The Public Management Committee handbook provides an overview of the Committee’s responsibilities and mission, answers questions related to serving on the Committee and includes a short glossary of frequently used terms. This is a revision of the Orientation Guide for Members of the Public Management Committee [PUMA(97)17] which was made available at the meeting in March 1997.

The Annex to this document, PUMA(2001)15/ANN, contains a list of current members of PUMA Working Parties and networks.

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Who should serve on the Committee? 7
Senior civil servants from an agency such as a Cabinet Office/Prime Minister’s department, Ministry of Finance or Budget, Ministry of Public Administration or other central agency represent national positions for the Committee on a broad range of public management questions.

What are the responsibilities of the Bureau? 7
Selected Committee delegates are elected as Chair and vice-chairs to provide more detailed direction of the PUMA programme.

On what basis is the Bureau elected? 8
Officers represent a balance among governmental systems, reform experiences and regions.

What is the process for obtaining written documents prior to Committee meetings? 8
Documents are distributed electronically on the On-Line Information System (OLIS) and by e-mail 2-4 weeks before each meeting.

What types of items are placed on the agenda for Committee meetings? 8
Each agenda contains items to serve the diverse Committee objectives, including reviews of major issues, guiding work programmes, and contributing to horizontal work involving more than one OECD Committee.

How are specific agenda items determined for each meeting? 9
Agenda items may be suggested by either Committee officers or the Secretariat.
What is circulated to Committee members outside of meetings by written procedure? Because of limited meeting time, some questions, including lengthy or detailed documents, are circulated for written comment with comments provided on an exceptions basis.

What issues are handled primarily through consultation with specialist networks? PUMA specialist networks contribute to and guide work on sub-topics in their fields of expertise (including policy-making, budget management, human resources management, performance management, and regulatory reform).

What is the SIGMA Programme? SIGMA - Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries - is a joint initiative of the OECD and the European Community.

How does one keep up to date on the progress of PUMA work? Regular meeting reports, a newsletter and World Wide Web site provide the latest information on PUMA activities.

C. GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY CITED OECD TERMS AND CONCEPTS
PUBLIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

A. AN OVERVIEW

The Public Management Service (PUMA) reports on, analyses and assesses information on developments in public management and governance arrangements in OECD Member countries. Through meetings of Member country officials and experts, exchanges of information and expertise, and reports, PUMA examines what governments do and how they are seeking to improve public policy effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness to citizens and quality of services.

Its mission is to:

- provide information, analysis and assessment on public management for policy-makers in Member countries and for the OECD, and to develop the tools to do this;
- facilitate contact and exchange of experience on good practice amongst public management practitioners, particularly those working in central management agencies in government;
- report regularly on issues and developments in governance and public management, and on their relevance to economic and social development.

The Public Management Committee is made up of senior civil servants from OECD countries who are nominated as delegates by their governments. Committee members generally are from an agency such as a Cabinet Office/Prime Minister’s Department, Ministry of Finance or Budget, Ministry of Public Administration or other central agency, which have responsibilities with important impact on the organisation, regulation and operation of the public sector. They attend two-day meetings twice a year at the OECD in Paris, and may also serve on task forces and working groups dealing with special topics. These meetings offer public sector managers an opportunity to exchange ideas and experience and to discuss innovative strategies for dealing with common challenges. The Committee also provides a forum for addressing broad, cross-cutting issues and developments in public management of strategic importance to governments.

In particular, the Committee’s work is directed toward *helping countries strengthen their capacity to govern by improving policy-making systems and the performance of public institutions*. By providing information, overseeing and directing PUMA work, the Committee contributes a managerial analysis to the policy issues addressed by the Organisation overall, such as how improved public management can contribute to economic and social goals. It concentrates on the central systems that determine the operation of the public sector, on the management of resources, on the interaction between the public and private sectors, and on a critical review of particular policy instruments.
The Committee’s mandate for work from 2000 through 2004 describes this work as falling into five major activities:

- **Improving Government Coherence / Strengthening Relations between Government and Civil Society**: this activity aims at assisting governments to promote both internal policy coherence and external coherence of government action, including relations with external actors such as parliaments, civil society and the media.

- **Enhancing Public Sector Capacity**: this activity aims at helping governments create a public service that effectively responds to ongoing changes in order to meet the rising expectations of society.

- **Adapting Capacities for Decision and Action / Strengthening Government of Semi-Autonomous Public Agencies**: this activity aims at enhancing the understanding of the governance arrangements of public sector organisations in order to make better informed choices when undertaking governance and public management reforms.

