OECD Public Governance Reviews

Spain 2016

LINKING REFORM TO RESULTS FOR THE COUNTRY AND ITS REGIONS

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Foreword

Spain was one of the countries that had to absorb some of the most severe effects of the economic crisis. Faced with the challenge of budgetary cuts, the government of Spain had to continue to provide public services with limited resources. Reforming the public sector has proven to be a vital stepping stone for continuous efforts to build a more efficient state apparatus and serve the needs and demands of citizens. In order to initiate and oversee these reforms aimed at addressing the Spanish public administration's most pressing challenges, the Commission on the Reform of the Public Administration (CORA) was established within the framework of the National Plan of Reforms (2011-15).

At the request of the Spanish authorities, the OECD produced a *Public Governance Review of Spain* in 2014, which highlighted concrete steps as well as the challenges for carrying out these reforms. The Review also offered specific recommendations on how to move forward with implementation based on OECD standards and best practices in other OECD member countries. On the basis of that work, the OECD was asked to monitor the status of the implementation of the public sector reforms two years later and to provide updated recommendations on how to overcome the remaining obstacles to a more efficient public administration. This publication provides such update.

Given the highly decentralised nature of the Spanish state, the various autonomous communities (regions) are key actors in ensuring the sustainability and inclusiveness of the reforms stipulated by the CORA. National, regional and also local levels have made major efforts to overcome the economic crisis, but only by joining efforts between the centre of government and the autonomous communities can Spain fully capitalise on the full potential of reforms of this magnitude. Yet, inclusion should go beyond co-operation among the administrative bodies. It requires tapping onto the vast potential of information and communications technology (ICT) for a more inclusive, transparent and innovative public sector. It also requires improving access and the usability of government data and information, and actively engaging citizens in the reform processes – not

only as a way of improving government accountability but also to strengthen public trust.

Better policies resulting from the ongoing public administration reforms are crucial for promoting inclusive and robust growth and for ensuring better service delivery to all citizens in Spain. As part of the reform endeavours, strategic foresight also holds great potential for economic recovery, but only if the structures to carry it out are consolidated in the centre of government. This report offers valuable insights in this regard.

This Review is a progress report, one of the first in its kind in a series of OECD Public Governance Reviews. It was conducted under the auspices of the OECD Public Governance Committee who approved it in spring 2016, supported by the Governance Reviews and Partnerships Division of the OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate that conducts assessments of, and advises on, public administration and open government reform strategies in these countries. Our ultimate goal, through works like this, is to help governments like the Spanish one in the design and implementation of strategic, evidence-based and innovative policies to strengthen public governance, so they can respond effectively to their various economic, social and environmental challenges and deliver on their commitments to citizens.

Angel Gurría

OECD Secretary-General

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Executive summary

The government of Spain has based its recent economic policy on facing the latest economic and financial crisis on a broad range of government reforms included in framework of the 2011-2015 National Plan Reforms, designed to help to improve the functioning of the labour market, enhance the fiscal framework, boost the business sector and reform the public administration. The reform of the public administration, the Commission on the Reform of the Public Administration's (Comisión para la Reforma de la Administración, CORA) reform, stands out as a critical component in the pillar dedicated to structural reforms.

In the context of the economic and financial crisis, the primary focus was on cost reduction and efficiency measures. This was necessary in order to reduce public spending in line with Spain's fiscal commitments while continuing to deliver important public services with reduced staff numbers. The success of the public sector reform in meeting those targets should not be underestimated. By the end of July 2015, 76% of the 222 measures had been fully implemented and total savings had reached an accumulated amount of EUR 21 810 million (according to last CORA report at the time of the drafting of this report)[*].

The CORA report formed the basis for the recent OECD *Public Governance Review of Spain* carried out in 2014. The report identified and assessed key processes for an efficient reform process. This progress report focuses on the two years-long process of implementation of the CORA reform (between July 2013 and July 2015).

Spain has made progress in implementing the OECD recommendations from the first OECD *Public Governance Review*. Important steps have been taken to improve the transparency of administrative decisions, especially with an eye toward better regulation and improved transparency. However, ensuring the sustainability of these public administration reforms beyond the current economic crisis remains the biggest challenge of the CORA. Several strategic actions could reinforce the sustainability of the reform effort in the

[*] Updated reports are available at Spanish Transparency website http://transparencia.gob.es/.

long term: the setting out of a long-term vision for the Spanish public sector; the introduction of mechanisms for adjusting the reform measures during their implementation; and the role of the civil service in ensuring continuous improvement.

The role of the Office for the Execution of the Administrative Reform (OPERA) is worthy of special mention and could be retained as an OECD best practice when it comes to the follow up and monitoring of horizontal policy assessment. Co-ordination with other auditing and control bodies should also be reinforced in order to assure complementarities as well as to arrive at a government-wide vision of the current state of the public administration.

As Spain progresses towards a sophisticated model of governance for information and communication technologies (ICT) management and shared services, the next set of reform actions could streamline and strengthen the role of the chief information officer in relation to strategic decisions and directions concerning shared services and, in particular, digital government services. This would help ensure coherence between strategic decisions on IT management and investments and decisions on digitization, to ensure that synergies are captured and systems and platforms are reused whenever possible.

As a new legislature starts, efforts must focus on the implementation of the remaining reforms. The CORA reform has been a driving force that has also inspired and fuelled reforms at the regional and local level. Autonomous communities contributed to the implementation of the CORA's measures and have made major efforts in streamlining and rationalising their activities. The economic crisis has also revealed regional disparities and differing approaches to the same problems. Spain will have to continue to improve its co-ordination mechanisms to make the most of its decentralised model and deliver better services to citizens.

A capable public administration is ultimately a key to promoting inclusive and balanced growth. The institutional capacity of the Spanish public administration will contribute to rebuilding citizens' and business' confidence and trust and lead to better policies for better lives.

Assessment and recommendations

The government of Spain has made major efforts to bring about the necessary reforms included in its National Program of Reforms. The reform of the public administration stands out as a critical component in the pillar dedicated to structural reforms. The political engagement for undergoing the reforms is evident and the level of execution of measures envisaged is high. Those initiatives aimed particularly at rationalising and streamlining the public administration have already reaped results and produced important savings, but many of the recommendations expressed in the first *Public Governance Review of Spain* are still valid and should be followed.

In particular, assuming that the worst part of economic crisis has passed, Spain should create the conditions to consolidate a culture of public administration reform through strategic foresight and a permanent, consistent and co-ordinated structure in the centre of government.

To this end, in terms of stocktaking of the reform, the government of Spain could consider the following recommendations.

Recommendations on stocktaking of the reform

Maintaining and consolidating the reform path on a medium- and long-term basis

- The creation of a long-term strategic forecast (for a period of at least ten years) that would go beyond the National Program of Reforms would contribute not only by highlighting the major challenges and structural changes that the Spanish administration still needs to tackle, but it would also enable the government to measure the impact of its reform agenda against the achievement of multi-dimensional policy outcomes for citizens and businesses – for the economy and society. Political support has not weakened during this period, but the focus has shifted to other issues. It is time for a broader reflection on public administration reform that goes beyond a mere reaction to the economic crisis.
- In addition, a periodic review process of milestones and achievements conducted by third parties (i.e. the OECD, think tanks or independent

experts) in the medium/long term could provide objective advice and enable the government and its leadership to justify and advance corrective measures and the engagement of the legislature.

Consolidating a permanent structure for the reform in the centre of government

- The continuous improvement on Spanish public administration reform that advocates the first Public Governance Review of Spain (PGRI) needs a permanent structure, such as OPERA, the Office for the Execution of the Administrative Reform, which would not only be in charge of policy implementation and monitoring, but also of periodic progress assessments, with new proposals and undertakings added at each stage. Just as OPERA's leadership has evolved in the direction of a much more comprehensive approach than the one explicitly laid out in its mandate, it should also strengthen its strategic vision of the reform process.
- In addition, OPERA could reinforce its work and efforts by better communicating on the state of implementation of the reform measures. Besides the quarterly and annual reports, a clear and more user-friendly website dedicated to the CORA (such as the one dedicated to the Transparency Portal) would better display all the measures and the state of their implementation. Moreover, in order to highlight the central and regional co-ordination in the reform of the Spanish public administration as a whole, a specific page dedicated to the advances made by the autonomous communities would be an asset and would lend more transparency to the process as a whole.
- The co-ordination between Ministry of the Presidency and the Secretary of Public Administration (SEAP) through OPERA could be reinforced and reshaped in order to bring about greater interaction. In order to take full advantage of SEAP's expertise and aptitudes, one option could be to reinforce its role within the centre of government (CoG).

Reinforcing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

- This reform also represents an opportunity to advance and deepen the ministerial co-ordination model into a more flexible one that enables all ministries and associated bodies to interact better at the technical level as well, while bearing in mind the need to sustain ongoing co-operation with other monitoring entities. Some efforts aimed at a more overarching approach on the part of monitoring entities could also be reinforced. Spain has its own unique and specific model for monitoring and evaluation, but one that is very much fragmented and scattered

throughout different institutions (General Controller of the State Administration - IGAE -, the General Inspector of Services at a sectoral level and the Autonomous Agency on Evaluation - AEVAL).

- It is also worth reiterating here the recommendation outlined in the OECD's first *Public Governance Review of Spain* on the need to strengthen the status of the AEVAL as a major evaluation body that would work using a more comprehensive approach in co-ordination with other monitoring entities and complements OPERA's tasks. In that sense, OPERA could be formally mandated to partner strategically with key national and regional performance monitoring actors, to develop and implement such a performance assessment framework.

Making the most of public administration reform at subnational level

By recommending that autonomous communities adopt the measures included in the CORA reform, the central government took the lead in the reform of the public administration; however, the autonomous communities' active implication appears to be essential since a vast majority of initiatives still require their direct and committed implication to be implemented.

After initial reservations expressed by some autonomous communities (and pointed out in the first Public Governance Review), the CoG and in particular OPERA, have made major efforts to approach and collaborate with all autonomous communities. There is a broad support of the CORA reform from the autonomous communities but to a lesser extend in the case of Catalonia and the Basque Country (although both governments have also undergone important administrative reforms) and they have made major efforts to implement all of the initiatives together with OPERA and with line ministries, in particular.

The implementation process with the autonomous communities has not been homogenous. This is due to agreements through sectoral conferences or bilateral negotiations with individual autonomous communities. Such agreements allow certain initiatives to be implemented less than 100%. It should also be mentioned that some co-ordination arrangements have not reached all of their potential as relevant mechanisms have been established to exchange experiences on a performance base and focused on public administration reform.

To address the challenges mentioned above, the government of Spain could consider the following recommendations:

- Although autonomous communities play an active role in implementing the CORA measures, new mechanisms for multi-level and horizontal co-ordination and dialogue are still needed in order to find new ways to

reach formal and more permanent and lasting solutions to the multi-level governance challenges that Spain faces. These new mechanisms would also enable and promote horizontal sharing of best practices and particularly performance information among the autonomous communities themselves. This is also the case for digital government.

- As it was pointed out in the first *Public Governance Review of Spain*, the Conference of Presidents is an existing mechanism that has not been fully exploited and could contribute to building a common agenda on the main challenges and projects facing all actors at the central and regional levels. As in other OECD countries, such as Canada's Premiers' Conference and Australia's Council of Australian Governments (COAG), it could be institutionalised as a body, with regular meetings, and take responsibility for approving at least a mandate programme. Sectoral conferences could be entrusted to implement this programme. The Secretary of State for Public Administrations would formally chair the Conference of Presidents and would also encourage autonomous communities to generate and share performance information.
- In the specific case of public administration reform, the creation of a specific body in charge of co-ordination with the autonomous communities remains a pending issue that has yet to be resolved by the working group within the Council of Fiscal and Financial Policy of the Autonomous Communities (Consejo de Política Fiscal y Financiera de las Comunidades Autónomas, CPFF). One option could be the creation of an advisory group that would depend directly on OPERA as a permanent structure and would meet on a regular basis. This institutional arrangement would also act as a "clearing house", enabling the autonomous communities to share evidence, performance information and best practices with other autonomous communities and with OPERA, exchanging information on successful and unsuccessful experiences in their jurisdictions. In such a scenario, a reinforced Secretary of State for Public Administration within the CoG would further reinforce this idea.

Digital government

Strengthening digital government for a more strategic public administration

- Continue assessing the progress in the implementation of the information and communication technologies (ICT) measures and measuring their benefits. Once the measures have been implemented,

the government of Spain should keep a close eye on and evaluate the impact of the measures based on punctual and systematic quantitative and qualitative data collection. This can help build a system of productivity indicators of civil servants (Key Performance Indicators, KPI), as well as indicators on data management and digital government to be used by the chief information officer (CIO) for strategic planning purposes and to guide the elaboration of the next digital government strategy.

- Maintain the focus on communicating on the progress in the implementation of the CORA ICT measures and their impact. This may also have a pedagogical effect on the autonomous communities.

Strengthening streamlining, consolidation and collaboration

- As Spain progresses towards a sophisticated model of governance for ICT management and shared services, the next set of reform measures could streamline and strengthen the role of the CIO in relation to strategic decisions and directions of shared services and, in particular, digital government services. This would help to ensure coherence between strategic decisions on IT management and investments and decisions on digitisation to enable synergies to be captured and systems and platforms to be reused whenever possible.
- Important efforts have been implemented in Spain to increase efficiencies through streamlined and shared service delivery within the administration. Additional changes in the legal and budgetary framework might help address some of the remaining issues. One of the key issues is that the legal framework does not allow the division led by the CIO to charge users. Solutions may include either changing the law, granting the right to bill public agencies, or establishing a separate agency such as the Digital Government Services in the United Kingdom, the General Services in the United States or the Smals in Belgium. The new public agency would be a service provider, with the mandate to deliver the services, overcoming the financial problems and able to increase the use of the services delivered.
- Further support for service consolidation could be achieved by clarifying the criteria for the consolidation of mutual procurement and avoid adopting a simply technological perspective and applying market principles e.g. see the Belgian example of Smals.

Linking the transparency and open data agendas more closely

- The Transparency Portal should be more closely linked with the open government data (OGD) agenda. This would boost the proactive disclosure of data and information, and would help move from a legal compliance approach to a real collective commitment across the administration. As a side effect, this could ease up the change of culture within the administration and create more opportunities for public engagement, thus creating higher value. The government could seize the opportunity of the next International Open Data Conference being held in Spain to link more solidly these efforts.
- Reinforce the integration of data and information across the administration, both as an overarching strategy to improve internal efficiencies and service delivery as well as part of broader efforts to develop a "data-driven public sector".
- Consider strengthening the role of the unit working on transparency to clarify its mandate and provide it with sufficient human resources in order to strengthen its role in relation to the OGD agenda.
- Use data analysis more actively to spur the public sector and maintain efforts on building a culture of information sharing and public data release across the Spanish administration, especially for economic data and particularly in real time. Raising awareness and increasing the capacities of civil servants can provide an important incentive to further contribute substantively to the portal.
- Consider expanding the use of the Transparency Portal as a platform to engage citizens in policy drafts. This is a common practice linked to the implementation of the transparency policy in countries such as Mexico and Portugal, which has created important externalities in terms of public engagement in policy making and regulatory reform.

Stronger accountability mechanisms for better citizen participation and restoring trust in government

In light of what has been assessed on this topic, the government of Spain could consider the following recommendations:

- The consolidation of consultation mechanisms through a more proactive and consultative body, such as the existing Advisory Council, made up of academics and civil society organisations, is essential to get direct inputs from all parts of Spanish society.

- Together with increased use of ICT and the mentioned recommendation linking the transparency and open data agendas more closely, increasing citizen participation through an open government approach throughout the Spanish government would contribute to further enrich all the efforts made over the past few years and move towards inclusive growth. The CORA thus could be a good instrument to reinforce an open government agenda in Spain.
- The Spanish parliament (*Cortes Generales*) could also become directly involved on a regular basis in the discussions of a better long-term strategy for a performance-based Spanish public administration. Both chambers would engage in these discussions, with a debate in the Senate because of the issue's territorial dimension and in the Commission on Constitutional Affairs of the Congress. OPERA could also provide the Senate and Congress with tools to perform this function: annual reports on measures and their outputs and outcomes. This could even lead to the creation of an ad hoc Standing Committee of Deputies on public administration reform.

Chapter 1.

Stocktaking of reforms in Spain to date

Reforms to restructure and enhance the efficiency of the public sector has contributed to the quality of the Spanish public administration. This chapter provides an assessment of Spain's efforts in monitoring and analysing the implementation of this programme with a special focus on the Office for the Implementation of the Reform in the public administration (OPERA). Strategic foresight and medium- and long-term vision in government provides for one of the major opportunities of the reforms, but only if the results are subsequently integrated into policy making.

The context of this progress report

The government of Spain has founded its economic policy to face the current economic and financial crisis on three pillars: fiscal consolidation, restructuring the financial sector to reactivate lending and investment, and structural reforms. The reform of the public administration stands out as a critical component in the pillar dedicated to structural reforms. As underscored in Mariano Rajoy's inaugural speech as Prime Minister in December 2011, the purpose of these reforms is to eliminate inefficiencies and duplication across the central government and between levels of government.

