COMMUNICATIONS IN PUMA:
PROGRESS REPORT AND OUTLOOK

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1. This report briefly describes efforts by the OECD Public Management Service (PUMA) to enhance the communication of its work, increase its visibility and influence, and thus better serve its clients. It discusses how PUMA is implementing the recommendations of the Communications Advisory Group, describes new communications products and actions taken to raise PUMA’s profile, highlights initiatives to improve the presentation and promotion of the OECD’s work overall, and, finally, outlines ways Committee members can assist the Secretariat in reaching its target audiences. A programme of work for PUMA Communications and Information is outlined at the end of the report.

Recommendations by the Communications Advisory Group of the Public Management Committee

2. At the April 2000 session of the Public Management Committee, the Committee’s Communications Advisory Group (CAG) submitted a report on PUMA’s communications strategy, focussing in particular on PUMA’s target audiences and the ways to reach these audiences and influence policy. The report contained two recommendations:

Recommendation One

The Secretariat should ensure that each work product identified in the annual work plan includes a communications strategy:

- Who is the audience?
- What is the message?
- When should it be delivered?
- What do we want them to do when they receive it?
- How do we engage their attention?

Recommendation Two

The Secretariat should incorporate the following guidelines into its internal procedures and quality review of draft outputs:

- Content -- Products should be more policy-relevant, not purely descriptive.

- Style -- Products should have one-page executive summaries that carry clear, explicit messages. They should be short and pithy, more direct, and to the point. Stated another way,
our goal should be to “reduce the issue to its pulsing essence.” 1 Publications should also include more visual elements, and should be user-friendlier, both in terms of language and design.

- **Timing** --The timely publication of outputs should have the highest priority. Quicker turnaround should be ensured.

- **Accessibility** -- Products should be easily accessible, and understandable by readers who are not French or English native speakers. Emphasis should be given to producing fewer publications for sale (both in terms of numbers of volumes and number of pages), but more documents for free distribution both in paper and electronic format.

- **Instruments** – Outputs should be fit for the purpose. Communications instruments should be chosen with a goal of maximising the impact and influence of the work. Consideration should be given to communications instruments other than traditional outputs such as publications (for example, face-to-face briefings, special seminars and meetings for political and policy officials).

3. The PUMA Secretariat welcomed these recommendations and has taken steps to implement them.

4. With regard to Recommendation One, the Secretariat is explicitly integrating communications considerations in its work programme. Communications strategy elements are being incorporated into business plans and activity descriptions [see PUMA(2000)9], stating the target audience, the message and appropriate instruments for communicating the message. For example, outputs of the 1999 survey of ethics measures in OECD countries were tailored to different audiences:

- A PUMA Policy Brief, *Building Public Trust*, and a summary of the survey's findings targeted senior policymakers;

- An OECD flagship book, *Trust in Government*, and background papers were aimed at public management professionals; and

- An OECD Policy Brief, *The Fight against Bribery and Corruption*, and an article in the *OECD Observer* carry the message to the wider public.

In addition to these products, efforts to promote the results of the survey included an OECD news release, flyers and a media seminar on the flagship books; a PUMA workshop and plenary discussion at an ethics conference in Ottawa; and items on the OECD homepage and the redesigned PUMA website. The news release produced immediate results: the same day we received several orders for the flagship book, including from the French Minister of the Civil Service and Reform of the State and from the *Procureur général* of the French *Cour des Comptes*.

5. PUMA is working closely with the OECD Public Affairs and Communications Directorate (PAC) to identify other priority areas of our work programme that could receive similar attention.

6. To respond to Recommendation Two, the Secretariat is looking at how to improve the quality and timeliness of its outputs through, for example, author training, the use of the OECD style guidelines,  

enhanced quality control of texts, and streamlined production processes. It is using a broad array of instruments to disseminate its work: CD-ROMs, extensive use of the website, policy briefs, media events, seminars, conferences, etc. All PUMA publications contain succinct executive summaries, which are often made available on the website or repackaged in other ways.

New PUMA products

7. Several new PUMA products are being launched this year to package our work more effectively, for example:

- The OECD Governance Database on governance structures in Member countries. The Database will be available on the website, integrating the vast amount of governance-related information produced in PUMA and in other directorates (DAFFE and TDS), and allowing users to search and extract information and generate customised reports. The possibility of linking the Database to the World Bank’s Administrative and Civil Service Reform website is under discussion.

- The OECD Journal on Budgeting. This Journal will contain a selection of recent work carried out by the Working Party of Senior Budget Officials as well as contributions from finance ministries of Member countries. The Board of Editors is made up of senior budget officials. The first issue of the Journal will be published before the end of the year.