- **Increasing Government Transparency and Accountability**: this activity aims at issues related to transparency, accountability and integrity in the public service. It will cover governance arrangements for the whole public service environment, as well as focus on specific core areas such as the budgetary system, accounting and independent scrutiny.

- **Optimising Public Performance in Efficient and Global Markets**: this activity aims at providing guidelines for building the institutions, capacities and tools to ensure high quality regulation.

The work programme also includes a number of cross-cutting issues, including coherence, gender, sustainable development, e-government and risk management, which may not necessarily show up under the main titles of work, but which either underlie or are reoccurring elements of PUMA’s work.

The Committee’s work is carried out in collaboration with the PUMA Secretariat and a range of government constituency groups of specialist senior managers and experts. These specialist groups or networks are responsible for budgeting and financial management, regulatory reform and management, human resources, government-citizen relations, e-government and other issues of concern to centres of government. They meet regularly to exchange information and consider analysis of specific management issues.

Recognising that effective public sector institutions play a crucial role in promoting democratic practices in non-member countries and strengthening their capacity for mutually beneficial economic relationships, the Committee also oversees outreach with non-members. In particular, the Committee closely follows the work of the SIGMA Programme -- Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries. Operating within the Public Management Service, SIGMA is a joint initiative of the OECD and the European Community. The initiative supports public administration reform efforts in 15 countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, and is principally financed by the European Community.
B. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What is the role of Committee delegates?

- To represent their country in directing and shaping the PUMA programme of work; and in giving substantive direction to the development of PUMA outputs, to ensure that outputs accurately represent Member country practices and are consistent with their views;
- To provide country views on major governance and public management issues of strategic importance to their governments, many of which are cross-cutting in nature;
- To serve as the key communications link between the OECD and Member countries in provision of information and communication related to PUMA work:
  1) Committee members serve as the main contact for providing information to the OECD on public management trends and practices in their own countries (i.e. through filling out country fact sheets), as a basis for PUMA reports and exchange of information at PUMA Committee meetings; and
  2) Committee members assist in promoting PUMA work and in disseminating information obtained through PUMA reports and meetings to officials within their own governments;
- To provide guidance on management issues, including communication strategies, ways to maximise the benefits of PUMA work to Member countries; observership of non-member countries and ways to improve the usefulness of PUMA meetings.

Committee members are asked to come to the meetings prepared to represent the range of interests and the country’s view on all agenda items. Some countries handle co-ordination of country positions through task forces or special meetings, while others use a written procedure.

What benefits can delegates get from participation in PUMA?

Participation in the Committee provides first-hand exposure to innovative practices and a network of senior management practitioners who can provide the benefits of their experience. In addition to the more formal exchanges that occur, many opportunities are available during the two days of meetings for one-on-one exchanges of information. The information gained from PUMA meetings, reports and network contacts offers a valuable source of ideas, innovations and analysis related to ongoing efforts to address public management challenges in Member countries.

As their country’s main representative to the OECD on public management issues, Committee delegates’ input directly shapes OECD work and conclusions. Delegate involvement can help to ensure
that their country’s practices are portrayed accurately, that PUMA reports are consistent with their government’s views, and that they may be of use within their governments. Delegate contributions also serve a broader purpose, as PUMA work and findings are disseminated widely through publications, short reports, a PUMA home page on the World Wide Web, and a newsletter distributed to more than 7,000 people consisting largely of government practitioners.

How are the Committee’s medium-term and longer-term objectives developed?

The Committee regularly holds discussions and considers written proposals addressing its mission and objectives for both the short and longer-term. The most extensive recent exercise in this regard was the development process of the Committee’s 2000-04 mandate, a process the Committee undertakes every five years. This included preparation of a document on “Directions For the Future PUMA Mandate [PUMA(99)7/REV1]” in October 1999, as well as a set of medium-term objectives and the 2001-02 Programme of Work and Budget [PUMA(2001)1].. Each of these documents contains an introduction setting out the main issues and objectives that the Committee seeks to address. The Secretariat develops these proposals based not only on Committee views, but also taking into account policy statements of the OECD, objectives established through Ministerial meetings, and statements of the OECD Secretary General. The aim is to ensure that Committee objectives are not only useful to PUMA’s main constituency of central management agency practitioners, but that they also contribute to the broad objectives of OECD Member countries in support of economic growth, social and political stability, and in such areas as horizontal work initiatives, and outreach to non-member countries.

Who should serve on the Committee?

