PROPOSED OUTLINE OF THE FINAL REPORT
ON STRENGTHENING GOVERNMENT-CITIZEN CONNECTIONS

5th Session of the Working Group on Strengthening Government-Citizen Connections
30 November and 1st December 2000

At its 4th Session held on 27-28 April 2000, the Working Group on Strengthening Government-Citizen Connections agreed that the main findings of the activity would be published as a Final Report. The Working Group is invited to review and comment the Proposed Outline of the Final Report at its 5th Session to be held on 30 November - 1 December 2000.

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INTRODUCTION

1. At its 4th Session held on 27-28 April 2000, the Working Group on Strengthening Government-Citizen Connections agreed that the main findings of the two comparative surveys and set of country case studies undertaken in the course of the activity would be published as a Final Report (40-50 pages, hard copy). The Working Group also decided that the Final Report was to be accompanied by a short Policy Brief (5 pages, hard copy) designed for ministers and policy-makers.

2. The Final Report and Policy Brief are part of a larger set of project outputs to be published online, including: a database of consolidated questionnaire survey responses¹, nine country case studies, and a public Electronic Discussion Group. These project outputs will be made available on dedicated web-pages hosted on the PUMA website.

3. The report aims to support Member country efforts to strengthen government-citizen relations by providing information on trends, practices and innovative solutions in a comparative perspective. It does not seek to rank countries, rather the report focuses on the overall direction and progress achieved to date by the countries participating in the activity.²

4. The Working Group is invited to review and comment the Proposed Outline of the Final Report at its 5th Session (30 November - 1 December 2000).

¹ See proposed framework for the Consolidated Questionnaire Response which will present country responses to both surveys (general and IT) in a single, integrated format.

² Australia, Austria, Belgium (and Flanders), Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, US and the European Union.
PROPOSED OUTLINE OF THE FINAL REPORT

PREFACE [1 page]

5. The preface, by the Secretary General, will place PUMA work on "Strengthening Government-Citizen Connections" within the wider context of the OECD’s efforts to support good governance in Member countries. These efforts address the development of legal and institutional frameworks for information, consultation and active participation in policy-making as well as the tools for their implementation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY [5 pages]

6. The executive summary will present the key messages of the report, outline the main findings and policy lessons identified (target audience: ministers and policy-makers).

I. INTRODUCTION [2 pages]

7. The introduction will provide an overview of the activities undertaken during the period 1999-2000 by the Working Group on Strengthening Government-Citizen Connections, including: two comparative surveys (one on general frameworks, the other on the use of new ICTs), nine in-depth country case studies and five Working Group meetings. It will also refer to discussions of the project held at the annual meetings of the network of senior officials from Centres of Government (e.g. Berne 1998, Naples 1999).

8. The section will present the methods of investigation used, describe the structure of the final report and review the full set of project outputs (including the on-line database of consolidated questionnaire responses; the set of case studies, dedicated WebPages, Electronic Discussion Group [EDG]) and policy brief).

9. The section will also indicate how the current activity on citizen information and consultation in policy-making builds upon earlier PUMA work on "Responsive Administration" (e.g. on service delivery) and contributes to future activities set out in the PUMA Work Programme for 2001-2002 (such as "Relations with civil society", "E-government", "Relations between Executive and Legislature").

1.1 Why strengthen connections with citizens? [2 pages]

10. This section will briefly review the various driving forces which have led governments to strengthen connections with citizens, including the need to: counter declining public trust in government, respond to calls for greater government transparency and accountability, include public input into the policy formation process. The section will examine the governance implications of limited public confidence for the design and effective implementation of public policy. It will provide a concise statement of the policy problem under investigation, namely how can OECD Member countries improve the transparency, accountability and legitimacy of government policy- and decision-making by enhancing information, public consultation and active participation?
11. Finally, it will provide definitions of the key terms used throughout the report:

- **Information**: a one-way relation in which government produces and delivers information for use by citizens.
- **Consultation**: a two-way relation in which citizens provide feedback to government.
- **Active participation**: a relation based on partnership with government in which citizens actively engage in the decision- and policy-making process.

1.2 **Overall trends**

12. This section will provide a concise overview of the main trends identified in each of the fields under investigation, namely: government provision of information for citizens, opportunities for feedback and consultation and, finally, active participation and engagement of citizens in decision- and policy-making. This section will also highlight the relative weight and scope of each of these three types of relations between governments and citizens.