The Commission on the Reform of the Public Administration (*Comisión para la Reforma de la Administración*, CORA) was created in 2012 to help the public sector contribute to revitalising the economy and fostering efficiency and competitiveness. It was mandated to carry out the following tasks:

- Conduct a comprehensive study of administrative reform.
- Design a programme for administrative streamlining, to be addressed by four sub-commissions: 1) administrative duplication; 2) administrative simplification, 3) service delivery and shared services; and 4) institutional administration.
- Develop, through the Council on Fiscal and Financial Policy of the Autonomous Communities (*Consejo de Política Fiscal y Financiera de las Comunidades Autónomas*), a programme of good practices to rationalise expenses and increase savings together with autonomous communities.

The CORA presented its consolidated report at the end of June 2013. The report proposed a series of specific reform initiatives that were expected to have a considerable impact on key aspects of public administration. Furthermore, the government of Spain established an implementation unit responsible for executing the objectives put forward by the commission, as well as for monitoring and evaluating the specific actions over time. The implementation unit (hereinafter "OPERA", its Spanish acronym) benefits from a high level of political support and leadership from the executive.

As the legislative term comes to its end, Spain's economy is showing clear signs of recovery according to international indicators, and the Spanish economy is moving towards regaining the confidence of international markets and increasing its efficiency, flexibility and capacity to compete.

The National Program of Reforms 2012-2016 is the framework of a four-year strategy submitted annually to the European Commission. These annual plans are built on goals and measures corresponding to the different phases of the reform agenda that the Spanish government designed for its four-year legislative term. Three axes of this reform agenda are in the context of priorities of the European Annual Growth Survey.

The 2015 National Program of Reforms is thus conceived as the last part of the strategy for this government term, and as such it has two self-reinforcing priorities: to conclude reforms that have already been initiated and to foster the current economic recovery and job creation.

At the national level, the main areas of the structural reforms include important actions in the following areas:

- improvements in the functioning of the labour market and the fight against unemployment
- protection and social inclusion
- promotion of growth and competitiveness through the de-indexation of the Spanish economy and the Plan for Regulatory Simplification under the Spanish Law on Market Unit (LGUM)
- business investment and financing
- increasing efficiency in the public administration.

From these starting points, the Spanish government has delivered what is considered the most relevant review of the Spanish public sector in the last few decades.

The OECD Public Governance Review of Spain

The CORA report formed the basis for the recent OECD *Public Governance Review of Spain*, which was launched in Spain on 1 April 2014 and approved at the OECD Public Governance Committee on 2 April 2014.

Four key processes for an efficient reform process were identified in the first *Public Governance Review of Spain*:

1. The Spanish reform process is a unique opportunity to restore public trust in institutions and the Spanish economy. The CORA strives to build confidence and create safer economic frameworks. Its efforts aim to provide a more predictable and favourable business climate. Elsewhere, the reform seeks to strengthen the citizen-government relationship and fight corruption. Spain should take advantage of the CORA's efforts in both areas to bolster trust in government. Citizens should also become a permanent actor in the reform

process. Continuous consultation mechanisms are necessary to increase citizen involvement in public decision making.

2. Synergies between the various components of the CORA and between it and other reforms related to public administration should be identified and exploited. There is a need to maintain the strategic link between all the wide-ranging reforms being implemented in Spain. There are opportunities to complement different thematic reforms with other initiatives that would strengthen public governance. The CORA reforms should be closely linked to other efforts in areas such as public transparency and budgetary reforms so as to achieve the objectives of modernising the public administration.

3. Administrative reform in Spain requires a long-term and sustained institutional effort. The institutionalisation of the reform is essential to ensure that all levels of government will effectively meet the demands of a renewed economic system. It is important to strengthen the strategic capacities of the centre of government given the Spanish tradition of ministerial administrative autonomy and the high degree of territorial decentralisation. The creation of OPERA as the unit responsible for the implementation of the reforms of the public administration has been important to ensure the reforms' optimal performance, promote the continuous evaluation of administrative activities, and ensure the efficient and effective delivery of public service to citizens.

4. The involvement of autonomous communities is crucial to make public administration reform work. There is a high level of convergence in the vision and strategies at various levels of government. Thus, the need to form partnerships and take full advantage of synergies is especially pressing in regards to multi-level governance. Good practices and innovative solutions are available in Spain at all levels of government. This environment provides a solid foundation to build effective multi-level partnerships to jointly address economic challenges.

Progress report on the implementation of the CORA reform

As a second step, the Spanish government asked the OECD to carry out a progress report on the results of the CORA reform implemented between December 2013 and July 2015. During this phase, the OECD provided support to the Spanish government for the implementation of the recommendations of the first OECD *Public Governance Review*. The OECD's support focused on:

- Strengthening the government's capacity to implement reform initiatives based on informed decision making in Spain. The key goal is to improve public policy assessment, monitoring and feedback mechanisms.
- Assessing the implementation of further reforms through a more open, transparent and participatory public administration.
- Assessing the implementation of the recommendations of the commission in two autonomous communities: Galicia and Murcia. This section identifies the practical implications of the CORA reforms and their articulation with reform initiatives undertaken in the autonomous communities. It focuses on the specific CORA initiatives that each of the autonomous communities has adopted in its own jurisdiction.

This progress report assesses progress made over the period July 2013-July 2015 toward the implementation of the CORA measures and the extent to which the government of Spain has had the opportunity to take into account the recommendations included in the first *Public Governance Review*. This study will thus concentrate on OPERA's main outputs and link them where possible to the pursuit of expected outcomes over the medium and long term.

The CORA included 222 measures, 30 of which were assessed on a fact-finding mission to Madrid, as well as to Murcia and Santiago de Compostela. The mission was an opportunity not only to see *in situ* how measures are being implemented by ministerial units, but also to assess how autonomous communities are carrying out Spanish public administration reform at the regional level.

Overview of the reform

The CORA reform formed the basis for the most significant programme of reform of the Spanish public administration since the return of democracy to the country. It set out in 222 detailed measures how the reform commitments, including those in the Programme for Government, would be implemented.

The CORA's working programme is to advance the reform of the administration as a means to achieve medium-term outcomes in the area of economic growth and resilience, job creation and competitiveness on four fronts:

- elimination of administrative overlap between different levels (central, regional, local) of the Spanish public administrations

- reduction of the overall administrative burdens that constitute an obstacle to the economic activity of companies and individuals
- reorganisation of internal operative means seeking economies of scale and scope to improve the efficiency of public administration services
- improvement of the institutional architecture of the public sector in Spain, proposing the merging or elimination of public bodies.

Those four fronts are, in fact, immediate outputs to overcome the aforementioned challenges.

The government of Spain has made major efforts to bring about the reforms included in the National Program Reform. Given the fiscal situation, the primary focus was on cost-reduction and efficiency measures. This was necessary in order to reduce public spending in line with Spain's fiscal commitments, while continuing to deliver important public services with reduced staff numbers. The success of the public sector reform in meeting those targets should not be underestimated. By the end of July 2015, 76% of the 222 measures had been fully implemented and total savings had reached an accumulated amount of EUR 21 810 million (according to last CORA report at the time of drafting this report)[1].

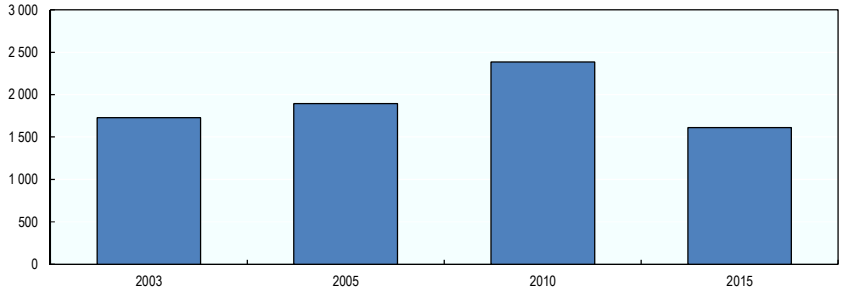
Table 1.1. **Distribution of savings**

	General state administration	Autonomous communities	Local governments	Subtotal public administrations	Citizens and business
Measures on efficiency	2 147 007 696	611 257 655	7 675 125	2 765 940 476	2 333 041 965
Measures on public employment	2 264 500 000	10 354 450 000	3 171 000 000	15 789 950	
Measures on organic rationalisation	937 337 673	2 087 750 000	229 070 000	3 254 157 673	
Total savings	5 348 845 369	13 053 457 655	3 636 815 125	22 039 118 149	2 333 041 965

Source: Ministry of Presidency, CORA report, September 2015.

At the same time, public sector reform started with a deep restructuring and downsizing. The figures speak for themselves, especially at the regional and local levels: autonomous communities eliminated 754 institutions (far above the initial commitment of 508), which represents 31.90% of existing bodies, while municipalities shed 1 436 entities, amounting to a decrease of nearly 25% and reverting to the levels of 1999. In the case of the general state administration, 173 entities were restructured and 114 of them eliminated. Finally, income generated by the selling of state real estate and other business transactions have shot up to EUR 506.9 million.

Figure 1.1. **Evolution of public sector downsizing at regional level in Spain**



Source: Based on information from the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, July 2015.

The implementation of measures included in the CORA's reform agenda was to be finalised within three years from the time of its publication in July 2013 with a specific timetable adapted to each initiative. The CORA reform process is therefore expected to reach its end in June 2016. The implementation process is progressing according to plan.

Implementation of measures

In June 2013, the government created the Office for the Implementation of the Reform in the Public Administration (OPERA) to monitor the process, follow up on the implementation of the measures, and prepare the legal and administrative changes that had been identified by the CORA.

The CORA reform package is very ambitious in its scope with 222 wide-ranging measures. OPERA has created built-in follow-up mechanisms to ensure monitoring and assessment on a regular basis and has consolidated a system of co-ordination and updated follow up between institutions of the centre of government (CoG). This has been assured through regular bilateral meetings with ministries and bodies and weekly meetings of the Undersecretaries' Commission. This has contributed to OPERA's role in gathering accurate and detailed information from all units involved in the implementation of the CORA.

Measures are distributed among ministries, with the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations not only taking on a leading role (together with OPERA) in the monitoring and supervision of the reform package, but also responsible for the implementation of 67 measures, accounting for 30% of all measures. This ministry is followed by the Ministry of Employment and Social Security with 21 measures and the Ministries of Education, Culture and Sports and that of Health, Social Services and Equality both with 20, and the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism with 19.

The CORA has been envisaged as a continuing process of revision and review, wherein new measures could be aggregated, improved upon or adapted according to the needs and agreements among administrations to provide better services for citizens. However, since June 2013, only five measures have been aggregated. Despite poor consolidation efforts, the reform is a very ambitious initiative and has far-reaching implications for the Spanish administration as a whole.

Individual ministries are responsible for ensuring the execution of the measures they are leading within the financial framework in a context of severe budget austerity. It is therefore clear that the CoG must retain a central role of influence and support in the implementation of policies and measures.

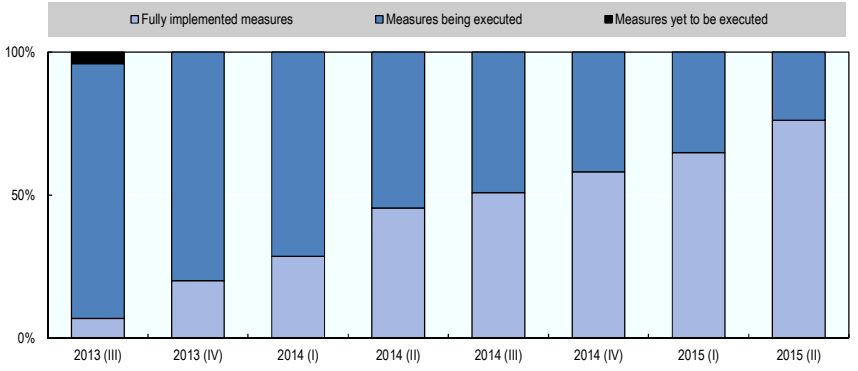
Once the needs have been detected and measures selected, each unit has to put the mechanisms in place to carry them out in an efficient way. In that sense, some measures originally envisaged in a specific way had to be adapted when necessary in light of different needs and realities. A good example is the streamlining of territorial public observatories. The CORA reform identified redundant public observatories (most of them in the autonomous communities, some in municipalities) and proposed the unification of such entities or their integration into the pertinent central government observatory. In the end, this measure was adapted to the reality and specific requirements of each autonomous community.

OPERA has created its own system of data collection on indicators that are used to monitor implementation. There is a statistical research programme that is decided by each line ministry, which are ultimately responsible for the implementation strategy for their corresponding measures. OPERA is responsible for monitoring along with each ministry. OPERA prepares a quarterly and yearly report on implementing development strategies that is presented to the Council of Ministers. Since the publication of the CORA in June 2013, OPERA has produced five quarterly progress reports, a monitoring report (June 2014) and two annual progress reports (in 2013 and 2014). The political commitment to the undertaking of these reforms over this period has been evident. The Council of Ministers has delivered reports on the implementation process on a quarterly basis.

This is also because issues related to public administration are now under the Ministry of Finances and Public Administrations (which was not the case before, as previously the public administration was either a single ministry or fell within the scope of the Ministry of the Presidency).

Figure 1.2. **Evolution on the implementation of the CORA reforms**

Quarterly figures



Source: Ministry of Presidency, CORA report, June 2015.

OPERA has divided the 222 measures into different categories throughout the past two years of implementation of the CORA. The 30 measures selected for this progress report (included in Annex A) have been grouped according to the OECD's own classification and taking into account each measure's impact, that is: 1) Measures with an impact on subnational governments (autonomous communities and local governments). They require the indispensable co-operation of subnational governments to implement them. 2) Measures aimed at organic rationalisation of the public administration. This is mainly applicable to the general state administration but has also inspired action in the autonomous communities. 3) Measures with a strong impact on citizens and service-oriented businesses, with special attention paid to health, employment and business. 4) Structural legal measures aimed at promoting substantial changes in law and in procedures. However, some measures transcend more than one category and have evolved during the implementation process. The Centralized State Procurement System is an illustrative example of an ambitious and complex measure that was initially aimed at the creation of a single central purchasing agency on a national level but that has gradually gone on to involve autonomous communities in some sectors. In fact, the initial phase, consisting of the internal centralization of contracts (mainly for supplies) and rationalisation of public procurement within each Ministry, has resulted in significant savings for the state since the year 2013, with savings amounting to more than €170 million by the end of 2014. In addition, it is worth mentioning that the implementation of a Purchasing Platform for the Ministry of Health, Social

Services and Equality, which can be joined by ACs who wish to do so, has the potential to lead to further savings of more than 54 million euros.

The amount of savings expected to result from of these measures is much higher, and would be mostly obtained after the implementation of the framework agreements coordinated by the new General Directorate of Rationalization and Centralised Procurement ("*Dirección General de Racionalización y Centralización de la Contratación – DGRCC* -") established within the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations. The contracts and agreements that are being tendered have generated additional savings of more than 268 million euros[2].

All measures are being implemented, but as mentioned in the first *Public Governance Review of Spain*, there is an evident range in the degree of impact of the initiatives. Some measures, such as the creation of a "One Job Portal" (*Portal Único de Empleo*), differ from others where a regulatory change is required. The latter group would include the Law for Unity Market and the reform of local governments, and here more time is needed before completing an impact assessment.

As for the reform of administrative rules with an important impact on the core of public administrations (measures on the legal regime of the public administrations and on administrative procedure), they were approved in October 2015 (Box 1.1).

Box 1.1 **Reform on administrative laws**

With regard to the consolidation of standards of quality, efficiency and legal certainty in the Spanish public administration, one of the most ambitious CORA proposals is the comprehensive reform of administrative procedure and its integration with electronic procedures in order to move towards a more efficient and paperless administration. The Council of Ministers in May 2015 approved the Common Administrative Procedure for Public Administration Act (dedicated to the public administration's relations with citizens and business), along with the Public Administration Legal Regulation Act (dealing with the administration's internal organisation and inter-administrative relations), all in order to introduce reforms and regulate the relations between citizens and the administration. These new laws separate for the first time the traditional Law 30/1992 and 1956 on Legal and Administrative Procedures and brings together different laws such as the Government Act, the Agencies Act and the Law on Organisation and Functions of the General State Administrations. Ultimately, this will bring about a profound change in the public sector and its regulation as a whole.

These laws are aimed at:

- improving administrative efficiency through a fully electronic and interconnected administration

Box 1.1 **Reform on administrative laws (*continued*)**

- ensuring legal certainty and predictability
- increasing the quality standards of the legal system by incorporating the OECD's standards for better regulation
- achieving more agile and efficient administrative procedures by reducing administrative burdens and shortening processing times.

These laws came into force in October 2016, one year after the day of their publication.

These legal changes were not unanimously endorsed. The final draft was approved in a brief parliamentary procedure after the incorporation of some of the suggestions included in a comprehensive and critical Opinion of the Council of State. These laws are bound to provoke substantial changes in administrative procedures.

Sources: Ley 39/2015, de 1 de octubre, del Procedimiento Administrativo Común de las Administraciones Públicas, www.boe.es/boe/dias/2015/10/02/pdfs/BOE-A-2015-10565.pdf; Ley 40/2015 de 1 de octubre, de Régimen Jurídico del Sector Público, www.boe.es/boe/dias/2015/10/02/pdfs/BOE-A-2015-10566.pdf.

The government of Spain has also stressed the need for regulatory changes in law making. The OECD takes note of measures to be approved for better regulation pursuant to the recommendations in the first *Public Governance Review of Spain* on the Law on Administrative Procedure. Of particular interest is not only the broader *ex ante* consultation contained in the regulatory impact assessment (*Memoria de Análisis de Impacto Normativo*), but especially the *ex post* process of updating information regarding the new law in the process of monitoring its implementation.