Member governments have the discretion to nominate the delegate that they consider most appropriate to represent the government’s viewpoint on reform changes and developments in public management. Delegates generally are senior civil servants from an agency such as a cabinet office / Prime Minister’s department, ministry of finance or budget, ministry of public administration or other central agency, which have responsibilities with important impact on the organisation, regulation and operation of the public sector. Because PUMA’s work covers a wide range of public management issues, including budget and performance management, human resources management, regulatory management, and wide-ranging issues of reform, a delegate’s consultative abilities and authority to elicit other officials’ views are critical.

What are the responsibilities of the Bureau?

A few Committee delegates are elected annually to serve as officers who represent the Committee in providing more detailed direction to the Secretariat on issues of management and planning of the work programme. These representatives, known as “the Bureau” generally serve for 2-3 years. They participate in planning meetings prior to each Committee meeting and ongoing consultation by telephone and through e-mail and written exchanges. The Chair of the Committee conducts the Committee meetings and is involved in close consultation with the Secretariat on an ongoing basis. The vice-chairs also provide ongoing guidance, and may be asked to replace the chair in his or her absence. Currently, the Bureau has one Chair and five vice-chairs.
On what basis is the Bureau elected?

The process of selecting Committee officers is a collaborative one between Member countries and the Secretariat. As consensus of the Committee is required to elect the officers, the Secretariat consults in advance of the meeting as feasible with individual Committee members on a list of possible candidates. This list will preferably contain representatives of a range of governmental systems, geographic regions and reform experiences who have senior level positions and past involvement in the Committee. Following preliminary consultations with Member countries, the Committee is asked to approve the nomination of Committee officers at its first meeting of each year.

What is the process for obtaining written documents prior to Committee meetings?

The Secretariat aims to have all written documents ready for distribution on the OECD On Line Information System (OLIS) in the OECD’s two official languages, English or French, three weeks in advance of the meeting. Official OECD policy is that Member countries are provided access to OECD documents through the OLIS system, and should use it to obtain all meeting documents. Delegates can obtain access to OLIS through a request from their government’s OECD delegation in Paris. However, the PUMA Secretariat also distributes the documents by e-mail as some delegates do not have access to the OLIS distribution system. Generally, the agenda is distributed about six weeks in advance, and a second e-mail containing all or most other documents is distributed 2-4 weeks in advance.

What types of items are placed on the agenda for Committee meetings?

Items are placed on the Committee agenda for a range of purposes: to promote mutual learning and exchange; to provide a forum for identification of emerging trends and practices and discussion of viewpoints on major governance and public management issues; to provide direction and policy guidance on the management and operations of Committee work; to allow for input into work and identification of important issues at an early stage; for revision of work at a later stage; and decisions on whether and how to disseminate work at the final stage. In general, a balance is sought between six categories of agenda items:

- **Addressing major governance and public management issues**, many of which are cross-cutting (for example, identifying characteristics of good public governance);
- **Contributing to horizontal work** involving more than one OECD Committee;
- **Exchange of promising practices**. Exchange of promising practices is one of the most popular elements of Committee meetings, and therefore a variety of vehicles for exchanging practice have been developed over time. These include:
  - expert presentations around a common theme, drawing general lessons for Member countries;
  - panel discussions with a select group of Member countries and/or experts comparing country experiences;
  - oral presentation on reforms in a single country, with opportunities for questions and answers;
  - dissemination of short fact sheets of 1-3 pages on recent public management developments, brought to the meeting by each member country (written...
exchange). Many of these fact sheets are also summarised for use in the PUMA newsletter, Focus.

Although these are regular features of Committee meetings, none are obligatory, and this format may be adjusted as desired. Selections of countries for presentations are made with the objective of exposing the Committee to a wide range of countries and promising practices.

- **Review of outputs produced under the work programme.** These agenda items provide an opportunity for countries to represent their viewpoints on emerging public management issues, and to ensure that the work is accurate and meets with their approval. One of the strengths of PUMA work is that it is based on excellent access to information from Member governments. Committee members are the crucial link in the information-gathering and development process. This access is available in part because Member countries have the assurance that they will be involved in both the information-gathering and in the development of outputs, and that they will have the opportunity to review them for accuracy and final approval. Discussion at the Committee level facilitates achievement of consensus, and also serves as a stage in the communications process for disseminating conclusions of PUMA work.

- **Committee policy and planning issues.** This includes consideration of the programme of work and budget, communications strategies, planning of major meetings, outreach to non-member countries, and following SIGMA work. Committee input on these matters is important for the effective functioning of both the Committee and the quality of work that is produced.

- **Informational updates.** Certain items on the agenda are provided for informational purposes, including reports on recent developments related to PUMA work, activity meetings, horizontal work within the OECD, reform within the organisation, budgetary decisions, etc. These do not generally require Committee input or preparation in advance, and only take a small portion of the meeting.

