FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME ON HRM

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1. Under the new PUMA mandate we are aiming to ensure that we focus our activities in those areas which are relevant to adapting governance and management systems to the demands of the changing conditions in which governments now operate. The critical areas seem to be in:
   - strengthening the capacity for managing knowledge;
   - aligning human resource management with changing systems of strategy, planning, accounting, service delivery and control;
   - and strengthening public sector leadership, values and capacity in an environment where public sector work appears to be losing its appeal.

1 Leadership

2. In the January expert meeting, delegates suggested that PUMA’s new agenda should focus on the burning issues of senior civil service, in particular leadership. Possible outputs on leadership are as follows:
   - A paper covering the role of leadership in the public sector and analysing different leadership development strategies. Included in this will be an examination of the strategy of forming leadership elite groups.
   - In partnership with one or more national leadership organisations, PUMA will organise a high profile series of seminars, backed up by an alumnae programme, aimed at linking together emergent public sector leaders across the OECD, and strengthening their sense of joint cause on critical problems confronting OECD governments.
   - Good models of leadership development strategies in Member countries will be collected and published.

3. Possible areas to be explored would be:
   - Identifying the role and function of leadership in the future;
   - Attracting potential leaders to the public service and developing them;
   - Delineating better strategies for leadership development;
   - Identifying the barriers preventing women from becoming senior leaders.

2. Direction for Future HRM Data Collection

4. Despite the high reputation of the PSPE data base and the high demand for information from Member countries, academics, and journalists, there appear to be many challenges in collecting and analysing the data. Some of them stem from the generic nature of the data itself, and others from the difficulties in collecting data. The challenges appearing so far can be listed as follows:
too narrow scope of data collection;
- reliability and comparability problem due to diverse criteria used in Member countries;
- difficulty in collecting data due to the burden imposed on some Members;
- criticism of the value-added of the data collection from some countries;
- no free access to database from the outside; delivery of data only upon demand.

5. In recognition of these challenges, the Secretariat is in the process of redefining its approach to the collection of basic information about governance institutions, processes, and trends in Member countries, making it more systematic, integrated and comparable. There are two main reasons for this approach:

- There is a growing need to provide fundamental facts to advance and qualify the debate and research on governance related issues. The World Bank has asked for co-operation with PUMA on the issue and the existing PUMA data is in high demand in Member countries.

- The OECD has a comparative advantage over other possible actors in the field. The OECD has access to information through Member countries, and the OECD, with one foot in practice and one foot in research, is in a unique position to provide information that is reliable and usable to Member countries.

6. It is proposed therefore to move the OECD’s data collection in the field of HRM in the following direction in the future.

1) To enlarge the scope of data collection. At present, the OECD’s quantitative data is confined to public sector pay and employment. It will be expanded to cover some demographic statistics such as age and gender. As for the qualitative data, the OECD plans to collect basic data on HRM systems making possible comparisons between Member countries in regard to structure and category of the civil service, recruitment, performance appraisal, pay systems, promotion, openness of positions and so on.

2) To enhance the reliability and comparability of data. The Secretariat will put more effort into assessing the quality and comparability of data when submitted by countries. Furthermore, it is proposed to increase the use of country peer review of data

3) To integrate the HRM data into a larger governance database. In order to ensure easy access to data from Member countries, the data will be integrated into the OECD database system. This will enhance accessibility and facilitate statistical analysis.

3. Country Case Studies of HRM Systems

7. The proposal is to provide member countries with an external view of how well their public sector HRM policies meet current national priorities, and to contribute to lifting the level of national debate on strategies for their improvement. It would involve the analysis of the current HRM systems in a specific Member country, a discussion of the issues revealed amongst HRM experts in a panel of OECD Members, and a discussion paper identifying areas for policy development.

8. The scope would be the entire HRM system including: structure and classification within the civil service, recruitment, performance appraisal, pay systems, promotion, and so on. It will also cover our new emerging issues like critical skills shortages, knowledge management, and HRM outside the core civil service.
9. The analysis will be on the basis of criteria agreed with the country involved.

10. The country to be studied will be entirely on a voluntary basis. It would be necessary for the country involved to meet the non-staff time costs of the external participants in the study team. If the demand was there it would be possible to undertake two country studies per year.

11. If this project is implemented, PUMA will share horizontal data on whole systems in a specific country as well as vertical data from our data collection on each issue.

4. Management Control in the Public Sector

12. An important aspect of performance management in a more devolved public management environment, is how senior managers know whether their departmental strategy, policies and systems are being applied as intended. "Management Controls" are the feed-back systems which advise senior management of policy and procedure compliance, and thereby provide the basis on which greater trust and delegation becomes possible.

13. Important components of this way of looking at management are the role and procedures of the top managers acting as a "management board", risk analysis, the coordination and quality control of various information flows such as internal audit and inspection, internal control systems, performance management, and analysis of the influence of cultural factors. The critical assumption is that it is not feasible to control all risks of non-performance or non-compliance, and that senior managers must therefore develop a mix of feed-back mechanisms calibrated to the risks which arise for their particular operational and ethical environment.

14. It is proposed as a first product that a paper be written which develops the concept of management control in the public sector, and illustrates different OECD approaches to its application.

5. Operationalising Ethics

15. PUMA has done an excellent study of public sector ethics across the OECD. There is an issue though about how those findings might be translated into a particular country context - every country has its own distinct set of ethical problems and it is not possible therefore just to borrow a general best practice model and apply it.

16. It is proposed that PUMA develop diagnostic tools which could be used by member countries to assess the extent and characteristics of the ethical problems they face, and which could be used to guide the mix of interventions which would have the best chance of changing behaviour in the desired way in that particular public service culture.

6. Knowledge Management

17. PUMA could contribute to the efforts of Member countries in the area of knowledge management by assisting them in arranging high level seminars or symposiums on this issue in a national context. This could be done jointly with CERI/OECD. The Seminars would be aimed primarily at facilitating the exchange of information and experiences with reference to the issues facing a particular country. The lessons learned would in successive seminars could be summarised and published by the Secretariat.