The centre of government as the driver of a whole-of-government administrative reform

The CORA was proposed, conceived of and implemented by the CoG, composed of the Ministry of the Presidency and the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, which have taken the lead in promoting and co-ordinating all of the initiatives government-wide. This has helped to send a clear message of political priority at the highest level with the direct implication of the Vice-President of the government.

The role of the implementation unit of the CORA reform, OPERA, has been key to the reform. OPERA, the new specialised structure created to implement the CORA measures, has been crucial in consolidating political support and providing technical monitoring and support to all ministries, agencies and other administrations. Since OPERA was created to be

responsible for the implementation of the reforms of the public administration, it plays a key role in ensuring good performance and in carrying out follow-up activities with major stakeholders, not only at the central level (ministries and agencies), but also at the regional level (autonomous communities).

The OPERA initiative has the potential to be developed as an OECD good practice if it is consolidated as a permanent structure of public administration follow up and assessment.

Although formally in the organisational chart of the Ministry of the Presidency, OPERA is functionally dependent on both the Ministries of Finance and Public Administrations and that of the Presidency. The strong collaboration and teamwork of the leading actors in the CORA continues. While the initial preparatory phase was very much in the hands of these three policy portfolios, at the current stage of implementation, OPERA has taken the lead in monitoring and providing assistance to ministries and in monitoring the autonomous communities. In addition, Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations and in particular, its Subsecretariat is playing a relevant role in the implementation of key measures, especially those dedicated to the Centralized State Procurement System (described below), the sale of State properties, the reduction of cars and implementation and monitoring of electronic invoicing.

It is too early to measure the overall impact of the CORA measures implemented so far, but major steps on follow up and assessment should be taken now in order to enhance the process and make it more efficient in terms of outcomes and performance.

Outputs versus outcomes

Establishing the desired outcomes is essential in building a results-based monitoring and evaluation system. Building the system is basically a deductive process in which inputs, activities and outputs are all derived as an outflow from the setting out of these outcomes. Indicators, baselines and targets, all crucial elements of the performance framework, are derived from and based on the laying out of outcomes.

Performance is what governments and their public administrations strive for. There are many ways that governments and the public measure and assess a country's performance, e.g. GDP growth, employment rates, GINI coefficients, etc. While these measures are helpful, they can also be influenced by external and unforeseen factors. Natural disasters, for example, can significantly impact government finances for a period of time. They also do not necessarily paint a clear picture of the impact that

government policies have on society and on societal well-being. More and more often, this role is being filled by outcome evaluations and performance measurement systems.

Spain exited the financial assistance programme for the recapitalisation of financial institutions in 2014 and is currently subject to post-programme surveillance and European Semester surveillance. Thus, in the context of Spain, where national reforms are under the supervision of the European Union (Stability and Growth Pact), monitoring performance through outcome-based results has become even more important in the resulting tight fiscal environment.

However, indicators are only relevant when they measure against an objective. Thus, measurement indicators will show the progress made toward reaching the intended objectives. Outcomes will demonstrate whether success has been achieved. In short, outcomes will show which road to take.

As mentioned in the previous *Public Governance Review*, "foresight requires the capacity and the will to conduct dynamic and inter-related long- and short-term strategic planning, based on a whole-of-government vision, understanding and knowledge". A stronger focus on evaluation in the medium term would help improve the efficiency of public administration policies. Evidence-based design of reform policies is known to be an effective tool to improve efficiency. This requires information on the implementation of policies, along with an evaluation culture that integrates lessons learnt into the design and redesign of policies, and fosters the exchange of experiences among ministries and agencies.

This is about measuring the impact of short-term reform decisions on the achievement of medium- and long-term results. If results are not being achieved properly, this toolkit guides the government on how to correct course so that it can do better. This performance assessment framework is as much a policy toolkit for governments as it is an accountability toolkit for citizens.

Meaningful performance monitoring and assessment enhances the capacity of governments to act on lessons learnt. Identifying and taking action to implement lessons from good practice – such as risk management techniques that have been shown to work – as well as from bad practice, can enable public sector entities to apply a more consistent, efficient and effective approach to risk management. Take the example of a department in a public sector organisation that encounters a new risk and devises an effective internal control to mitigate the risk. If the department communicates the lesson learnt to other departments or other public

organisations that may encounter the same risk, they will be able to test the mitigating action and use it to develop their own solutions. In Slovenia, the government has developed a network among practitioners that is co-ordinated by a central authority. Practitioners share their experiences and give each other incentives to develop risk management practices (OECD, 2014d).

Strategic foresight in government

Good governance requires forward-looking governments with a clear strategic vision. As stated in the first *Public Governance Review of Spain*, such a vision should go beyond immediate actions and the current context. This is probably one of the main opportunities of the CORA reform, envisaged as the immediate response to the financial crisis as far as the public administration was concerned. But, as outlined in OECD (2014d), additional vision and actions are needed to create the conditions for continuous improvement. Box 1.2. shows how the principles of Performance Management can be implemented in seven steps in order to ensure well-integrated performance measurement and evaluation.

Box 1.2. **OECD Principles of Performance Management: From setting objectives to measuring results – A seven-step process**

Performance measurement and evaluation need to be integrated into all major policy initiatives both *ex ante* and *ex post* – these tools are critical to evaluate policies to identify success and failures, and to improve policies accordingly. The process of performance measurements includes the definition of concrete and measurable objectives and the evaluation of whether they have been achieved. It helps to ensure that strategies inform daily decision making, to enhance accountability and credibility, and to communicate progress. Performance measurements work best if they build on clear objectives, good-quality data and are embedded in a culture of constant learning and improvement.

There are risks, however. If measurements are not complemented with more in-depth qualitative analysis, these indicators lead to a situation in which reward is given to programming that is not achieving its intended result, or is achieving perverse outcomes. Moreover, an exclusive focus on "what is measurable" leads to the discounting or non-measurement of other important performance objectives.

The OECD has developed a seven-step methodology to help policy makers set objectives for their policies and assess whether they have been achieved. Figure 3 provides a concrete illustration of the application of the seven-step method to a policy on strengthening the enforcement of traffic regulation to reduce traffic causalities.

Box 1.2. **OECD Principles of Performance Management: From setting objectives to measuring results – A seven-step process** (*continued*)

Step 1: Establish priority policies

For indicators to provide valuable information, they must be properly rooted in policy itself. At the same time, it is unrealistic, and perhaps undesirable, to link indicators to all policy initiatives. Thus, policies need to be prioritised according to their ability to help government meet its strategic objectives. A priority policy should be articulated as a consistent course of action expressed as a causal and concrete statement (see example below).

Step 2: Define the targets

A target is a concrete goal that states the degree or level of achievement expected with respect to its associated priority policy. Targets are most directly linked to results indicators, and the degree or level of achievement that a target measure can be based on a variety of comparative parameters, depending on the base comparator and the results being sought.

Step 3: Identify key activities

An activity is a specific programme, initiative or project that clearly supports reaching a target. Activities must be systematically and clearly linked to targets and should be expressed as action verbs. Thus, "train", "implement" and "build" all work well to lead an "activity statement" but "improve", "strengthen" or "enhance" for example, do not.

Step 4: Build output indicators

An output indicator measures progress with an activity, and thus these two components should be clearly linked. A well-constructed output indicator is measurable. Thus, it must be quantitative (i.e. expressed in physical or monetary units) and time bound (i.e. limited to the lifetime of the corresponding activity). One key question to ask when establishing an output indicator is "what will be produced by the activity being measured?"

Step 5: Build results indicators

A results indicator measures the results of activities in terms of their contribution to corresponding targets. Thus, it is closely associated with targets.

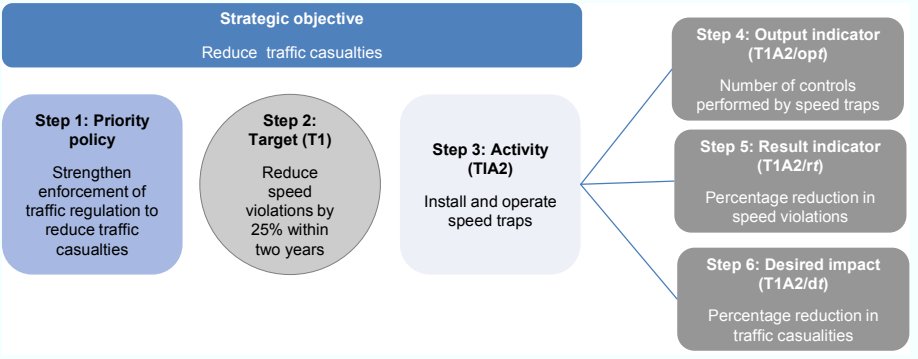
Step 6: Identify the desired impact

An impact indicator sets a longer term perspective and provides insights on the effect that one or more key activities have on the priority policy and, ultimately, on the strategic objective. Impact indicators are particularly difficult to develop because attribution or causality is hard to establish – i.e. making a direct and complete link between the

Box 1.2. **OECD Principles of Performance Management: From setting objectives to measuring results – A seven-step process** (*continued*)

activity's impact and policy objective can be difficult. This is because other factors, often not within the control of government, may be involved with meeting a strategic or policy objective. Thus, it may be more rewarding and appropriate to identify the desired impact – the desired impact of an activity on a priority policy and, more fundamentally, the desired impact of a priority policy on a strategic objective. Such a conversation can: 1) help focus policy thinking by providing a framework or an orientation within which other decisions can be taken; 2) inspire extended institutional and individual effort (OECD, 2009).

Figure .1.3. **Illustration of the seven-step methodology**



Step 7: Identify appropriate qualitative research methods

There are many approaches to determining the effectiveness of activities and/or priority policies. Output, result and impact indicators may signal problems and trigger governments to "dig deeper" to find the causes of the problem and identify the appropriate actions. Qualitative research methods can add value to the indicators and an understanding of policy effectiveness. Such research methods can include case studies, focus groups, interviews and reviews (e.g. OECD peer reviews).

Source: OECD (2013), *Poland: Developing Good Governance Indicators for Programmes Funded by the European Union*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264193543-en.

The CORA reform is being implemented according to the objectives set out in the CORA report, taking as its aim to "increase the quality of public institutions in the long term", but it is still based on short-term considerations and too limited in its perspectives on streamlining and rationalisation. No relevant medium- and long-term vision instruments of

performance measurement seem to have been introduced, or at least made publicly apparent.

Strategic foresight presents the advantage of not being bounded by traditional demarcations between agencies or issues. Foresight helps to foster the whole-of-government approach "by looking at issues that crosscut ministerial boundaries". This should take into account the government's fiscal priorities, environmental and economic forecasts, social trends and the political feasibility of achieving a particular outcome.

But foresight teams should above all have the capacity to undertake high-level statistical analysis, horizon-scanning and to commission research and polling where necessary. Strategic foresight advice should be broad-based, and wherever possible backed up by empirical evidence, so that it can be contested and debated by others in the policy domain.

Some countries follow a centralised, CoG-based structure for foresight activities (e.g. France, the Netherlands, Singapore, the United Kingdom) while in other countries different departments engage in foresight activities (e.g. Finland, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, the United States) without necessarily being co-ordinated. They can act independently based on their subject matter and policy area. Countries, however, may still have an integrated vision document for strategic foresight which guides the activities of different foresight offices located in different ministries (e.g. Sweden).

The experience of Sweden with the Commission on the Future (Box 1.3) is worthy of special mention, as it identified Sweden's challenges in the longer term (2020 and 2050). It was considered to be an important step in the ongoing work of shaping a policy for the future of the country and also paid attention to the public sector.

One of the biggest challenges observed in different countries is the integration of the results of foresight (or of the practice itself) into policy making; countries tend to focus on short-term goals without a clear connection with the long-term approach that is typical of foresight exercises.

Box 1.3. **The Commission for the Future of Sweden**

In order to identify the challenges that Sweden will face in the longer term (2020 and 2050), the government appointed the Commission on the Future of Sweden (Framtidskommissionen) in the autumn of 2011. Over a period of a year and a half, the commission spoke with and listened to different stakeholders across the country including civil society, the private sector, local government, government agencies, individual researchers, non-governmental organisations and others.

The work of the commission focused on challenges related to sustainable growth, demographic development, labour market integration, democracy, gender equality and social cohesion. However, the aim of the final report was not to offer proposals on how future challenges are to be met, but rather to help shape future policies in Sweden. As an instrument of foresight, the idea is that identifying some of Sweden's long-term challenges will contribute to a more future-oriented public debate, and enable the government, the Riksdag and other sectors of society to arrive at decisions at an early stage and thus ensure that Sweden can deal with its challenges in the best possible way.

Challenges were not considered by the commission as problems; they primarily referred to the consequences of the various processes of change in society – and in the world beyond Sweden – and Swedish policies, which can open up new opportunities. In this sense, it was vital for the commission to identify the future challenges to society in order to meet the "problems" head on and take advantage of the opportunities that lie ahead.

Regarding the public sector, the final report of the commission acknowledged that policy implementation is to a great extent the responsibility of the 234 government agencies and Sweden's 290 municipalities and 20 county councils and regions, which enjoy a high degree of autonomy. This complex setting implies a challenge in terms of attaining the desired levels of co-ordination, co-operation and well-designed decision-making processes to ensure that education, healthcare, infrastructure and other public services will be delivered at high-quality standards. The report also studied the past, present and future trends in terms of expansion or decline of the public sector, concluding that having one of the largest public sectors as a percentage of GDP among OECD countries is a future challenge. It also included considerations on democracy and political parties and challenges related to corruption in the coming years (especially with regard to public-private partnerships and the local level).

Source: Government of Sweden, www.government.se.

This consists of building bridges between the different types of experts and professionals and overcoming the tendency to focus on specific interests/preferences, instead working together effectively to advance knowledge about the future and improve government readiness to effectively face future challenges.

It is about broadening the traditional scope of challenges on economic development and fiscal situation (what GDP growth focuses on) to encompass the multi-dimensional challenges that governments and societies

are currently facing. Governments of OECD member countries have started to put in place mechanisms and have adopted reforms with the aim of restoring and improving their responsiveness to the needs of citizens and businesses (Box 1.4). Governments are called upon to demonstrate their capacity to govern in a way that meets the growing and changing expectations of citizens.

Box 1.4. **Examples of foresight programmes**

Australia: Australia has recently begun to use government foresight systematically. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Australia's national science agency, has a dedicated team (CSIRO Futures) working on foresight in energy, transport and other fields. It produces "Our Future World", reports on global megatrends updated every two years. Multiple other departments do some foresight work. Every five years, the Treasury department produces a report on long-term issues (40-year forecast) to help short-term decision making. The establishment of the Strategic Policy Network with representatives from every department, led by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, may impact foresight use for strategic policy.

Canada: Multiple government departments have used foresight, and this has increased over the last few years with the creation of Policy Horizons Canada (PHC), a centralised agency for carrying out foresight work and building foresight capacity in government. The PHC is headed by a high-level steering committee of deputy ministers and reports to the Privy Council. Parts of the Department of National Defence, including the Directorate of Future Security Analysis, use foresight for capabilities and personnel planning, primarily for internal audiences. Multiple other departments pursue some foresight work on economic, social and technological issues within their policy departments.

France: France has one of the longest-established foresight programmes in Europe, with policy-focused foresight services in almost every department. The Centre d'analyse stratégique (CAS) works directly under the Prime Minister to advise on policy formulation and implementation. The Senate has a delegation dedicated to foresight to reflect on socio-economic transformations through scenario-building. The French defence department has a Délégation aux affaires stratégiques (DAS), which carries out regular analyses of long-term international geostrategic issues.

Finland: Finland Foresight is well-integrated into Finnish policy planning. The Government Foresight Report, prepared through wide consultation by the Prime Minister's Office, is prepared at the start of the mandate for a new incoming government. During the mandate, the Government Foresight Network develops a report on the Finnish policy-making environment and each ministry has dedicated staff to develop ministries' Futures Reviews. The Finnish parliament's also has a Committee for the Future to pursue and review foresight work.

Box 1.4. **Examples of foresight programmes** (*continued*)

Germany: Over the last 20 years, Germany has developed a decentralised mix of foresight projects in departments at federal and *Länder* levels. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research is the main government agency involved in foresight, including through its "Futur" project on research planning. At both the national and regional levels, particularly in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, foresight projects (both internal to government and by external agencies) study a wide range of technological, industrial and social science issues.

United Kingdom: Government foresight in the United Kingdom is dominated by the UK Foresight Office, a central government agency that reports directly to Cabinet, and is headed by the Chief Scientific Advisor. It was originally dedicated to technology and industry but now has a broader thematic mandate to look at challenges for the future, pursuing major foresight projects, horizon scanning and training activities across government. Separately, the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre and the UK Defence Science and Technology Laboratory do foresight and horizon scanning for the Ministry of Defence.

United States: Well-established but decentralised foresight programmes are scattered throughout the US government. Many agencies (state, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Defence, Treasury, Energy, Office of Management and Budget and especially the General Accountability Office) have strategic planning capacities that use foresight to varying degrees. The National Intelligence Council produces major Global Trends reports every four years. As the world's foremost producer and user of foresight work in the last half century, the US military has an array of strategic planning and intelligence organisations, in which foresight work is well entrenched to inform planning.

Sources: Dreyer, I. and G. Stang with C. Richard (2014), "Foresight in governments: Practice and trends around the world", *Yearbook of European Security YES 2013*, European Union, Institute for Security Studies, available at: www.iss.europa.eu/fileadmin/euiss/documents/Books/Yearbook/2.1_Foresight_in_governments.pdf (accessed 7 September 2015); OECD (2015a), *OECD Public Governance Reviews: Estonia and Finland: Fostering Strategic Capacity across Governments and Digital Services across Borders*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264229334-en.