- A database of the results of the Multi-Country Business Survey on administrative compliance costs to businesses. It is planned to give anyone who purchases the publication presenting the results of the Survey free access to this database, either via a password-protected website or on CD-ROM.

8. In the coming year, PUMA will also tackle new knowledge management functions, including absorbing knowledge from SIGMA and tailoring past PUMA work (for example, work on managing across levels of government) to new target audiences such as transition countries. Existing databases (contacts, country information, etc.) will be updated and maintained to a high standard.

Raising the profile of PUMA’s work

9. To increase the visibility of PUMA’s work both within the OECD and outside, the Secretariat has been forging closer links with PAC and other directorates in the area of communications. In this way we can both provide input to various communications projects and take full advantage of communications instruments and opportunities in the Organisation. Some examples of how PUMA is playing a more proactive role are:

- Participating in communications task forces (e.g. the recent task force on enlarging the OECD audience).

- Working with the OECD Internet Editor and other directorates to launch and provide content for OECD “portal” web pages (bribery, electronic commerce, regulatory reform, governance, sustainable development).

- Exploring opportunities for media events with the Press Division of PAC, including events highlighting related work from several different directorates.
Discussing with PAC’s Marketing Division how best to promote PUMA products; for example, the new version of OECD Direct, the Organisation’s email alerting service, will allow clients to subscribe electronically to PUMA’s Focus newsletter and policy briefs directly from the OECD homepage.

These and other initiatives should make our work more visible to our colleagues in other parts of the OECD as well as to a wider audience outside the Organisation.

10. Furthermore, journalists from The Economist and other periodicals have expressed interest in attending a PUMA symposium on Accrual Accounting and Budgeting to be held in November and which will be attended by the French Secretary of State for the Budget. Another symposium on the role of the legislature in the budget process will be held at the French Senate in January 2001 and broadcast live on French television.

**OECD-wide initiatives**

11. The OECD as a whole is focussing on presenting its work both to a wider audience and in a more cross-cutting and coherent way:

- A new website is currently being piloted and will be applied across the house at the end of the year.

- An online subscription service, SourceOECD, gives universities and other organisations access to all OECD publications and journals. It includes a search function, and in future will present all publications broken down into chapters, each with an abstract summarising the contents.

- A post of Counsellor for Knowledge Management and Development has been created to improve information development and sharing.

PUMA keeps abreast of communications developments throughout the Organisation, making sure that, whenever possible, our needs are taken into account and our work benefits from new initiatives.

**How countries can help**

12. Committee members and other contacts in Member countries can help to ensure that PUMA’s work reaches target audiences and thus enhance its ability to influence policymakers. For example, delegates can:

- Encourage mutual web links between government sites and PUMA, inform of us sites we could link to, etc.

- Ensure that we receive up-to-date country information (reports of issues and developments, factsheets, updates).

- Promote the use of OLIS and OLISNet in all ministries and departments.

- Provide us with the titles of professional journals or other media (newsletters, websites…) used by you or your colleagues in which we could promote our work.
Inform us if specific PUMA products or promotional efforts are successful with a particular audience, or have a noticeable impact on policy or thinking.

Conclusion

13. PUMA has considerably increased its efforts to communicate its work more effectively, as has the OECD as a whole. Following the recommendations by the Communications Advisory Group, we are integrating communications into activity planning and striving for better quality, more timely and targeted products. We have strengthened our relations with PAC and other directorates, actively contributing to OECD-wide communications efforts, ensuring that PUMA work receives its share of attention and drawing on the Organisation’s resources to promote our work to the widest possible audience. The Secretariat will continue to work to improve its products and strategy, and welcomes further assistance and guidance from the Committee and its Communications Advisory Group.
Annex: Outline of a programme of work in communication and information

**Desired outcome**
To optimise ways of conveying PUMA results to their target audiences

**Issues**
- Improved communication
- Raising PUMA’s profile
- Knowledge management in PUMA

**Outputs**
- Better, better-targeted and more timely ways to relay information on PUMA work
- Higher quality information
- New instruments for Outreach communication
- Assistance to Divisions
- Forging closer relationships with PAC (Press, Internet Editor, Publications, Knowledge Manager, OECD Centres)
- Involvement in horizontal communications projects
- Enhanced communication in PUMA
- Absorbing SIGMA knowledge
- Providing "institutional memory"
- Database maintenance
- Assistance to Divisions

**Products**
- Website
- Flyers and other promotional material
- Focus newsletter
- Best Practices Institute
- Policy Briefs
- Media events
- Tailoring previous work to new audiences
- OECD "portal" web pages
- Best Practices Institute
- PUMA information/presentations at international conferences
- Media events
- Intranet
- Mailing list
- PUMA Library
- Tailoring previous work to new audiences