Meetings generally begin at 9:30 and continue until 18:00 on the first day, with a 1 and 1/2 to 2-hour lunch break and pauses for coffee in the morning and afternoon to allow for individual networking. Delegates are usually invited to a cocktail at the end of the first day. The second day operates on the same schedule, but an attempt is made to conclude the meeting by 16:30 to accommodate delegates with early travel schedules. Each agenda is annotated to provide specific information on timing.

**How are specific agenda items determined for each meeting?**

Agenda items may be initiated through a request of the Committee, the Chair or officers, or by request of an individual Committee member. In other cases, they are initiated by the Secretariat in close consultation with the Committee officers. As described in the previous question, a balance is sought between a variety of items to meet the range of Committee objectives.

The greatest discretion in agenda planning relates to which work outputs are brought to the Committee for discussion, guidance, and if appropriate, approval. Not enough time is available during meetings to discuss all work that is under way, so a selection is made with the objective of bringing to the Committee those items of greatest significance, potential impact, and interest. The selection is also influenced by the timing of the meeting, that is, whether the work has been developed to a point that either Committee approval is sought, or early direction from the Committee is considered to be beneficial. An attempt is also made over the course of several meetings to bring to the Committee the full range of issues and activities in which PUMA is involved.
Many items on the agenda are recurring, not necessarily because they are required, but because Committee members have expressed a strong interest in them (for example, presentations on promising practices and country reform presentations). Other items are initiated by the Secretariat because of external events necessitating Committee attention (for example, requests by non-members to serve as observers; and new budgetary developments). Others relate to OECD-wide requirements (for example, initiation of horizontal work, and the budget planning process).

The Secretariat also seeks to minimise the amount of documentation necessary for review and discussion at Committee meetings to no more than 100 pages total to maintain a manageable workload for Committee members. Generally, the Committee considers executive summaries, synthesis chapters or other excerpts, rather than full length publications. Longer documents are circulated to Member countries apart from Committee meetings through a written procedure, or are provided for reference but are not required for discussion.

What is circulated to Committee members outside of meetings by written procedure?

Because of the desire to maintain a manageable amount of reading material required to prepare for Committee meetings, most publications and unclassified documents are circulated to Member countries for written procedure review independent of Committee meetings. Countries are generally given three to six weeks to respond, depending on the length of the document and timing requirements for final dissemination. Committee representatives can circulate these within their government for comment as appropriate. Absence of a response is generally considered as agreement to ensure that publications may be issued on a timely basis.

In addition, certain policy issues are raised to Committee members outside of the Committee meeting when deadlines do not allow a decision to wait until the actual Committee meeting. For example, unforeseen changes in the PUMA budget may require consultation with Committee members before being implemented. A desire to streamline the decision-making process may also result in circulation of policy proposals outside of the Committee meeting.

What issues are handled primarily through consultation with specialist networks?

PUMA’s informal specialist networks address issues of budget management, human resources management, regulatory reform, and policy-making (officials from centres of government). Like the Committee, these networks are composed primarily of government officials from central management agencies. They are involved in directing the work as well as in contributing information and reviewing reports. Committee responsibility for work in these speciality areas is generally delegated to the representatives of the networks, but the most significant outputs are also reviewed at the Committee level.

What is the SIGMA Programme?

A key element of OECD outreach to non-member countries on public management issues is the SIGMA Programme -- providing Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries. Operating within the Public Management Service, SIGMA is a joint initiative of the OECD and the European Community, and is principally financed by the European Community.
Launched in 1992, the initiative now supports public administration reform efforts in fifteen countries in transition: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. SIGMA offers these countries access to a network of experienced public administrators, comparative information, and technical knowledge, working to assist them in modernising their public institutions. For countries that are candidates for membership of the European Union, the work focuses on priority areas for accession, particularly reform of civil services and administrative control, and financial control and external audit. For Bulgaria and Romania, the focus is broader to respond to the special needs of these two countries. For the Western Balkans (Albania plus ex-Yugoslavia minus Slovenia), SIGMA supports the Stabilisation and Association Agreements and the Stability Pact in respect of public administration reform. In the Western Balkans, work on building administrative reform is extended to encompass tax administration and trade, the latter as part of the international community’s regional policy for stabilisation. These two aspects of reform will be undertaken in collaboration with the Trade Directorate and the Centre for Tax Policy and Administration (DAFFE). Discussions are currently underway to extend SIGMA’s work to the Former Soviet Union.