A strategic policy cycle for inclusive growth

Now that all the CORA measures are being executed, it is time to make an overall assessment of the project and try to move toward a longer term planning horizon, looking out over 20, 30 or 40 years, to see what trends are emerging as influences on policy development. With the beginning of a new parliamentary term, the new Spanish government could move forward towards reforms with greater impacts, but that may also require more resources (financial, political, etc.). Box 1.5. explains the OECD framework for a strategic policy cycle.

Box 1.5. **A strategic policy cycle for inclusive growth**

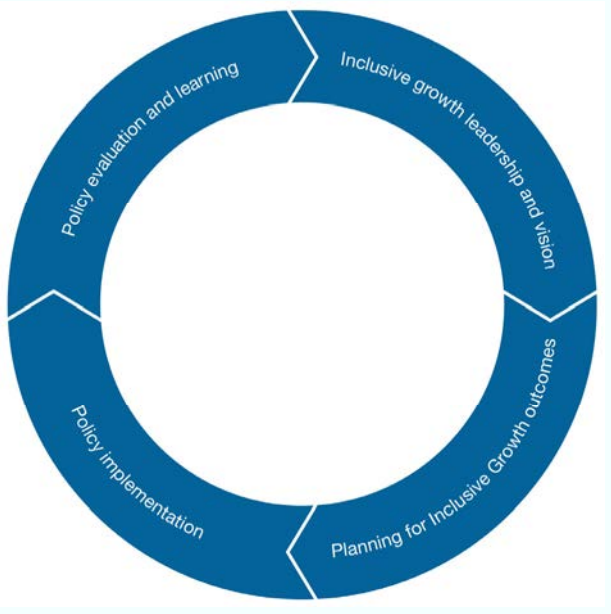
Assessment focuses on outcomes that matter for well-being.

Responsive changes are made based on a beneficiary assessment of services and service providers.

Comprehensive evaluation, including from independent institutions, informs new inclusive growth policy packages.

Key national indicators translate societal priorities in whole-of-government outcomes, guiding goals and performance targets.

Figure 1.4. **Strategy policy cycle**



Source: OECD (2015b), "Policy shaping and policy making: The governance of inclusive growth", Background report, GOV/PGC (2015)20, OECD, Paris.

Maximising synergies among evaluation units to assess more broadly the economic and societal outcomes of policies

The CORA reform is contributing to the creation of new tools and mechanisms, even if for the moment just on a short or in some cases medium-term basis, for better efficiency and effectiveness of the Spanish public administration. The first *Public Governance Review of Spain* stressed

the potential of exploring synergies among different evaluation units. This is particularly the case for other monitoring bodies that also operate under the auspices of the Ministry of Finance and Public Administration (MINHAP), such as the Public Policy and Quality of Service Assessment Agency (AEVAL) and the General Comptroller of the State Administration (IGAE). However, there is still a need to bolster co-ordination and co-operation in setting, implementing, monitoring and reporting on the results of a robust performance assessment framework that, among other things, "tells the story" to citizens and businesses of the impact of institutional consolidation at all levels of government on economic performance, nationally and in the regions.

In this sense, the AEVAL, an institution focused on assessing policy performance, promotes and conducts evaluations and impact analyses of the Spanish government's public policies and programmes, as well as of its management of service quality, while promoting the rational use of resources and accountability to citizens. In the context of the administrative reform, the AEVAL's mandate could have been extended in order to contribute to a wider vision and assessment of the CORA's impact and help report on the results of a robust performance assessment framework that other monitoring bodies in the Spanish system do not offer. Publications like the "Practical guide to the design and conduct of public policy evaluations. The AEVAL approach" ("Guía práctica para el diseño y realización de evaluaciones de políticas públicas. El enfoque AEVAL") are evidence of the agency's know-how and experience that could be shared to complement the relevant and essential work of the General Comptroller of the State Administration IGAE and the General Inspector of Services at a sectoral level.

Supreme Audit Institutions traditionally take on the role of auditing public policy performance. For example, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) of the United States or the Algemene *Rekenkamer* of the Netherlands (OECD, 2015c) are external, independent bodies devoted to this purpose. In the case of Spain, the Court of Audit's mandate (Tribunal de Cuentas) is restricted to budget accountability and financial management of the public sector[3] The Government of Spain could explore ways for existing institutions to develop independent processes for the auditing of public policy performance, and in doing so could take advantage of the know-how and experience of existing bodies engaged in public policy performance auditing.

At the same time, since the creation of the Independent Authority on Fiscal Responsibility (AIRF), this body has produced reports regarding the financial situation of the autonomous communities. There is no evidence on

the central government's feedback or the impact of such assessments, neither on the governments' policies nor on the CORA measures.

Recommendations

Keeping and consolidating the reform path on a medium- and long-term basis

- Elaborating a strategic foresight plan on a long-term basis (at least ten years) that would go beyond the National Program of Reforms would contribute not only to underlining the major challenges and structural changes that the Spanish administration still needs to confront, but would also enable the government to measure the impact of its reform agenda on the achievement of multi-dimensional policy outcomes for citizens and businesses – for the economy and society. Political support has not weakened during this period, but the focus has shifted to other issues. It is time to reflect on public administration reform beyond a mere reaction to the economic crisis.

- In addition, the periodic review of milestones and achievements by third parties (i.e. the OECD, think tanks or independent experts) in the medium/long term could provide the government with objective advice and enable it and its leadership to justify and advance corrective measures.

- This approach could strengthen the accountability principle underpinning good governance, as it would highlight in both qualitative and quantitative terms the relationship between inputs and outcomes, and allow for this information to be disseminated widely both within and outside government. Citizen and stakeholder reaction to this performance information could then inform future strategic policy development. In this sense, it is key to ensuring that the impact of reforms can be assessed *vis-à-vis* their stated objectives.

Consolidating a permanent structure for the reform in the centre of government

- OPERA could be maintained as a permanent structure, with permanent staff in charge not only of carrying out monitoring activities, but also of conducting periodical assessments, with new proposals and undertakings added at each stage. As OPERA's leadership has evolved in the direction of a much more comprehensive approach than the one explicitly described in its mandate, it should also strengthen its strategic vision of the reform process.

- OPERA's mandate could be amended to concentrate its activity on measuring the impacts of reforms on the achievement of strategic results/goals for people and businesses (outcomes), while assessing the fulfilment of the measures (outputs).
- The co-ordination between the Ministry of Presidency and the Ministry of Finance and Public Administration with CORA reform shows the potential of also taking full advantage of Secretary of State of Public Administration's expertise and abilities by reinforcing its role within the CoG. This would give a greater impetus to administrative reform as a process of continuous improvement and strengthen the internal coherence of the long-term vision of the whole-of-government approach.

Reinforcing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

- This reform is also an opportunity to advance and deepen the ministerial co-ordination model, taking on a more flexible approach that enables all ministries and involved bodies to interact better at technical level as well, all the while bearing in mind the need to sustain ongoing co-operation with other monitoring units.
- OPERA could go one step further by measuring the impact of reforms on strategic policy outcomes over time (every three to five years), in addition to their impact on outputs (e.g. annual deficit-reduction targets reached by cuts/consolidation efforts).
- In light of the specific mandate of AEVAL, it is worth reiterating the recommendation outlined in the first *Public Governance Review of Spain* on the need to strengthen this body through a commitment on the part of the government to issue an official statement on the AEVAL's reports, either accepting its recommendations or explaining why the public administration will not follow them.
- OPERA could reinforce its work and efforts by better communicating on the state of the implementation of the measures. Beside the quarterly and annual reports, a clear and more friendly website especially dedicated to the CORA (such as the one dedicated to the Transparency Portal) would help to issue reports that more clearly display all of the measures and their respective state of implementation. Moreover, in order to highlight co-ordination between the central and regional governments in the reform of the Spanish public administration as a whole, a specific page dedicated to the advancements of the autonomous communities would be an asset and would lend more transparency to the process as a whole.

- The development and implementation of a common outcomes-based performance assessment framework using the AEVAL's experience, one that could be applied to all monitoring entities, would be of value. In that sense, OPERA could be formally mandated to partner strategically with key national and regional performance monitoring actors, to develop and implement such a performance assessment framework.
- Government of Spain may also consider ways for existing institutions to develop independent processes for the auditing of public policy performance and to take advantage of the know-how and experience on existing bodies dealing with issues of public policy performance.
- This new framework would be accompanied by joint capacity building for civil servants from all bodies as well as for all employees in line ministries in charge of the CORA.

Notes

1. Updated reports are available at Spanish Transparency portal.
2. http://catalogocentralizado.minhap.es/pctw/Acceso/inicio.aspx (accessed 13 February 2016).
3. Articles 136 and 153 of Spanish Constitution and Law 7/1988, 5th April on Court of Audit's Functioning.

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Chapter 2.

Making the most of public administration reform at subnational level in Spain

This chapter assesses the joint efforts by the autonomous communities in implementing the public administration reform at the regional level. Even though the initiatives by the Commission on the Reform of the Public Administration have triggered further reforms of the autonomous communities' administration, more effective governance structures remain crucial for policy coherence and continuity. This chapter thus stresses the importance of strengthening and consolidating current collaboration mechanisms with all autonomous communities in order to capitalise on the full potential of public administration reform at the subnational level.

Key facts and findings

The Commission on the Reform of the Public Administration (Comisión para la Reforma de la Administración, CORA) has contributed to enhancing the role of the centre of government (CoG) in co-ordinating policies at the national level. By recommending that the autonomous communities adopt the measures included in CORA reform, the central government and, in particular, it's CoG, have taken the lead in proposing and promoting the implementation of the CORA reform. Given the highly decentralised model of the Spanish state, the active implication of the autonomous communities has been essential to this reform, as 139 out of the 222 initiatives require the direct and committed involvement of the regions in their implementation.

After some initial reservations expressed by some autonomous communities (and outlined out in the first *Public Governance Review of Spain*), the CoG, and in particular OPERA, have made major efforts to maintain contact and collaborate with all autonomous communities. There is a general consensus on the need to carry out such a reform and on the notion that co-ordination is essential at different levels of the administration. In fact, all regional governments have undergone their own public administration reform process alongside the CORA, even the most critical ones like Catalonia and the Basque Country (Irekia, 2014), which expressed a clear opposition to the initiative.

The CORA reform did not start from scratch. Some relevant autonomous communities such as Galicia, the Basque Country and Catalonia had already taken important steps to promote administrative reforms in their respective regions in the context of the economic crisis. Galicia, for instance, undertook rationalisation measures in 2010. In the case of Andalucia, the existing co-ordinating body for administrative reform, the Interdepartmental Commission on administrative co-ordination and rationalisation[1] was created in 1988 and is now in charge of the implementation of the CORA's measures and the regional government's administrative reform measures.

Yet the CORA itself has been a major driving force that has encouraged autonomous communities to carry out their own administrative reforms. Some of them initiated their reforms directly inspired by the CORA (such as Murcia or Castilla-La Mancha), while others have adopted various forms for streamlining and rationalisation. This is the case of Cantabria, which in late 2013 passed a two-year Strategy for Better Public Services with an eye toward meeting international requirements for the reform of the public administration.

Autonomous communities have made major efforts to implement all of the initiatives together with OPERA. The implementation process across autonomous communities has not been homogenous. It is the result of agreements reached through sectoral conferences or bilateral negotiations. Some initiatives have therefore been agreed to be implemented at a rate of less than 100%, based on the particular agreement reached with each autonomous community. This is the case with initiatives related to external relations, such as the integration of autonomous promotional agencies into national trade offices abroad. This measure has been accomplished to the tune of 86.8%, after the Basque Country and Catalonia rejected its implementation. Similarly, seven autonomous communities (Andalucía, Aragón, Canary Islands, Catalonia, Madrid, Navarra and the Basque Country) objected to the centralisation of special appeals of the awarding of public contracts in the Central Administrative Court of Contractual Appeals (*Tribunal administrativo central de recursos contractuales de la resolución de los recursos especiales en contratos de ámbito autonómico y local*) and have chosen to keep their own regional structures. This reinforces the idea of bilateralism and shows the asymmetrical relationship between the general state administration and the autonomous communities.

Table 2.1. **Level of implementation of measures in autonomous communities**

Autonomous community	Measures agreed	Measures refused	Pending	No position	Applicable measures	Percent of measures effectively accepted and implemented
Andalucia	61	25	1	5	92	66.30
Aragón	81	4	0	0	85	95.29
Asturias	71	1	3	4	79	89.97
Balearic Islands	73	2	0	0	75	97.33
Canary Islands	75	7	2	0	84	89.29
Cantabria	77	1	1	0	79	97.47
Castille and Leon	80	4	0	0	84	95.24
Castille-La Mancha	69	0	2	3	74	93.24
Catalonia	49	41	0	0	90	54.44
Extremadura	75	1	1	0	77	97.40
Galicia	88	2	0	0	90	97.78
La Rioja	76	0	0	1	77	98.70
Madrid	78	5	0	0	83	93.98
Murcia	73	0	0	3	76	96.05
Navarra	69	4	0	1	74	93.24
Basque Country	53	24	0	5	82	64.63
Valencia	81	5	2	0	88	92.05

Source: OPERA, September 2015.

Effective and active involvement of autonomous communities in the reform

Since the publication of the CORA measures, the central government has made important efforts to co-ordinate with autonomous communities through the existing institutionalised multi-level governance mechanisms, such as sectoral conferences, bilateral agreements and the Working Group on Administrative Reform created within the Fiscal and Financial Policy Council of the Autonomous Communities.

Sectoral conferences: The foremost co-operation instrument that has yet to be fully exploited

As outlined in the First Public Governance Review, sectoral conferences represent the most important multilevel governance arrangement in Spain, bringing together regional ministers and the equivalent central government ministry for a given policy area. The CORA report focused both on the need to strengthen the sectoral conferences, even suggesting the creation of new ones, while bearing in mind the spirit of streamlining and rationalisation. This is the reasoning behind the merging of some sectoral conferences, with the one dedicated to International Development Cooperation now folded into the Inter-territorial Commission for Development Cooperation, and it also explains the creation of the Territorial Council on Social Services and Autonomy and Long-term Care System as a result of the merger of two conferences (Sectoral Conference on Social Affairs and Territorial Council on Autonomy and Long-term Care System).

As announced in the CORA report, the Sectoral Conference on Vehicle Traffic, Road Safety and Sustainable Mobility was created (Law 6/2014 of 7 April 2014), as was the Sectoral Conference on Industry and SMEs (constituted on 12 March 2014) and the Council for Market Unity (Box 9). The new Transparency Law also provides for a specific advisory body, the Council on Transparency and Good Governance, which was created in 2014 (Royal Decree 919/2014 of 31 October) and aimed at supervising and assessing the law's implementation. During its first year, the council has already started to work with local governments and autonomous communities under the provisions of the law (Government of Spain, 2014) that seem rather limited. In fact, only a constitutive meeting of representatives of local governments (through the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, FEMP) and autonomous communities was convened in March 2015 and work was is expected to restart with incoming governments following the regional and local elections in May 2015 (*Consejo de Transparencia y Buen Gobierno*, 2015).

The number of meetings of sectoral conferences increased in 2014 over the amount held in the previous two years. In 2014, sectoral conferences began to introduce the CORA measures as a central topic on their meetings' agendas (Spanish Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, 2014). This has contributed to the creation of an overview of the government's structural reform, featuring updated and detailed information at the sectoral level, and it has also been a forum to launch and promote the implementation of the CORA measures that required the participation of the autonomous communities.

In addition, the Law of Market Unity also introduces positive changes aimed at promoting a more coherent common framework for all administrations to the free movement of goods and services, and one that is essentially aimed at benefitting citizens and businesses. (Box 2.1).

Box 2.1. **Law of Market Unity**

Law 20/2013, the Law of Market Unity (*Ley de Garantía de la Unidad de Mercado*, LGUM) aims at ensuring the unity of the national market, avoiding or minimising the distortions that may arise from the Spanish territorial administrative organisation. The law therefore tackles the fragmentation of the domestic market emerging from differences between and overlapping of central, regional and local regulations.

The law defines a model for strengthening the co-operation and collaboration between the state, the autonomous communities and local authorities as essential to the implementation of the norms and basic principles included in the law. Within this co-ordination framework, the Council for Market Unity was created as a body in which all levels of government are represented and one that aims to monitor the implementation of the law. In January 2015, a progress report was published by the commission including the identification of contact points, adaptation to new norms, sectoral conferences, co-operation mechanisms and protection measures for operators.

Principles such as the free movement and establishment of economic operators, the free movement of goods and services throughout the national territory, and the equality of basic conditions for the exercise of economic activity are enshrined and now protected by law. It aims to remove administrative barriers and red tape and enable enterprises to operate in the different autonomous communities without the obligation to meet different legislative requirements for each of them as was the case previously. The law ensures that any product or service produced under regional legislation can be traded throughout the country, based on the single license and home country principles.

Box 2.1. **Law of Market Unity** (*continued*)

The LGUM required a very ambitious and continuous adaptation process of national, local and regional regulations. This regulatory adaptation process is complementary to the protection of the rights of economic agent rights against violations of the LGUM, as foreseen in the law. In 2014, important progress was made in this process. In the central administration, 90 regulations were adapted, and all of the remaining identified regulations were in the approval process or the drafting phase. In 2015, this adaptation process has been accelerated. Since this exercise not only affects state-level regulations, it is being carried out through sectoral conferences, specific working groups and other co-ordinating bodies with the autonomous communities and municipal administrations. The Council on Market Unity has thus been established and the autonomous communities foresee actions on more than 500 regulations.

