

OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook 2015

Country profile

AUSTRIA



Access links

- [OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook 2015: www.oecd.org/publications/oecd-regulatory-policy-outlook-2015-9789264238770-en.htm](http://www.oecd.org/publications/oecd-regulatory-policy-outlook-2015-9789264238770-en.htm)
- [Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance and the underlying data: www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory-policy/measuring-regulatory-performance.htm](http://www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory-policy/measuring-regulatory-performance.htm)
- [Regulatory policy in Austria: www.oecd.org/regreform/regulatory-policy/austria.htm](http://www.oecd.org/regreform/regulatory-policy/austria.htm)
- [Regulatory Policy Outlook country profiles: www.oecd.org/regreform/regulatory-policy/outlook-country-profiles.htm](http://www.oecd.org/regreform/regulatory-policy/outlook-country-profiles.htm)
- [OECD regulatory policy website: www.oecd.org/governance/regulatory-policy/](http://www.oecd.org/governance/regulatory-policy/)

Overview

Austria has recently introduced major regulatory reforms. Since 2013, all new primary laws and subordinate regulations have to undergo a RIA, as well as an *ex post* review five years after adoption. As of April 2015, thresholds based on various impact dimensions have been introduced to improve proportionality in the RIA framework. If these thresholds are not exceeded, a simplified RIA may be conducted.

The Federal Performance Management Office at the Federal Chancellery functions as a RIA oversight body, reviews the quality of RIAs and provides guidance for government officials. The Office also publishes annual reports on the implementation of the RIA system. The Federal Ministry of Finance plays a leading role in the reduction of administrative burdens. In 2012, the target of reducing 25% of administrative burdens for business was achieved. Further measures to reduce administrative burdens for citizens are also in progress.

The requirement for consultation does not cover all regulations. Consultation on draft regulations prevails, while early-stage consultations about the nature of the problem and possible solutions are only carried out in some cases and on an informal basis. Consulted stakeholders are granted in general six weeks to provide feedback. The public can provide comments on some draft primary laws via the website of the parliament. Austria would benefit from making greater use of stakeholder engagement tools that engage a wider public, such as interactive websites and public consultations over the internet with invitation to comment, and by carrying out consultations at an earlier stage.

The formal requirements entered into force in 2013 for conducting *ex post* evaluations are quite extensive, asking inter alia for an assessment of the achievement of underlying policy goals, a comparison of actual and predicted impacts, and the identification and quantification of costs and benefits and unintended consequences. Since April 2015, these requirements for *ex post* evaluation are limited to regulations for which full RIAs have been conducted. The administration has only started to carry out first *ex post* reviews, so that as of now there is little experience in the implementation of these requirements.