How does one keep up to date on the progress of PUMA work?

For each Committee meeting, the Secretariat issues a Description of Major PUMA Activities and Outputs report briefly describing the latest outputs and those forthcoming in the near future; and a Calendar of Meetings that lists upcoming meetings. An Annual Report describing all of PUMA’s major outputs is also issued once a year. The most recent Programme of Work and Budget provides a description of planned activities over a two-year period. The most recent versions of these documents are available on OLIS, or can be obtained from the Secretariat upon request.

In addition, the PUMA home page on the World Wide Web is continuously updated to provide information on the latest PUMA outputs, and can be located on the Internet at http://www.oecd.org/puma.

The PUMA newsletter, Focus, is available both on the Web at http://www.oecd.org/puma/focus and by mail to government management officials who request to be placed on the mailing list. It provides information on recent PUMA outputs and promising practices reported by Member countries in country fact sheets that are brought to PUMA Committee meetings.
C. GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY CITED OECD TERMS AND CONCEPTS

BIAC -- the OECD Business and Industry Advisory Committee represents business and industry associations from OECD Member countries. It is one of the OECD’s two social partners along with the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC). PUMA Committee officers hold consultation meetings with BIAC and the Secretariat consults with its representatives as appropriate to obtain input into PUMA work.

CCNM -- The Centre for Co-operation with Non-Members fosters and manages the OECD’s dialogue with transition and emerging market economies and some developing countries, sharing institutional and policy options and promoting participation in OECD Committees and adherence to OECD standards and instruments. The CCNM also co-ordinates and monitors the OECD's many and varied partnerships with other organisations.

HORIZONTAL WORK -- Multi-disciplinary work of the OECD involving two or more directorates and Committees. The OECD Secretariat is composed of 11 substantive directorates, each responsible for a different aspect of OECD work: Economics Department; Statistics Directorate; Environment Directorate; Development Co-operation Directorate; Public Management Service; Trade Directorate; Directorate for Financial, Fiscal and Enterprise Affairs; Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry; Directorate for Education, and Employment, Labor and Social Affairs; Directorate for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries; Territorial Development Service. The work of each directorate is overseen by one or more Committees composed of Member country representatives. PUMA works with many of these directorates in horizontal work on regulatory reform, sustainable development and outreach.

MINISTERIAL -- The OECD’s highest authority, the Council at Ministerial level, examines major issues and priorities for the OECD at an annual meeting in May. Composed principally of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Finance, the Ministerial meeting concludes with a communiqué, a statement of agreed policy aims and priorities.

OECD COUNCIL -- Composed of OECD ambassadors from each Member country delegation and chaired by the OECD Secretary General, the OECD Council is the focal point for on-going review by Member governments of Committees. It decides on the Programme of Work and Budget of OECD and stimulates thinking on the overall goals of the Organisation and on its future course. The Council may agree on Decisions which are legally binding under international law, or on Recommendations, which are expressions of political will to follow the policies set forth.

OLISnet -- The OECD’s On-Line Information Services (OLISnet) is used to disseminate OECD documents to Member countries. Committee delegates should request access to this system through their OECD delegation office or, alternatively, through a contact point in their government who already has access to the OLISnet system. OLISnet requires a PC running modern Windows software (Windows 95/98 or NT 4.0 with the “Dial-up Networking” option installed), an Internet browser (from
Microsoft, Netscape or other) and a modem (or a direct connection from your own office network). Access points to the OECD private network are available in all Member country capitals. This facilitates obtaining documents the day they are ready.

**OUTREACH** -- OECD work and dialogue with selected non-member countries.

**STATUS OF DOCUMENTS** -- Much of OECD work is restricted to selected Member government officials, particularly in its early stages before it has been reviewed and agreed upon by Member countries. There are three main classifications for documents:

- **CONFIDENTIAL** -- This is the most restricted classification. Unauthorised disclosure of material under this classification would seriously prejudice the interest of the Organisation or any of its Member countries. PUMA Committee documents are rarely issued with the confidential status except for such issues as observership.

- **FOR OFFICIAL USE** -- Documents under this classification are restricted to Member government officials. They should not be disseminated to the general public.

- **UNCLASSIFIED** -- These documents may be disseminated freely, as a publication, or through other means, such as electronic dissemination on the Internet.

**TUAC** -- The OECD Trade Union Advisory Committee represents government trade unions from OECD Member countries. It is one of the OECD’s two social partners along with the Business and Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC). PUMA Committee Officers hold an annual consultation meeting with TUAC and the Secretariat consults with its representatives as appropriate to receive input into PUMA work.