Sectoral conferences play a key role here, as this topic had to be included on meeting agendas and working groups had to be created to ensure successful implementation and collaboration with the autonomous communities. On the one hand, a software platform for inter-administrative co-operation has been created. The platform aims at gathering and exchanging information regarding legislative proposals on the central and regional levels. On the other hand, sectoral databases containing all the information related to individual topics from different administrations have been made available to economic operators.

In addition to this Law, business activity has also been reinforced with the suppression of advanced opening licences to premises below 700 m2.

AEVAL is the body entrusted with assessing the LGUM's implementation.

Source: http://www.mineco.gob.es/portal/site/mineco/gum.

Line ministries in fact play a key role in the implementation of measures in fields where autonomous communities have shared or exclusive competences. For example, their actions have been essential in the case of health, a competency shared between the central government and the autonomous communities. In this area, the Inter-territorial Council for the National Health System (Consejo Interterritorial del Sistema Nacional de Salud) has come to agreements on various key issues in order to enhance co-ordination for better service delivery to patients throughout the Spanish territory. The e-health system and the implementation of interoperable electronic prescriptions required the direct implication of the autonomous communities, as a common ICT system and tool had to be implemented, as described in chapter 3. This co-ordination has yielded concrete and essential outputs, such as Interoperable Electronic Prescription and the Interoperable Clinical File, as well as brought about the creation of a health card database within the framework of the National Health System (NHS), that is bringing

substantial and tangible benefits to the population both in terms of quality of access to the public health system and of quality of services.

Other examples worth mentioning are the Sectoral Conference on Agriculture and Rural Development that also promoted the CORA measure dedicated to the mutual recognition of hunting and fishing licences among the autonomous communities. In the field of economic internationalisation, co-ordination efforts have led to the integration of 12 autonomous communities in the Spanish ICEX trade commission offices in foreign countries as well as the publication of a common Service Guide for Internationalization.

Once general agreement is reached, it has to be confirmed by bilateral collaborative agreements.

Bilateral agreements have increased

The economic crisis marked a turning point in multi-level co-operation through bilateral agreements. Although ministries left previous years' programmes and areas of co-operation intact, measures with financial implications have been substantially reduced in the last few years.

Since 2010, agreements with a significant economic burden have been restricted to priority actions (OECD, 2015), whereas more emphasis has been placed on public sector agreements on exchanging data or information and those without any economic commitment in order to pursue or open new channels of co-operation between administrations. This is the case for most of the CORA measures and it is, according to the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, the reason for the increase in the number of agreements reached in the last two years (349 in 2012, whereas there were 549 in 2013 and 610 in 2014).

As a result of the implementation of the CORA initiatives, bilateral agreements between the general state administration and autonomous communities have increased and returned to 2010-11 figures (after several years of decrease, see above). According to the last CORA report, 333 of such initiatives are due to the CORA reform (see Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, 2014) Examples of CORA measures adopted in bilateral agreements include not only the integration of autonomous communities into national platforms such as central purchasing or the central court but also the adherence to some initiatives coming from autonomous community. This is the case of the integration of records of goods of cultural interest. The government of Andalucia (Junta de Andalucia) has made the information system MOSAICO available to the

Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports for the management of protected Spanish historical heritage goods.[2]

Moving towards a more integrated approach to multilevel institutional cooperation

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Law of the Legal Regime of Public Administrations (*Ley de régimen jurídico del sector público*) also brought about some changes regarding multi-level co-ordination.

The CORA report briefly mentions the desirability of strengthening this legislation, and for the first time the Conference of Autonomous Communities' Presidents, the political body created in 2004 and only regulated by its own internal rules and procedures, is now included in the law. This body is, however, only recognised as an entity without any kind of permanent status or capacity to take binding decisions, and the number of meetings (once a year) is not fixed. This would have been an opportunity to increase the group's statute by creating a permanent secretariat and linking it to the sectoral conferences. This follows up in line with the first *Public Governance Review of Spain*'s recommendation on the Canadian intergovernmental conference secretariat. The Secretary of State for Public Administrations would be the most suitable unit to take on the role of such a secretariat.

While recognising the specificity of the Spanish model, the Conference of Presidents could also have a more strategic function and vision and should also be able to commission tasks and reports from the different sectoral conferences. This would confirm the direct link between the bodies and make the sectoral conferences functionally dependent on the Conference of Presidents.

The new Law of the Legal Regime of Public Administrations also introduces some changes in the regulation of sectoral conferences but their mandate and functions are not particularly reinforced. The mechanisms of approval and agreement remain the same as before, with the exception of a new requirement of mutual information on draft legislation dealing with matters that affect the central government and the autonomous communities' competencies. Another important change is that decisions approved in sectoral conferences shall be binding when the central government performs a co-ordinating function according to the constitutional distribution of competences regardless of each autonomous community's vote.

The new law does not take the opportunity to reinforce joint plans and programmes. This mechanism has not been used and such plans have not been elaborated, but the new law could have boosted it by supporting reinforced horizontal co-operation among autonomous communities.

During the first OECD field mission in 2013 and in the survey completed by the autonomous communities, it was clear, as recognised by the CORA, that several sectoral conferences were not performing at their full potential. The scope of this review has not allowed confirmation of this point. Interviews with the autonomous communities of Murcia and Galicia revealed an interest in sectoral conferences but also outlined the relevance of the bilateral relations for the administrative reform. This points to the need for a forum which is lacking, one specifically for debate on such horizontal issues.

Making the most of a multi-level CORA reform: Towards the consolidation of a horizontal forum on administrative reform

The last Conference of Presidents of Autonomous Communities (October 2012) agreed on the creation of a working group within the corresponding sectoral conference. Since no specific conference on administrative reform or public administration exists, the sectoral conference chosen was the Fiscal and Financial Policy Council of the Autonomous Communities (CFFP), headed by the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations. The CFFP is the main body for the debate of financial and budgetary matters between the central administration and the autonomous communities. The Working Group on Administrative Reform was created to discuss the CORA simplification and duplication measures with autonomous communities and "would draw up an administrative rationalisation programme focused on eliminating bureaucratic complications, simplifying standards and procedures and preventing duplications" (Ministry of Presidency, 2013).

High-ranking officials from departments related to administrative reform at the regional level participate in the meeting. From the central government, the secretary of the sectoral conference, the General Secretary for Co-ordination of Regional and Local Authorities (such as the Director General and planning and administrative organisation or reform department heads), also attended the meeting along with the main drivers of the CORA's implementation, such as the head of OPERA and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations.

The working group has not strictly followed the agenda of the council (which regularly meets three or four times a year) and has only met twice a year since its creation (9 October 2013, 4 February 2014, 9 October 2014 and 4 February 2015), with the participation of most autonomous communities. In practice, this group has been used as a forum to gather general inputs from the general state administration on the CORA reform, but there does not seem to have been any debate or exchange of information.

It is also worth noting that no decisions have been taken and no agreements reached.

The working group is meant to be a horizontal forum where administrations share information on draft laws, but as far as the OECD has been able to determine, no draft has been specifically studied in detail since draft laws are sent to autonomous communities through official channels. Autonomous communities were only informed on the main issues included in draft Law of the Legal Regime of Public Administrations and the draft Law of Administrative Procedure.

Given the vast array of factors that impact skills development, activation and use, and the wide distribution of responsibilities in these areas across many ministries and all levels of government, effective governance structures are critical for policy coherence and continuity. Policy coherence and continuity are particularly important in the context of the long time horizon needed for certain skills policies – education policy in particular – to bear fruit. While Spain has a number of governance structures in place to facilitate dialogue and collaboration, these typically focus on specific segments of the skills system, such as education or employment. More needs to be done to facilitate dialogue and co-ordination across the entire skills system.

Recommendations

Enhancing vertical and horizontal co-ordination mechanisms between the central state and Autonomous Communities

- Explore new mechanisms of co-ordination and dialogue that could find new ways to reach formal and more permanent and lasting solutions to the multi-level governance challenges that Spain faces. The best example is the debate on the autonomous finance system. These new mechanisms would also enable and promote horizontal sharing of good practices across the autonomous communities themselves.
- The Conference of Presidents is an existing mechanism that has not been fully exploited and that could contribute to a common agenda on the main common challenges and projects at the central and regional level. It could be an institutionalised body with regular meetings and in charge of approving at least a mandate programme. Sectoral conferences could be entrusted with this programme's implementation. The Secretary of State for Public Administrations within the centre of government would provide the secretariat.

- Sectoral conferences should be better utilised in order to make the most of both vertical and horizontal co-ordination between Autonomous Communities. Common projects and the exchange of experiences could also be promoted and enhanced by the central state.

Consolidating a specific and permanent body on public administration reform with the autonomous communities

- In the specific case of public administration reform, the creation of a specific body for co-ordination with the autonomous communities remains a pending issue that has yet to be resolved by the working group in the Council on Fiscal and Financial Policy of the Autonomous Communities (*Consejo de Política Fiscal y Financiera de las Comunidades Autónomas*). One option could be the creation of an advisory group that would depend directly on OPERA as a permanent structure and would meet on a regular basis.

- This institutional arrangement would also act as a "clearing house", enabling the autonomous communities to share the evidence, performance information and good practices they have gleaned from successful and unsuccessful experiences in their jurisdictions amongst themselves and with OPERA on. In such a scenario, the Secretary of State for Public Administration could also provide the Secretariat, which would be chaired by the central state and one of the autonomous communities, with the Presidency rotating between the seventeen of them and Ceuta and Melilla.

- The central government also needs to provide incentives to the autonomous communities to build capacity in their administrations to generate and collect performance information on reform implementation and impact on achieving not only outputs but also outcomes. This issue could be included as a specific function of the Secretariat of the Conference of Presidents or in the autonomous communities' Advisory Group of OPERA.

  Reform efforts must strive for greater transparency through monitoring and accountability mechanisms. In that sense, relations between the Council of Transparency and the autonomous communities could be institutionalised through a legal mandate that would go beyond mere working groups. To date, these relationships have been undertaken without an express or specific legal mandate. Spain´s recent reform of the rules on cooperation between levels of government, codified in Law 40/2015, of 1 October, suggests the desirability of formally establishing a coordinating body between the Council and the regional authorities

responsible for issues of transparency, like the intersectoral conferences established on other matters.

Notes

1. www.juntadeandalucia.es/boja/1988/73/d2.pdf.
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Chapter 3.

Digital government for a more strategic public administration in Spain

This chapter focuses on the progress and remaining challenges of the role of digital government for a strategically more efficient public administration in Spain. Information and communications technology (ICT) carry a vast potential to a more inclusive, transparent and secure public sector, thereby improving the access and use of government data and information. The chapter finds that even though the public administration reform carried out in-depth reforms to clarify and strengthen the ICT governance framework, data and information should be reinforced across the administration to improve internal efficiency and eventually develop a "data-driven public sector"

Introduction

This chapter reviews the progresses made so far by the Spanish government in implementing the ICT-related actions foreseen by the Commission on the Reform of the Public Administration (*Comisión para la Reforma de la Administración*, CORA). The assessment is based on the *OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies* (adopted by the Council in July 2014), that supports the development and implementation of digital government strategies that build trust by bringing governments closer to citizens and businesses. The *Recommendation* aims to strengthen a use of ICT within the public sector focused not only on increasing efficiency, but also on fostering more innovative and open governments. These are governments able to design, implement and assess their policies in more inclusive ways, across jurisdictions and with multiple actors; therefore more trustworthy governments. The 12 principles of the *Recommendation* are organised around three pillars: 1. openness and engagement; 2. governance and co-ordination; 3. capacities to support implementation. This framework has been applied to frame the assessment included in this chapter.

Transforming ICT management into a strategic asset

ICT governance framework and organisational model

The Spanish administration has carried out an in-depth reform to clarify and strengthen the ICT governance framework for the central administration (general state administration). The actions undertaken are in line with the *OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies* and follow the recommended policy actions formulated by the OECD's first *Public Governance Review of Spain*.

The established governance framework is built around four pillars:

- a new overall organisational set up
- legal clarity and solidity
- a strategy to support the provision of shared services to the whole administration
- a focus on citizens' needs as well as on the internal needs of the administration.

In order to follow up with the implementation of some of the actions foreseen in the CORA, two royal decrees have been published that set the first steps in this regard:

- Royal Decree 802/2014 of 19 September establishes the functions and structure of the Directorate for Information Technologies and Communications (DTIC, led by the Chief Information Officer) under the dependence of the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations.
- Royal Decree 806/2014 of 19 September establishes the ICT governance of the general state administration and its depending entities. The main elements of the ICT governance are: the ICT Strategy Commission and its Executive Committee, the digital administration ministerial commissions and the Committee of the Directorate for Information Technologies and Communications.

These decrees follow Royal Decree 695/2013 of 20 September which – amending Royal Decree 199/2012 of 23 January on the basic organisational structure of the Ministry of the Presidency and Royal Decree 1887/2011 of 30 December on the basic organisational structure of ministerial departments – created the figure of the Directorate for Information Technologies and Communications of the General State Administration, whose head is set with the rank of undersecretary, functionally under the Minister of the Presidency and the Minister of Finance and Public Administrations. The position of the Director is equivalent to the CIO in Anglo-Saxon terminology.

These legal steps taken by the government have created a solid background to establish a stable governance framework setting a clear mandate and responsibilities for the DTIC, ensuring that its head – the national CIO – can count on the instruments and the structure necessary to achieve higher coherence and rationalisation of strategic ICT decisions across the general state administration. The DTIC is indeed responsible for the design, planning and implementation of ICT consolidation, including for instance the development of a catalogue of horizontal services and the building blocks for the provision of common services to the general state administration as a whole, as well as for streamlining the development of infrastructure and domain-specific services.

The DTIC's functions also include the development, co-ordination and promotion of the digital government strategy for the general state administration, co-operation with the relevant parts of the administration to foster the digital administration and promotion of reuse of infrastructure and sector applications, which should help promote the standardisation of applications and equipment. In terms of procurement, for example, the DTIC shall collaborate with the Directorate-General of Rationalization and Centralization of Procurement for proposals related to the procurement policies for computer equipment and to the definition of technical requisites in the public procurement.

Box 3.1. **The Spanish governance model for digital government**

The newly established organisational architecture includes the following elements:

- The Chief Information Officer (CIO), who is the Director of the Directorate for Information Technologies and Communications (DTIC).
- The DTIC, within the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, which includes five subdivisions that support the CIO in the implementation of the strategy and is responsible for cross-departmental infrastructures and shared services.
- The ICT Strategy Commission (CETIC) – an inter-ministerial body at the highest political level comprising senior officials from all ministries – which defines the strategy that once approved goes to the Council of Ministers. The CETIC also defines the services to be shared and determines the priorities for the investments, reports on draft laws, regulations and other general standards with the purpose to regulate ICT matters for the general state administration. Furthermore, the CETIC promotes collaboration with the autonomous regions and local authorities for the implementation of integrated inter-administrative services.
- The Executive Committee of the CETIC (CECETIC), which supports the CETIC and the CIO in adopting the operational decisions, and ensures the smooth and effective performance of the digital government strategy in the general state administration and its bodies. It is vested with the approval of the departmental action plans.
- The CDTIC, which includes 25 CIOs of the different ministries (13) and agencies (12), and the deputy directors for ICT of all ministries and units.
- The Technical Committee of the State for the Judicial Electronic Administration, established based on Law 18/11 of 5 July, was set up when the CORA started its functions. It provides the institutional framework for the co-operation among administrations in the context of the judicial electronic administration. It ensures the interoperability of systems and applications of the judicial administration on the mentioned co-operation for which it sets criteria.

At the ministry level:

- The UTIC – one or more in each ministry – provide the technical support.

Box 3.1. **The Spanish governance model for digital government** (*continued*)

- The CMAD – one in each Ministry (13) – led by the CIO of the ministry. Its role is to link the specific business/activity of the ministry with the use of ICT. It promotes and oversees compliance with the guidelines set in the ICT strategy for the general state administration and prepares departmental actions plans. This is meant to ensure that the core functions of each area are connected with a strategic use of technology; and that in each ministry the decisions on ITCs are aligned with the functional decisions and promote the digitisation of services and processes to standardise, simplify and improve service quality. This is the main point of contact between the ministries and the DTIC.

Source: OECD's own work.

This is expected to result in the consolidation of infrastructure, services (e.g. data processing centres, internal communication networks, voice and data communication) and procurement that will drive important economies of scale and enable improved management of systems and processes. Additionally, this will also allow the CIO to develop a comprehensive digital government strategy for the whole general state administration, integrating the strategic ICT-related decision into the broader policy development and regulatory reforms.

