korea
➢  Lead commentator
➢  Discussion

15:15 – 15:45  Coffee break

15:45 – 16:45  Session 3 (continued)

Enhancing a whole of government management of top executives in department-based systems
➢  The example of Finland
➢  Lead commentator
➢  Discussion

Making a radical change
➢  The example of Belgium
➢  Lead commentator
➢  Discussion

16:45 – 17:15  Wrap up

Within the two different systems of management of senior executives, how to best address the new challenges posed to public organisations?