II. **STRENGTHENING GOVERNMENT-CITIZEN CONNECTIONS**

13. This section will present the framework under which the comparative data collected in the course of the activity has been analysed, namely: building legal, policy and institutional frameworks; developing tools and practices; introducing new information and communication technologies (ICTs); evaluating results. It will also set out the ultimate goal of the report, that of identifying a set of key factors for the success of government-citizen relations and will include an overview of future challenges.

2.1. **Building legal, policy and institutional frameworks**

14. This section will provide an overview of the legal and policy frameworks in place to define citizens rights of access to information, provision of feedback and active participation in policy-making, including:

- Constitutional guarantees of basic freedoms.
- Laws providing for popular legislative initiative and referenda.
- Freedom of information laws.
- Privacy and data protection laws.
- Administrative procedure laws.
- Sectoral laws providing rights to information and participation (e.g. environmental legislation).

15. The section will also examine initiatives based on government policy rather than legislation which enhance, or include specific provisions for, citizens access to information, consultation and active participation (e.g. government modernisation and public administration reform programmes).

16. Finally, the section will review the institutional mechanisms in place to apply these rights in practice, including:

- Government information services.
- Ombudsman Offices.
- Appeals procedures.
2.2 Developing tools and practices

17. This section will provide an overview of current practice, tools and innovative solutions used by governments in providing information, seeking citizen feedback and engaging citizens in policy-making. For each of the main categories of government-citizen relations under investigation, concrete examples of good practice from OECD Member countries will be highlighted (e.g. through the inclusion of ‘boxes’).

18. The section will conclude with a typology of promising practices and tools, and a discussion of factors for consideration when selecting the appropriate tool for a given objective (e.g. public opinion surveys for feedback on proposed government policies).

2.3 Introducing information and communication technologies (ICTs)

19. This section will examine recent government initiatives to use new information and communication technologies (ICTs) as a promising tool for the provision of on-line information, consultation/feedback, and active participation policy-making. It will review government experience with, and relative success of, Internet-based solutions for each of these three types of relations with citizens.

20. This section will also examine the set of constraints (e.g. technical, legal, organisational, social and cultural) limiting the use of ICTs in strengthening government-citizen connections and will explore the issue of the ‘digital divide’.

2.4 Evaluating public information, consultation and participation

21. This section will review current government efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of their information, feedback and consultation initiatives. It will highlight the substantial imbalance between investments in measures to strengthen government-citizen connections and in evaluating their success, which characterises most OECD Member countries.

22. The section will also suggest a number of key factors for successful information, consultation/feedback and active participation based on the empirical evidence collected in the course of the activity (e.g. surveys, case studies).

2.5 Challenges and opportunities for the future

23. This section will review emerging issues and examine the range of possible policy responses available (e.g. protection of personal data, role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in policy-making). It will focus on the key challenges currently facing OECD Member countries and propose directions for future work in this area.
III. ANNEXES

3.1 PUMA on-line resources for "Strengthening Government-Citizen Connections"

This annex will present the full set of on-line publications and survey data produced in the course of this activity and to be made available on the dedicated Web-Pages of the PUMA website, including:

- Policy brief.
- On-line database of consolidated questionnaire responses by country (format to be agreed).
- Country case studies.
- Public Electronic Discussion Group (EDG).

It will also refer to earlier PUMA work on government-citizen relations:

- **1980s**: Administration as Service, the Public as Client (1986); A Survey of Initiatives for Improving Relationships between the Citizen and the Administration (1987); Administrative Responsiveness and Employment Services (1988); Administrative Responsiveness and the Taxpayer (1988); Public Management and Private Enterprise: Administrative Responsiveness and the Needs of Small Firms (1990).

- **1990s**: Consultation and Communications: Integrating Multiple Interests into Policy; Managing Media Relations (1997); Impact of the Emerging Information Society on the Policy-making process and Democratic Quality (1998).

Finally, the annex will refer to other relevant PUMA publications, including:


3.2 Key on-line resources in OECD Member Countries

This annex will provide references to key official government websites and on-line data sources on government initiatives to provide citizens with information and opportunities for feedback/consultation and active participation.
TIMETABLE

To ensure the involvement of all participating Member countries, full use will be made of the Working Group’s restricted access EDG in completing the final draft report. The following timetable for the drafting process is proposed:

- The first draft of the report will be posted on the EDG in mid-February 2001 for review and comment.
- A second draft of the report will be posted on the EDG in mid-March 2000 for review and comment.
- The Working Group will discuss the final draft report at its next meeting in early April 2000.
- The report will be sent for publication in May 2000.

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3 This EDG may be accessed by Working Group members equipped with a valid password via the OECD OLISnet at the following address: http://ls27.oecd.org:8081/OLIS/COMNET/PUM-GovCitizen.nsf