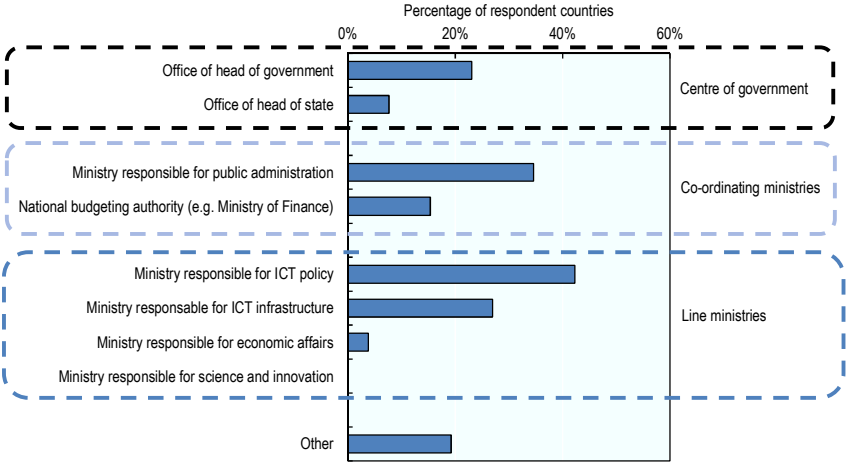
Most OECD countries have a CIO, who is normally a senior executive in charge of decisions related to the ICT and computer systems' availability and use in support of governments' overarching policy goals. Specific responsibilities may vary but the CIO is normally concerned with organisational issues, procedures, IT policy, ICT co-ordination, prioritisation of projects, oversight and evaluation. The introduction of such a position is motivated by the need to ensure a co-ordinated approach to identify and prioritise strategic decisions and investments in ICT across the public sector and policy areas which are linked to the core strategic objectives of the government.

Similarly to Spain, other countries such as **Denmark**, **Sweden** and **Turkey** have established formal bodies, e.g. steering committees, executive boards, for joint government co-ordination and collaboration.

Finally, the above-mentioned Laws on Common Administrative Procedures in the public administration on the regime of the public sector also reinforce the relevance of digital government and paperless administration to improve the relations between the citizens and the public sector, increase public sector transparency and foster public sector modernisation.

Figure 3.1. **Chief information officers in OECD countries**

Institutional location in public administrations



Source: OECD (2014), "OECD Digital Government Performance Survey", OECD, Paris.

Enabling co-ordination for improved efficiency

The legal clarity introduced in the past few years provides the ground to set up the context enabling the CIO to deliver the expected results. For instance, the approval of Royal Decree 806 represents an important milestone in the creation of a framework for the delivery of shared services. In order to operationalise these legal measures, the government has already worked on a strategy aimed to support the provision of shared services to the whole administration.

According to the strategy, the management of the services will be carried out by the DTIC (comprising five divisions) led by the CIO, but the delivery of the services is expected to be delocalised (e.g. cl@ve). A full list of shared services was submitted to the CETIC in April 2015, and was approved by the body. This is an important decision that will help identify opportunities for streamlining service delivery and thus increase efficiencies thanks to central co-ordination and leadership in the implementation of the strategy, while maintaining a decentralised approach to the delivery of services.

The strategy is indeed designed in a way to balance the need to focus on the high-level objectives of the state and the priorities of each ministry –

each will develop its own action plan to implement the strategy. The goal is to make the strategy relevant to the individual areas and its implementation sustainable across the whole administration.

Additionally, since 15 January 2015 all governments have been compelled to bill electronically as per effect of Law 25 adopted on 28 December 2013. The law also requires the mandatory use of invoice accounting records for all public administrations, documentation containing all invoices received and unpaid bills, and accessible to the accounting units and the Spanish Tax Agency (Agencia Tributaria, AEAT). This has been in place since 1 January 2014 and can support better alignment across agencies and higher transparency. The e-invoice has made possible the receipt – through the end of November 2015 – of a total of 5 million invoices for a total amount of over 24 billion Euros, sent to about 7.000 administrative bodies.

Experiences from other OECD member countries show that in order to drive a co-ordinated set of actions on the public sector's use of ICT, to advance the internal integration of systems and the sharing of resources (including data) and to improve the delivery of public services, many governments are taking a forward-looking approach and are establishing "digital transformation units". This is the case, for example, of **Australia**, the **United Kingdom** and the **United States**. The intention is to enable an efficient and effective delivery of government services digitally from start to finish, making it easier for services to be delivered, found and used. Individual government agencies or ministries retain responsibilities for decisions on services and ICT investment that do not relate specifically to delivering digital services to citizens and businesses.

The objective of these changes in the organisational set up is to overcome an operational approach often resulting in agencies operating in silos when developing digital services, and to lead a digital transformation of the public sector that does not disentangle decisions on ICT management from decisions on innovation and service delivery.

As Spain progresses towards a sophisticated model of governance for ICT management and shared services, the next set of reform actions could streamline and strengthen the role of the CIO in relation to strategic decisions and directions concerning shared services and, in particular, digital government services. This would help ensure coherence between strategic decisions on IT management and investments and decisions on the digitization, to ensure synergies are captured and systems and platforms are reused whenever possible.

Fostering a more user-friendly and efficient administration

A number of initiatives undertaken since the adoption of the CORA reforms have aimed to improve public sector efficiencies, public resources management, and the quality and accessibility of services offered to citizens. This has been achieved through the modernisation of the information systems with the purpose of increasing interchange and integration of information and data between the general state administration and the autonomous communities.

An overall assessment on the measures implemented so far is that the government has efficiently focused in leveraging the support of the CORA to further progress the implementation of a comprehensive strategy to improve efficiency and quality services, for example in the healthcare sector. The new set of measures foreseen by the CORA aim to enable further integration of processes, data and resources through the use of technology, while preserving the independence of the actors, as well as that one of the platforms and applications used by their agents. At the same time, the model also enables the development of common solutions used by the hub to push and support advancements of less-advanced agents.

The decision for the DTIC to define the criteria for centralised ICT procurement, to aggregate demands and align ICT procurement with the digital government strategy, are important measures to achieve efficiencies through ICTs within the public sector, thanks to a better definition of the needs of the general state administration (e.g. for core services, hardware, support services) and to more agile mechanisms for procurement while addressing all core needs.

Efforts are also being made to ensure that existing systems and infrastructures are being reused, e.g. all the units in the various ministries are encouraged to check first what is available before considering buying something similar. This has also helped gather data that enable aligning ICT procurement, understand who spends on what and how much. The sections below elaborate on some of these initiatives.

Ongoing discussion concerns the local level of government as well. The general state administration cannot provide services unless there is an agreement (*convenio* – e.g. framework agreement including the services that an entity can use).

Finally, from the perspective of systems integration and shared service, the government has tried to improve the integration of entities, systems and services through horizontal measures such as the shared services, but a major limitation is that they cannot bill other parts of the administration for the services they deliver.

Improving procurement

The DTIC defines the criteria for centralised procurement. All needs and purchases have to be approved by the CIO to ensure such alignment. In the new centralised ICT procurement system with framework agreements, it is the role of the CIO to define what needs to be in such an agreement in order to meet the needs of the general state administration (e.g. for core services, hardware, support services). The purpose is to have agile mechanisms for procurement while addressing all core needs.

The aim of the then current government's focus on improving ICT procurement is to eliminate duplications, achieve savings and homologate communication policies across the general state administration. Savings were expected to be around 32%, whereas those delivered reached 43%.

The demand aggregation is already producing considerable benefits as it enabled getting better prices from providers. These savings remain across time, because the framework agreement includes conditions that benefit anyone who takes advantage of such a framework agreement, even after the demand aggregation.

The CIO has the responsibility to track and check the records of ICT procurement. This has also helped gather data that enable aligning ICT procurement, understand who spends how much on what. These changes are also relevant as they foster the capacity to conduct and use data analytics within the public administration to support more efficient decision making. This move is very much in line with similar trends in other OECD countries where governments are trying to foster more data-driven public sectors, including in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The Spanish administration is, for instance, trying to use data to be able to plan procurement needs in advance: it asks each ministry how much they would like to buy and of what. The aim is also to support the consolidation of infrastructure, which is an objective covered by the CORA measures on communication.

Reinforcing cyber security and communication through consolidation efforts

At the end of the process of consolidation of ICT procurement, the Spanish government expects to be able to offer a single cyber security service through the establishment of a centre for cybersecurity operations (*centro de operacion de cyberseguridad*, COS).

The CIO's office will provide each ministry with the infrastructure needed to implement the security strategy specific to their ministry. Services

will be provided through the COS and each ministry will "use" it based on its security needs and strategy. The new system will leave the individual ministries with the responsibility of ensuring the security while the CIO provides the platform with the horizontal and vertical services to choose from. The idea is that the responsibility for the communication systems will be left to the individual ministries and the CIO's Office will provide the platform to deliver horizontal services for each to choose from based on their own needs.

With the single contract for procurement of the common platform the government also aims to enable the units responsible for security within the individual ministries to dedicate their time to the core business (security) and not to technical issues.

As part of the implementation of communication measures, the government first separated out contracting for additional services – those not purely communication related. In revising all of the existing contracts, it identified the 12 ministries that had the most communication contracts. A unified communication contract was signed in October 2015, leading to the deployment of a single communications network infrastructure for the AGE as a whole, intended to allow for the delivery of value-added services such as a videoconferencing system to the whole administration. There will eventually be a single communication backbone (IP phone, etc.) and lines of data to achieve savings in internal and international calls (i.e. VOIP instead of calls using a public line). This will also help set a homogeneous policy for civil servants' calls. The aim is to also use this for the CPDs to create synergies and eliminate islands of systems and infrastructure.

The CORA measures on communication also foresee the consolidation of data centres (CPD), with the purpose of streamlining the management of ICT resources to increase efficiencies. This should also contribute to the overall goal of positioning the CIO's Office between infrastructure and service provider. The plan is to develop a single governance model for the CPDs that will be connected to the private cloud. The idea is indeed to be able to provide in association with the consolidated data centre a catalogue of services that the administration can choose from with unitary costs for each individual service.

For the time being, all CPDs of the general state administration (about 100) are being evaluated to design a consolidation roadmap for the future – only 8 will remain.

In terms of achievements, even if this measure is still being implemented, some results have already been obtained. For instance, accrued savings have already passed the expectations. At the end of the process the following gains are expected: single service catalogue,

standardised services for the general state administration, shared high-level security concept, homogeneous policies, consolidation of workstations (e.g. PCs, tablets) and common contracts for their procurement (i.e. aggregated contracting). The next main development envisaged is the establishment of a supply portal ("on-demand asset website") to enable the CIO of each ministry to access information on its personnel and assets and solicit purchases. This approach follows the "government cloud" approach used in the United Kingdom.

Improving the delivery of employment-related services

The implementation of the measure Spanish Employment System (*Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal*, SEPE) is particularly relevant as it fosters data and information exchange across the administration, thus strengthening internal efficiencies while creating the conditions to deliver better services to end users. The implementation of the "One Job Portal" is a good example to avoid a proliferation of portals, while trying to ease access to relevant information and increase the visibility of job offers and public employment-related services. The "One Job Portal" is an important example of an ICT measure which produced important direct effects in terms of savings for the general state administration; it also had an important impact, not only in improving access to information and providing better service delivery (over 1.8 million jobs were offered via the single portal according to the report on the result of the CORA's implementation published in November 2015), but also in producing additional benefits in terms of collaboration across levels of governments and partnerships with the private sector (17 regions are involved, and there are agreements with private portals such as Infoempleo, Monster and JobTalent).

As a service provider, the portal aims though its functionalities to offer not only access to job offers but also to give a broad choice of work-related opportunities, including on trainings. The idea is indeed to strengthen the support it provides based on the specific user profile. Additionally, the portal facilitates data analytics-related activities that allow better assessing needs in terms of training, market trends, tendencies of the labour market (e.g. businesses have to provide data on the contracts they issued, follow the movement of workers).

Particularly at times of important unemployment and immigration-related challenges, which impact on labour and social care policies, it is important to leverage good examples such as that of the "One Job Portal" to optimise its value and deliver a number of different services relevant to the target users. For example, creative use of Smartphones as an additional delivery channel of the offerings provided on the portal, not only improves service access and delivery for the disadvantaged and vulnerable

population, they can also be used as mechanisms to engage these people to better assess their needs and design policies and plan actions accordingly.

Spain shows an adequate level of maturity in the use of ICT within the public sector, and a good level of Internet and mobile penetration, to afford a more forward-looking and strategic approach in scaling up existing apps or portals, or developing new ones. This could imply, for example, expanding the use and impact of the "One Job Portal" by linking it to a mobile government services approach, to use it to respond to coexisting citizens' needs and/or to target several policy goals simultaneously, e.g. unemployment and integration of disadvantaged groups. This change in thinking could help realise the full potential of digital technologies not only to deliver integrated services, but also to positively contribute to overarching policy issues (e.g. employment).

Increasing efficiency through paperless administration and better systems integration

Initiatives aimed to improve service delivery while increasing the public sector's efficiency and accessibility (by boosting a paperless administration), include the system "*cita previa*" that enables the prebooking of an appointment with the public sector. The purpose is to increase public sector accessibility and efficiency, and to move to the extent possible users of the system online. The system helps save citizens' time and increase the amount of time civil servants have to dedicate to the citizens.

The data accessible through the "prebooking" system allows an understanding of the amount of work awaiting civil servants and thus supports strategic actions to reorganise the work and the resources, whenever necessary, and to improve the quality of the services delivered (e.g. reducing citizens' waiting time). The information exchange platform implemented prior to the CORA enables simultaneous access to different registers, thus boosting the interoperability among the various relevant actors. Civil servants in the employment office can access data on income and their personal information in real time to offer a service more tailored to the user's needs. All services related to unemployment can be delivered electronically.

The implementation of the system that enables citizens to request online and through mobile devices the Provisional Replacement Certificate (CPS), with the same user code and password, to the National Institute of Social Security (INSS) and to the Social Marine Institute (ISM), is another example of an implemented measure that aims to foster the use of ICTs to strengthen internal efficiencies while simplifying access to services for citizens and businesses. Citizens can also apply for a European Health Insurance Card

online and receive it at the address of the applicant listed in the databases of the INSS. In 2014, 1 689 594 cards were issued in total. The expected savings for the state are EUR 1 491 512, and for citizens and businesses EUR 8 037 989.

Another important measure under the CORA was the development of an online service available on the Electronic Office of Social Security to enable the requesting and shipping of certificates related to the payment of contributions to Social Security. Actions have been taken to implement this measure, which allows an employer to electronically know their status as contributors to Social Security. The measure has been implemented and fully operational since July 2013. For the period July 2013 - December 2014 savings for the state equalled EUR 3 374 865 and for citizens EUR 28 996 440.

A centralised database on aid and financing for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is fully operational, providing entrepreneurs and businesses access to information needed for the financing of SMEs. In addition, Law 15/2014 of 16 September, streamlining the state sector, has modified the General Law on Subsidies to launch a National Database Grant (BDNS). The Ministry of Industry, responsible for the BD of SMEs, has been co-ordinated with the General Controller of the State Administration (IGAE-Ministry of the Treasury) to transfer the data to the BDNS. To date, savings for entrepreneurs and business are estimated to be EUR 15 483 335.

Finally, the online *Official State Bulletin* (BOE) is fully operational. The publication of the BOE in electronic formats with legal value was introduced on 1 January 2009, but in 2014 and 2015 all products and services were fully developed and in continuous expansion. Through a free subscription, citizens can receive electronic alerts with information on newly posted laws and acts of their interest (i.e. "*Servicio de alertas*" "*BOE a la Carta*"). The BOE has improved the information system required for processing the electronic codes and have enriched their content: these codes can be downloaded for free and each gathers all the norms and standards of a sector of activity in a continuously updated way.

To date, the number of subscriptions amounts to 102 452 alerts (which represents an increase of 56.4% since January 2014). The number of electronic codes available on the web is 66 and the number of downloads of codes is above 1.2 million. This has produced savings for citizens estimated at over EUR 3 million. The BOE is an important instrument to increase the diffusion and accessibility of official acts and laws, which fosters public sector transparency, increases accessibility as well as citizens' awareness and knowledge of official acts. The BOE is part of the integrated system of diffusion of legislative information which is the result of a long process of

improvement and innovation in the management and diffusion of norms and regulations taking advantage of ICTs and aiming to bring citizens closer to the administration.

The National Action Plan for the further development of the BOE includes the objective to consolidate regional legislation. Finally, the goal of the project "Bulletin Board" (*Tablón Edictal Único*, TEU) is to design a new notification system based on all notification announcements published in the BOE. By law, citizens have the right to be notified of all administrative decisions that could affect their person or their interests. The TEU is expected to become the only electronic central notification system, where citizens will be able to access, consult and receive information on any pending matter with the administration at all levels (central, autonomous and local). In the course of 2014 and 2015, the development of the TEU is occurring at two levels: 1. regulations affecting the edictal notices is being revised; 2. technological: to develop the platform required for the thousands of notifications issued every year by the over 8 000 Spanish public institutions. The TEU has been operational since 1 June 2015.

E-health: Improving healthcare quality and efficiency at regional and national level with the support of ICTs

Most of the overall measures aimed to improve the efficiency and quality of the health system in Spain as part of the CORA reforms are meant to address some of the overarching priority issues faced at the moment by the Spanish government, e.g. modern society's longevity and high life expectancy which translate into problems associated with an ageing population.

Additionally, due to the high mobility of Spaniards across the country, many receive care and assistance outside their city of residence. Citizens have higher expectations in terms of the quality and availability of healthcare services while the expenses on public health are increasing as a percentage of the GDP.

Ensuring a high and equal level of good public healthcare across the country is quite challenging considering that each region in Spain is responsible for delivering healthcare services. The decentralisation of competencies and responsibilities, in addition to the previously mentioned mobility, requires good collaboration and co-operation among service providers. Technical standardisation, semantic interoperability and commonly used authentication systems become a necessity to achieve this collaboration. The desired changes imply a new vision and the capacity to show that various actors are capable of working as a network.