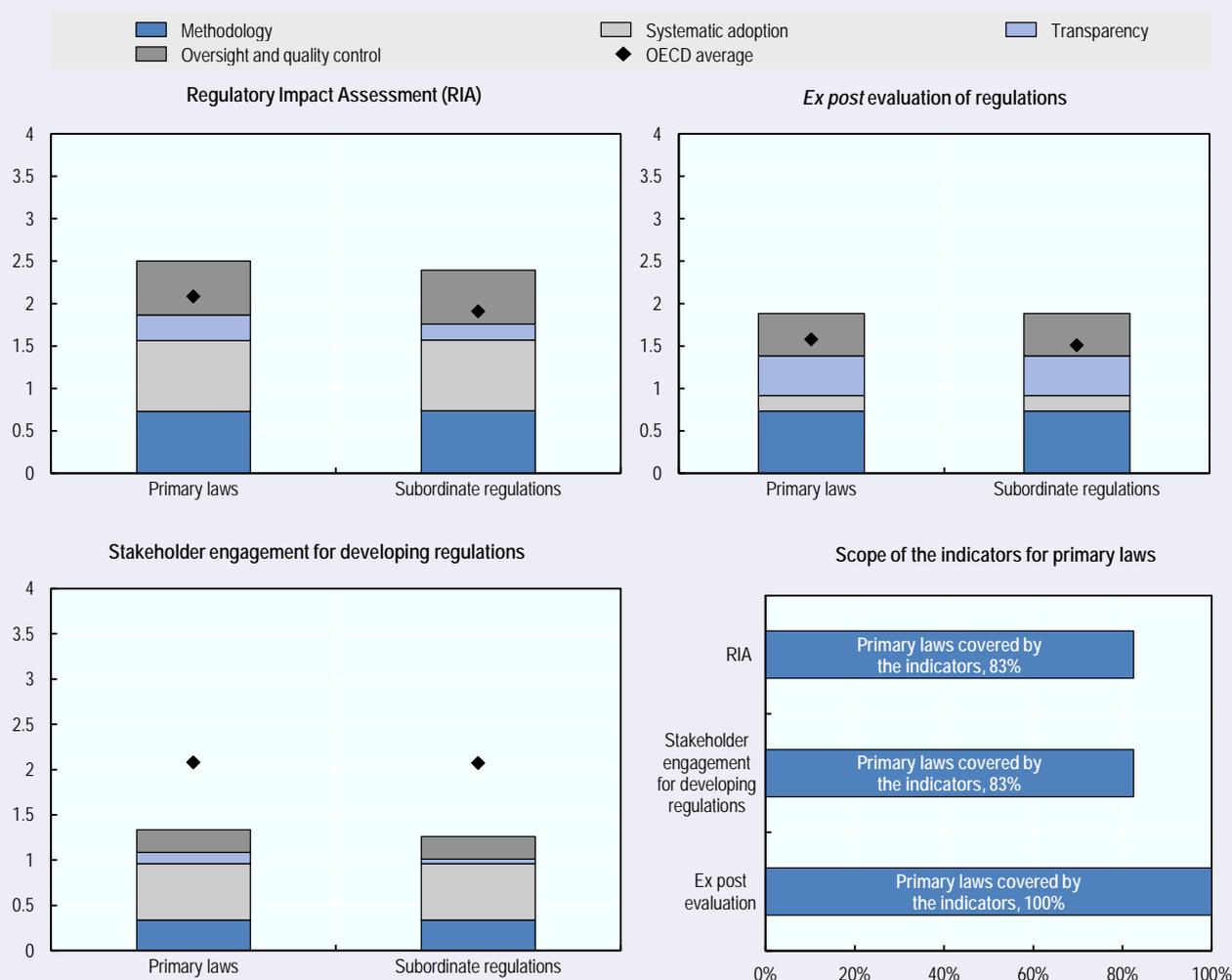


Spotlight: The inclusion of gender objectives in Austria's regulatory framework

In the context of reforms towards greater outcome orientation, the Austrian administration aims to strengthen gender equality policies by enforcing a higher level of policy coherence. Austria endeavours to streamline policies in one coherent system ranging from the budget level to the level of individual projects and regulations.

Austria has included gender objectives in budgeting practices and ran a series of workshops to better align different gender objectives and indicators to improve the horizontal co-ordination between different policy actors. The assessment of impacts on the equality of men and women is mandatory in all RIAs. Guidance for this assessment is provided in a separate chapter of the RIA handbook. Areas to be screened for gender impacts include benefits granted by the government to citizens and businesses, education, employment, income, public revenues collected, health, and political participation.

Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance 2015



1. The figures display the aggregated scores from all four categories giving the total composite score for each indicator. The maximum score for each category is one and the maximum score for each aggregated indicator is four.
2. The information presented in the indicators for primary laws on RIA and stakeholder engagement only covers processes of developing primary laws that are carried out by the executive branch of the national government. As in Austria approx. 83% of primary laws are initiated by the executive, the indicators on RIA and stakeholder engagement cover approx. 83% of primary laws. There is no formal requirement in Austria for consultation with the general public and for conducting RIAs to inform the development of primary laws initiated by parliament. The information presented in the indicators for primary laws on ex post evaluation covers processes in place for both primary laws initiated by parliament and by the executive. The percentage of primary laws initiated by parliament is an average between the years 2011 to 2013.

Source: 2014 Regulatory Indicators Survey results, www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory-policy/measuring-regulatory-performance.htm.

Statlink: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933263054>

Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance (iREG)

The three composite indicators provide an overview of a country's practices in the areas of stakeholder engagement, Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) and *ex post* evaluation. Each indicator comprises four equally weighted categories:

- Systematic adoption which records formal requirements and how often these requirements are conducted in practice.
- Methodology which gathers information on the methods used in each area, e.g. the type of impacts assessed or how frequently different forms of consultation are used.
- Oversight and quality control records the role of oversight bodies and publically available evaluations.
- Transparency records information from the questions that relate to the principles of open government, e.g. whether government decisions are made publically available.



The composite indicators are based on the results of the *OECD 2014 Regulatory Indicators Survey*, which gathers information from all 34 OECD countries and the European Commission as of 31 December 2014. The survey focuses on regulatory policy practices as described in the 2012 *OECD Recommendation on Regulatory Policy and Governance*. The more of these practices a country has adopted, the higher its indicator score. Further information on the methodology is available online at www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory-policy/measuring-regulatory-performance.htm.

Whilst the indicators provide an overview of a country's regulatory framework, they cannot fully capture the complex realities of its quality, use and impact. In-depth country reviews are therefore required to complement the indicators and to provide specific recommendations for reform.

OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook 2015

The *OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook* (www.oecd.org/publications/oecd-regulatory-policy-outlook-2015-9789264238770-en.htm) provides the first evidence-based, cross-country analysis of the progress made by OECD countries in improving the way they regulate. Findings are based on the results of the *OECD 2014 Regulatory Indicators Survey*.

Key findings:

- Laws and regulations are essential instruments, together with taxes and spending, in attaining policy objectives such as economic growth, social welfare and environmental protection. OECD countries have generally committed at the highest political level to an explicit whole-of-government policy for regulatory quality and have established a standing body charged with regulatory oversight.
- Implementation of regulatory policy varies greatly in scope and form across countries. While RIA has been widely adopted, few countries systematically assess whether their laws and regulations achieve their objectives. Stakeholder engagement on rule making is widespread in OECD countries, taking place mostly in the final phase of developing regulation.
- The national executive government has made important progress over the last decade to improve the quality of regulations. Parliaments, regulatory agencies and sub-national and international levels of government need to be more engaged to ensure that there are evidence-based and efficient laws and regulations for stimulating economic activity and promoting well-being.
- The impact of regulatory policy could be further improved by addressing shortcomings in the implementation and enforcement of regulations and by considering new approaches to regulatory design and delivery such as those based on behavioural economics.

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