In order to address most of these concerns, Spain has tried to scale up good models from across the country (e.g. in the Baleares built around the idea of fostering collaboration among professionals). For over a decade the government has focused on maximising the strategic value of ICT to conceive and deliver a new model of primary and specialised healthcare which builds on the following principles:

- involve the personnel and show them the value of the new model for their daily work
- engage the beneficiaries
- integrated processes, data and information.

In order to support the model of co-operation and collaboration needed to enable these changes, the government has adopted the following approach:

- have a clear strategy and communicate it
- put in place the system of agreements needed to implement it
- focus on ICT use to support the implementation of the strategy.

With its measures aimed to develop common services within the autonomous communities and between autonomous communities, the CORA helped accelerate reforms in health. Many of the projects had already been started before the CORA, which increased their visibility and obtained higher political support. Expectations are to promote clinical management by facilitating decision making and the daily work of healthcare professionals also across disciplines, to increase patient safety by preventing errors due to decisions based on incorrect or incomplete information, to contribute to a more rational use of drugs, improve storage space and produce a positive environmental impact, to save time and spare patients inconveniences.

Furthermore, the idea would be in the future, once all of the healthcare services are digitally connected, to link them with the social care services. The Nordic countries provide a very good example in this sense. **Denmark** and **Sweden**, for instance, have invested in "digital welfare", i.e. the digitisation of education, healthcare and social care and protection services, as part of their digital government and service delivery agenda (OECD, forthcoming).

Nevertheless, OECD analysis of the innovative examples of digitisation of services in this area from Denmark and Sweden prove that there are a number of important and complex new ethical dilemmas for policy makers, as well as design and implementation issues for decision makers that

represent prerequisites for the success of digital transformation projects in the welfare service areas – all of which must be addressed in the course of developing digital government strategies, and implementing specific digitisation projects and programmes. These are opportunities that Spain could seek to explore in the future building on the good results of its efforts to digitise services in the health sector.

The new digital environment indeed offers opportunities for more collaborative and participatory relationships across stakeholders to actively shape political priorities, collaborate in the design of public services and participate in their delivery, with the public value chain highlighting changes to public sector boundaries. These new approaches would lead to an environment in which citizens and businesses determine their own needs and address them in partnership with governments (people-driven approaches), which are supported by new governance frameworks and funding arrangements specific to digital innovation projects considered in a number of the cases.

The challenge is not to introduce digital technologies into public administrations (digitisation), but it is more transformative: to integrate the use of digital technologies into public sector modernisation efforts (digital government).

The section below provides an update of the implementation of specific e- healthcare related measures that are part of the CORA.

Development and implementation of interoperable electronic prescription

The CORA measure foreseeing the development of the interoperable e-prescription seeks interoperability of prescriptions issued in the territory of any region. It works intensively on extending electronic prescriptions in the field of autonomous communities and at the moment 92% of health centres, 53% of local information offices, 68% of specialised care centres and 90% of pharmacies already use this system. By November 2014, 99.9% of prescriptions were issued electronically and 77.8% were also distributed electronically. This can have a significant impact on the working time of professionals and improve the quality and accessibility of medical assistance for patients. From a financial perspective, savings to the autonomous communities are calculated at EUR 254 883 444 and EUR 8 567 511 for citizens.

Future developments include the possibility for the electronic exchange of prescriptions between autonomous communities that are already fully using the e-prescription system, for instance at the moment a pilot is being

implemented between Extremadura and the Canary Islands. For the time being only Castilla y Leon is not using the e-prescription system.

Based on the interoperable electronic recipe, the system enabling the exchange of information of a therapeutic nature is based on a central node of electronic services of the NHS and Health Intranet, equipped and maintained by the Ministry of Health. The savings to date for autonomous communities amount to EUR 77 510 000.

Interoperable electronic medical records (HCD)

The implementation of the HCD is a key part of the Spanish healthcare system, with an important impact both for the central government as well as the regions. The HCD integrates clinical and management information relevant for the health professional (or the various professionals involved with the same patient), enabling them to gather and share the results of their observations and decisions throughout the care process. The HCD is not simply a mechanism for storing and retrieving data, but a tool to improve the relationship between different professionals and between them and their patients throughout the whole care process, e.g. it avoids the duplication of diagnostic tests in other parts of the country in the case that results of a similar test are already available in the system. At present, all regions and Ceuta and Melilla are connected to the system as broadcasters and/or recipients making available more than 21 million clinical referrals. To date over 25.5 million citizens have information entered into the system, which has been adopted by all the autonomous communities.

Single Health Card Project and creation of a single database on Health Card System of the National Health Insurance (SNS)

With the publication of Royal Decree 702/2013 of 20 September, which amends Royal Decree 183/2004 of 30 January, a database of the national medical card was created that allows the identification of all citizens throughout the territory through a single lifelong national unequivocal code to which clinical information is associated. This measure, together with the Single Health Card Project, which regulates the physical format of the different SNS cards existing today, will allow improved identification of the patient and his/her membership to the SNS of Spain. It also is a guarantee of the right to health coverage throughout the country.

The system also guarantees the secure exchange of personal clinical data and information when necessary to provide personal care to citizens when travelling outside of the autonomous community where they live, or when in another member state of the European Union (EU). The system also allows autonomous regions to avoid renewing the health cards, with consequent

economic savings. The system also supports the realisation of other projects that are part of the CORA and partnerships such as the Electronic Clinical Records and History (interoperable electronic health record) shared between autonomous communities.

This provides important advantages for professionals in terms of joint access to the patient's clinical data and images, and for a citizen's access to all their clinical data from a single location, transparency on their data owned by the administration, capacity to decide who can see and access what type of data. As of January 2015, 16 regions are interchanging information and data (the only missing one being Catalonia). This affects 25 million Spanish citizens – about 55% of the total population have their clinical information available in other regions; data trace about 3 million monthly consultations by professionals through the Central Node and 30 000 consultations made by citizens.

Improving access to and use of government data and information

The first pillar of the *OECD Recommendation on Digital Government* strategies includes a number of principles aimed to strengthen the use of ICT and data for more open, transparent and participatory administrations. A number of measures adopted under the CORA are in line with this *Recommendation*. These include, for instance, a number of initiatives which have aimed to increase access to information and increase public sector transparency.

In order to follow up on the transparency-related measures foreseen by the CORA, with a focus on strengthening public access to information and increasing interaction with citizens, since July 2014 the government of Spain adopted a model built around four main axes of actions:

1. Regulatory framework: enforcement of the Law on Transparency and issuance of relevant decrees to follow up on its requirements.
2. Technological model: establishment of the Transparency Portal conceived as a tool to manage the "right of access to information".
3. Organisational model: establishment of the necessary organisational framework to ensure the governance and management of the process.
4. Functional model: grounded on Article 21 of Law 19/2013, the model is based on the proactive release of information, some of which is provided in a centralised manner through the Transparency Portal – for example, from the various ministries or the Court of Audit (*Tribunal de Cuentas*) – while for others it is decentralised –

such as in the case of the BOE or the public procurement platform for which links are available in the Transparency Portal.

The sections below provide a more detailed analysis of the actions taken in relation to these four areas.

Reviewing the regulatory framework

The Law on Transparency, Access to Information and Good Governance No. 19/2013 passed on 9 December 2013, applies to both the general state administration and the subnational level. The law embeds the principles of transparency of the public administration's activities and proactive publicity and information disclosure. The law regulates the periodic proactive publication of up-to-date public sector information necessary to guarantee transparency (e.g. the law requires the publication of more economic budgetary or public contracts-related information) and the citizens' right of access to public sector information (based on Article 105b of the Spanish Constitution). The law acknowledges the right of access to public information and the obligation of the public authorities to manage the administrative process of receiving requests of public information.

Entities obliged to publish data on the portal include the general state administration, the entities providing common social security services and public law entities. The law foresees 12 months for the deployment of a Transparency Portal covering the general state administration level. Therefore, the portal provides data on the central government, while the regional and local authorities have until 2016 to implement it, even though many have anticipated their actions. Given the complexity of the law when it comes to the obligation of proactive publication from the various authorities, OPERA is still in the process of interpreting it.

Setting up a new organisational model

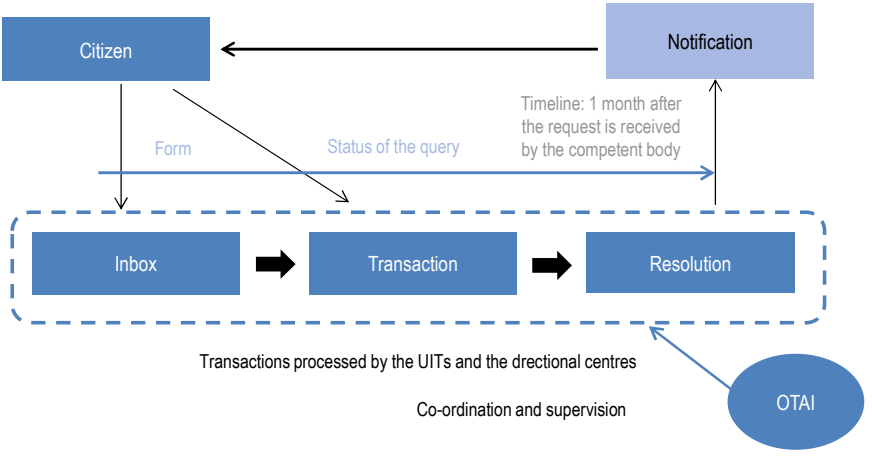
The legal and regulatory framework was completed by Royal Decree 671/2014 of 2 August 2014 that assigns the functions relevant to the implementation of the Transparency Portal to OPERA (which with the same decree becomes a permanent structure within the Ministry of the Presidency).

Based on Royal Decree 671/2014, the newly established Office responsible for Access to Information (OTAI) is part of the Ministry of the Presidency, and since August 2014 it depends on OPERA. It is responsible for the establishment and management of the Transparency Portal, considered as a key point of access and diffusion of public information, for co-ordinating and supervising the relevant activities of the information units

(*unidades de informacion de transparencia departamentales y singulares*) of the general state administration, to foster the capacity building of the civil servants in charge of transparency. The governance framework includes the OTAI the units for transparency information within the individual institutions or departments (UITs) and the directional centres (established by the ministries).

The UITs were foreseen by Article 21 of Law 19/2013 on Transparency, Access to Information and Good Governance with the purpose to ensure within each public institution affected by the law the institutional context necessary for the administrative management of the right of access to information and the proactive release of public sector information. They are co-ordinated by the Central Unit for Transparency Information that developed guidelines on basic criteria to facilitate the streamlining and co-ordination of the different UITs. The UITs are responsible for managing the public's access to information, referral of the request to the competent body, monitoring of the proper follow up to the requests of access to information.

Figure 3.2. **Technological model and governance framework of the right of access to information**



Source: OECD's own work.

The process of access to information includes the submission of the request from the citizen thorough the portal. The requestor receives a tracking number. Requests are received and addressed by the relevant UIT and directional centre that provides the answers under the co-ordination and supervision of the OTAI. Most of the requests (above 90%) are submitted

online. Most of the requests for information are received and processed by the UITs of the Presidency, followed by the UITs of the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Development.

An automatic system for the submission of the request for information is also under development and seen as a key functionality to the portal. Between September and December 2014, the OTAI has focused on the development of the Transparency Portal (www.transparencia.gob.es) and on increasing its content. Future advancements are also expected from the growing analytical work on the data on requests. OPERA also commissioned an external evaluation on the functioning of the website.

The Transparency Portal

In 2014, the main step in the development of the technological model has been the establishment of the Transparency Portal, conceived as a tool to manage the "right of access to information". Its technology platform is provided by the Directorate for Information Technology and Communications (DTIC) of the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, as a common solution for the entire central government.

Since its conceptualisation, the Transparency Portal was expected to become the basis of compliance of the transparency obligations set out in the Transparency, Access to Information and Good Governance Act (Law 19/2013 of 9 December 2013), as well as of the right of access to public information in Spain.

Launched by the government in December 2014, the Transparency Portal makes over 1,100,000 documents freely accessible to all citizens covering activities of the general state administration, except for sensitive information due to privacy or security reasons. To facilitate access, the information is divided into institutional (e.g. describing organisations' structures, ministries' functions, curricula and yearly salaries of high-level civil servants), normative (e.g. draft laws and regulations – which is quite innovative for Spain – as well as approved texts) and economic (e.g. on administrative management, with economic impact or budget-related, statistics covering the general state administration, information on public contracts provided through a link to the public procurement portal). A guide provided on the portal is meant to help citizens to better understand their right of access to information, the content of the portal and its exceptions.

The portal is implemented over the network platform Red SARA. It is important to underline the relevance of the fact that it is built on this Red as since its inception this Red has constituted a strategic project of the Spanish

administration and the basis for the Spanish public administration's private cloud.

Red SARA is the platform for delivering cloud services for the public sector, with the objective of bridging the existing digital divide. Red SARA provides the interconnection between all government layers (national, regional and local). It connects 16 ministries across all levels, representing more than 90% of the population.

Red SARA's objective is to increase collaboration and interoperability among the information systems of the various levels of government. It therefore aims to save both development costs and time, facilitate the integration of systems and the exchange of data/software while easing the development of new digital government services and enhancing the reuse of solutions. The network is designed with the latest virtual private LAN services (VPLS) technology, thus providing high-capacity data transmission.

Citizens can also electronically request access to information not available yet on the Transparency Portal. For citizens requesting access to this service, identification and authentication is made by means of Cl@ve. As of November 30, 2015 the number of authentications in the Cl @ system was 413, 214, the number of the registered users had reached 1,514,758 and the number of activated users totalled 634,768.

Integrating the Transparency Portal with Cl@ve

Cl@ve was developed within the current legal framework established in the Council of Ministers Agreement to drive the Reform of the Spanish Public Administration, and as such it is one of the measures foreseen as part of the CORA. Presidential Order PRE/1838/2014 of 8 October 2014 published the Council of Ministers' Agreement of 19 September 2014 which approved Cl@ve: the common platform of the public sector for the state administration for identification, authentication and electronic signature using concerted keys. Cl@ve is based on the DNI-e (electronic ID card) and electronic certificates, and offers the possibility of signing in the cloud with personal certificates kept in remote servers.

Cl@ve is part of the CORA's measures aimed at implementing policies unifying, simplifying and streamlining organisations and services within the Spanish public administration. Specifically, it is part of the measures concerning IT infrastructure to drive the rationalisation of current infrastructures, a more efficient use of technological resources and the development of services with higher levels of quality.

In this respect, Cl@ve aims to unify existing online identification methods into a single solution, thus eliminating, absorbing or complementing various existing and at times incompatible identification

systems, which had been deployed across different public administration organisations for a long time. Cl@ve is meant to make it more convenient for citizens to interact with public entities, whether municipal, regional or national, while at the same time simplifying identification systems and reducing maintenance needs.

The use of Cl@ve is mandatory for national online services, which will have to adopt Cl@ve before the end of 2015. Regional public administrations are being encouraged to adopt Cl@ve as their main identification framework so as to offer a unified system to all Spanish citizens across all online public services. The main target users are private citizens who need to identify themselves in order to interact with services on public administration websites. The value for the users will be derived by the increasing number of services that allow the citizens to use Cl@ve.

Cl@ve is implemented by the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations through the Directorate of Information Technology and Communications, and managed in collaboration with the Police General Directorate), the State Tax Administration Agency and the Department of Transport.

The fact that the Transparency Portal uses Cl@ve is a positive step in line with the overall intention of the CORA's decision to introduce it to streamline the use of identification keys. Nevertheless, not all countries across the OECD request citizens submitting a request for information to identify themselves. It is indeed considered a good practice to provide and release data and information without mandatory registration, allowing users to access data without being required to identify themselves; see below for a more detailed discussion on this point.

The content of the Transparency Portal

The portal offers citizens the possibility to consult information of the following types: organisational; of legal significance; economic information of the general state administration. Important efforts have been made to enrich the content of the portal. At the moment, authorities also publish on the portal the norms that are being elaborated (e.g. all the documents prepared for each of the steps taken prior to the publication of the adopted law), which is quite innovative within the context of the Spanish public administration. CVs of high-level policy makers and civil servants are also available on the Transparency Portal. In line with the envisaged functional model described above, actions have been taken to link the Transparency Portal with relevant sites such as the BOE. To facilitate the feeding of the portal, the government in September 2014established a database, which became operational by the time indicated in the Transparency Law.

In terms of the economic and financial content relevant for transparency reasons, as part of the law's enforcement since December 2014, the portal publishes for the first time in the history of the Spanish administration, a register of all agreements signed by the public administration and information on public grants (except in delicate cases for reasons of privacy or security).

Budgetary information on each public institution is also published (in open data format), tax-related reports are published containing information which is collected from the Court of Audit. The portal also includes information on real estate properties owned by public entities, information on public contracts, the salaries of high-level civil servants as well as authorisation for these to carry on private activities once they have left their high-level position.

Institutional information covers the structure of the public administration, norms applying to the different departments, competencies and functions of the various entities of the general state administration, CVs of high-level civil servants, plans and objectives for each entity and an evaluation of results in the course of the implementation of the plan. Regulatory information includes laws being drafted, existing laws and other information with legal relevance (e.g. directives, agreements).

Finally, efforts have been made to increase the availability of statistical information on the various public entities to provide a full picture of the quality of the public administration. These objectives have required considerable co-ordination efforts among the offices responsible for access to information within the individual ministries. Next steps foresee closer collaboration with the UITs in the various agencies.

Increasing awareness and public engagement

Any government presenting a mature level of ICT use needs to raise public awareness and publicise the efforts it has made to increase public sector transparency. This is essential in order to ensure that benefits impact the end users and do not create forms of digital exclusion within the society as the levels of sophistication of ICT use across the administration progress. In order to increase the level of awareness, the government has produced a video on the Transparency Portal which was circulated on public television.

To engage with communities and reach out to a critical mass of citizens, a Twitter account was set up, and the navigation bar of the portal on the right hand-side of the portal lists themes of common interest for the society. To facilitate access to information, content is currently organised around three main categories: institutional, normative and economic information, grouping 21 related subcategories. To further improve public engagement,

functionalities on the portal are being expanded, including window alerts on news of interest for common citizens.

Increasing impact and value

The establishment of the Transparency Portal, its multilingual content, the transitions with the UITs and the co-ordinating power of the OTAI are all significant actions undertaken by the Spanish government to implement the measure foreseen by the CORA to foster public sector transparency. The establishment of the Transparency Portal represents an important step to operationalise the commitments embedded in the Transparency Law. It increases citizens' accessibility to public sector information (such as the gross salaries of all high-ranking officials, public contracts) and allows information that was previously scattered throughout various agencies to be organised more systematically, hence increasing efficiency in information management.

Having located the initial responsibility for the management of the Transparency Portal under OPERA has ensured the right level of political support and engagement. Nevertheless, when benchmarking this initiative with similar experiences across the OECD, there is space for improving the portal, both from a content as well as from a governance perspective. For example, much of the information of public interest is still available only upon request – thus leaving space for improving a proactive approach to data and information release. Additionally, petitions may be filed directly on the website, but users have to identify themselves, which may prevent many actors from requesting data in the first place.

According to international standards, for instance, public sector data and information should be made accessible in non-discriminatory ways. Additionally, the "release data free of charge, under an open and unrestricted licence and without mandatory registration, allowing users to choose to download data without being required to identify themselves"[1]. This approach is increasingly being applied across the OECD to portals which were developed for transparency purposes, to foster open data or to increase public participation in policy making.

Therefore, some governments that release information only upon registration also provide incentives associated to this mandatory request. This is, for example, the case of the Portuguese portal enabling the provision of public comments on draft policies and regulations:[2] it is mandatory for the user to register but the incentive is the right to actively contribute to shaping the content of a policy/regulation, e.g. a recent example of active participation in the policy-making process included commenting on policy drafts for reducing energy consumption.

Actions aimed to create occasions for active participation can become forms to compensate the need to register and also become occasions to build citizens' capacities to capture the value of the released data and information to engage with the public sector. In line with these common trends, Spain could consider expanding the use of the Transparency Portal as a platform to engage citizens in policy drafts. This would be perfectly in line with Law 39/2015 of 1 October on common administrative procedures in the public administration. Law 39/2015 underlines that transparency is expected to be increased through procedures of online public consultation in the course of the drafting of new policy and regulation proposals.

This would certainly help increase the value of the transparency policy by creating important synergies with other ongoing actions and programmes aimed to strengthen open government in the country, e.g. the Aporta initiative and the open data portal: http://datos.gob.es. Datos.gob.es, which incorporates the resources to facilitate the opening up and location of data online and to raise user participation and increase web activity on the Data Catalogue.

In terms of governance, in many OECD countries the co-ordination of the Transparency Portal is not under the responsibility of the authority in charge of the overall co-ordination of the public sector reform agenda. Usually, substantive authorities or ministries (e.g. the authority responsible for the transparency agenda like the INAI in Mexico) are vested with the mandate to oversee the co-ordination of data collection, the identification of public needs in terms of data and information, the management of the portal and co-ordination with the local levels of government. This approach can provide a stronger basis for a solid governance to secure long-term sustainability in the management of the portal as a key tool for implementing transparency policies.

Strengthening the link between open government data and transparency policies

Furthermore, a stronger link between the open data and transparency agendas would help strengthen the focus of the Spanish government's efforts in these two areas on their broader and more strategic impact. Connecting open data with the transparency agenda could help ensure that public data and information are not only available and accessible, but also actively used by a sufficiently sized critical mass of users, from within and outside the administration, to produce benefits. These should be seen in terms economic, social and good governance value that include public sector transparency and integrity. The OECD has underlined the critical importance of focusing on data reuse to achieve any targeted goal (Ubaldi,

2013), as increasing data and information availability on a portal is an important but insufficient condition to create impact.

Concretely, a better connection between the transparency and open data agendas and initiatives could help, for instance, link efforts to increase the availability and accessibility of public sector data and information with finding solutions to public problems, e.g. foster the creation of new economic opportunities as part of the overall fight against unemployment, produce positive externalities of transparency-related initiatives such as more ethical behaviour in the public sector, or higher public engagement in regulatory impact assessment achieved through the opportunities offered to citizens to comment on draft policies, laws and regulations. Countries that have focused on linking the two agendas closely include the Colombia, Mexico and the United Kingdom.

Spain is in a privileged position, pretty unique across the OECD, of having had a strong open government data initiative for a long time, prior to the recent increase of the international attention on this topic. Important results in the area of open government data have been achieved so far through the Aporta project (Box 3.2), which is primarily focused on fostering reuse of public sector data to produce economic value. When coupled with the important recent actions aimed to increase public sector transparency thorough better access to information, the open government data agenda could further increase its impact.

Box 3.2. **The Aporta Open Data project**

The Aporta Open Data project, started in 2008, is the result of collaboration between the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism and the public entity red.es.

The Aporta Open Data project aims to promote a culture of reuse of public sector data and information, raise awareness on its importance to create economic value and stimulate its market potential. The Reuse of Public Sector Information is regulated by Law 37/2007 of 16 November, and by Royal Decree 1495/2011 of 24 October regarding the Reuse of Public Sector Information, which transposes the Directive 2003/98/CE to the national legal code, specifying therein the basic principles regarding reuse matters, together with an Interoperability Agreement.

The portal datos.gob.es was launched by the end of 2011 within the framework of the Aporta Open Data project to promote the publication of, improve access to and encourage the reuse of public sector data produced by the general state administration. These efforts aim to create a more transparent, efficient and friendly government, and to create new opportunities – both social and economic – based on reusing public sector data.

Box 3.2. **The Aporta Open Data project** (*continued*)

Datos.gob.es incorporates the resources to facilitate the opening up and location of data online and to raise user participation and increase web activity on the Data Catalogue. In order to foster reuse, the Aporta project also provides a Decalogue that explains the basics on open data and facilitates the first steps for all – journalists, agents, infomediaries, private entities and users – who are interested in reusing the information. Indeed, datos.gob.es incorporates the resources to facilitate the opening up and the location of data, but also to raise user participation.

The Aporta project offers an online Public Information Catalogue, providing a single access point to the various administration websites that offer public information resources and increase web activity on the Data Catalogue.

The Aporta project has the mandate and purpose to facilitate the creation of new business models, modernise government bodies and create transparent platforms for public collaboration and participation.

The strategic linkage and synergies between the transparency and open government data agendas cannot only take the form of connecting the transparency and open government data portals; further steps need to be taken from a policy and governance perspective.

Some of the risks of maintaining the current approach might be:

- Losing sight of the potential of public sector data and information for innovation. This can be derived from the release of public sector data and information which could produce value in terms of good governance (e.g. new service delivery arrangements, improved policy making) for the economy and the society as a whole.
- Duplication and inefficiencies from having datasets on both websites instead of linking and updating them in synchronised way, e.g. updates through the same platform.
- Losing visibility of one of the two portals if linkages and communication are not appropriately managed.
- Underuse of the potential of increased availability of public sector data and information on either portal to spur civic engagement.

Recommendations

Measuring and communicating impact and results

- Continue assessing the progress in the implementation of the ICT measures and measuring their benefits. Once the measures have been implemented (according to the definitions adopted by OPERA for the different types of measures, i.e. managerial, co-ordination, legal) the government of Spain should maintain a close eye and evaluation on their impact based on punctual and systematic quantitative and qualitative data collection. This can help build a system of productivity indicators of civil servants (Key Performance Indicators, KPI), as well as indicators on data management and digital government to be used by the CIO for strategic planning purposes and to guide the elaboration of the next digital government strategy.
- Maintain the focus on communication about the progress in the implementation of the CORA ICT measures and their impact, which may have a pedagogical effect also on the autonomous communities.

Strengthening streamlining, consolidation and collaboration

- As Spain progresses towards a sophisticated model of governance for ICT management and shared services, the next set of reform actions could streamline and strengthen the role of the CIO in relation to strategic decisions and directions concerning shared services and, in particular, digital government services. This would help ensure coherence between strategic decisions on IT management and investments and decisions on the digitisation to ensure synergies are captured and systems and platforms are reused whenever possible.
- Important efforts have been implemented in Spain to increase efficiencies through streamlined and shared service delivery within the administration. Additional changes in the legal and budgetary framework might help address some of the remaining issues. One of the key issues is that the legal framework does not allow the division led by the CIO to invoice users. Solutions may include either changing the law, thus granting the right to bill public agencies, or establishing a separate agency such as the Digital Government Services in the United Kingdom, the General Services in the United States or the Smals in Belgium. The new public agency would be a service provider, with the mandate to deliver the services, overcoming the financial problems and being able to increase the use of the services delivered.

- As the collaboration with the autonomous communities in some areas of the ICT domain is very good, the Spanish government could consider making the co-ordination permanent (through some form of agreement) and strengthening the system of incentives.
- Further support for service consolidation could be achieved, clarifying the criteria for the consolidation of effective affinity of needs and avoiding adopting only a technological perspective and applying market principles e.g. see the Belgian example of Smals.

Linking more closely the transparency and open data agendas

- The Transparency Portal should be more closely linked with the open government data agenda. This would boost the proactive disclosure of data and information and would help move from a legal compliance approach to a real collective commitment across the administration. As a secondary level impact, this could ease up the change of culture within the administration and create more opportunities for public engagement, thus creating higher value. The government could seize the opportunity of the next International Open Data Conference being held in Spain to more solidly link these efforts.
- Reinforce the integration of data and information across the administration, both as an overarching strategy to improve internal efficiencies and service delivery as well as part of broader efforts to develop a "data-driven public sector".
- Consider strengthening the role of the unit working on transparency to clarify its mandate and resource it/staff it properly in order to strengthen its role in relation to the OGD agenda.
- Use data analysis more actively to spur public sector intelligence (e.g. to better understand service users' requests, identify trends and needs, and inform the design of policies and decision making on prioritising efforts, for instance on data release).
- Maintain efforts on building a culture of information sharing and public data release across the Spanish administration, especially for economic data and particularly when done in real time. Raising awareness and increasing capacities among civil servants can provide an important incentive to further contribute substantively to the portal. Training sessions with the UITs with the objective of boosting the required cultural change within the Spanish administration have been organised and should become common practice.

- Consider expanding the use of the Transparency Portal as a platform to engage citizens in policy drafts. This is a common practice linked to the implementation of the transparency policy in countries such as Mexico and Portugal, which has created important externalities in terms of public engagement in policy making and regulatory reform.

Notes

1. http://opendatacharter.net (accessed 20 October 2015).
2. https://participe.gov.pt (accessed 20 October 2015).

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Chapter 4.

Stronger accountability mechanisms for better citizen participation in Spain

This ultimate chapter reflects on the necessary macro processes which have to accompany the reforms of the Spanish public administration, especially in terms of citizen engagement, accountability and the resulting overall trust in government. It is argued that effective communication by the Spanish public administration is inevitable to counter the disenchantment with the national government, which finds itself with an unfavourable level of confidence, well below the OECD average since 2009. Consultation mechanisms, also via information and telecommunication technologies, are assessed to detect potential for further active engagement of civil society organisations, which would add to the capacity of public administrations in promoting inclusive and balanced growth in order to implement the vital reform endeavours through 2015.

Key facts and findings

As mentioned in the OECD's first *Public Governance Review of Spain*, in a context of low trust in government such as the one that prevails in Spain due to the economic crisis, communication is critical to overcome resistance to reform. Besides measuring the benefits of reform, it is important to communicate the reform to the wider public and, particularly, to the main stakeholders.

A well-articulated communications strategy keeps stakeholders informed about progress, garnering the support necessary to sustain the effort over time and avoid reform fatigue. It is also important to establish mechanisms to communicate the results of reform within government. This helps raise awareness among public officials about the importance of the reform and lets them see the results of their efforts.

On an *ex post* basis, communication and visibility of what has been achieved is critical to ensure that the potential beneficiaries of reform are informed about the reform. Measures differ from one another, and in some cases communication is essential to make the most of the reform measure. For example, entrepreneurs will not take advantage of a market unity system if they do not know about it and its benefits. In other cases, it also helps to give visibility to the whole state dimension of an initiative. This is the aforementioned case with the health system (see Chapter 2), where co-ordination and the active participation of the autonomous communities is essential to ensure the effective implementation of the Interoperable Electronic Prescription. The experience of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality in giving updated information regarding the implementation of the Interoperable Electronic Prescription in all autonomous communities is a good example of accountability that has the potential to become a widespread practice.[1]

Finally, communication helps advance two of the pillars of good governance: transparency and accountability. When a government communicates with citizens, it is in a much better position to assess the results of its initiatives and the relation between inputs and outputs. Eventually, this creates an informed public, which acts as a preventive factor of corruption.

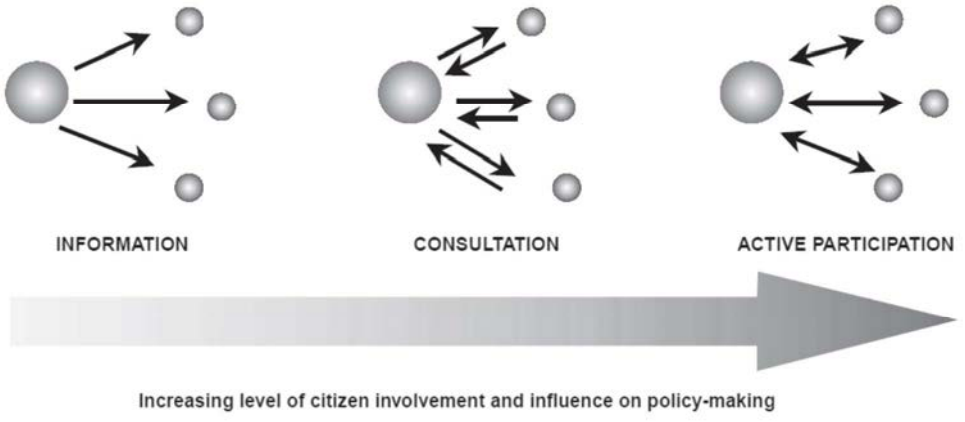
The OECD Guiding Principles for Open and Inclusive Policy Making are built on the belief that Governments, in order to fully reap the benefits of active interaction with their population, should inform and consult them and actively engage with them not merely as subjects but as partners. These relationships are defined by the OECD as follows (OECD, 2001):

Information is a **one-way relationship** in which government produces and delivers information to be used by citizens. It covers both "passive" access to information upon citizens' demands and "active" measures by government to disseminate information reaching them. *Examples include*: access to public records, official gazettes, and government websites.

Consultation is a **two-way relationship** in which citizens provide feedback to government. It is based on the prior definition by government of the issues on which citizens' views are being sought and which require provision of information. Governments define the issues for consultation, set the questions and manage the process, while citizens are invited to contribute their views and opinions. *Examples include*: public opinion surveys and comments on draft legislation.

Active participation is a **relationship based on partnership** with government, in which citizens actively engage in defining the process and content of policy making. It acknowledges equal standing for citizens in setting the agenda, proposing policy options and shaping the policy dialogue – although the responsibility for the final decision or policy formulation rests with government. *Examples include*: consensus conferences and citizens' juries.

Figure 5.1. **Defining information, consultation, and active participation**



Source: OECD (2001), *Citizens as Partners: Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making,* OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264195561-en.

Based on more than a decade of policy analysis, data collection and elaboration, OECD member countries have shown that Open

Government policies can be used successfully to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration and to increase the transparency and accountability of the public sector as a whole (government and public administration alike). These improvements open the door to positive effects on citizens' trust and hence on good governance and democracy, they promote economic development and ultimately generate growth, in part by allowing free access to Public Sector Information (PSI) though open data initiatives.

In parallel, all initiatives related to the improved performance of the Spanish public administration must be accompanied by a more transparent and fluid dialogue with relevant stakeholders and civil society. This has been the case of some measures, especially those related to business and entrepreneurship, but not in the Commission on the Reform of the Public Administration (*Comisión para la Reforma de la Administración*, CORA) reform as a whole.

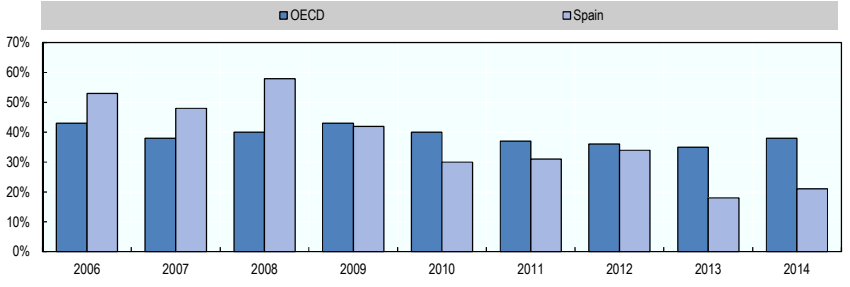
In the framework of parliamentary discussions on the government's plan to confront the economic and financial crisis, the CORA reform has been introduced as one of the components of this plan. Representatives from the Ministry of the Presidency as well as from the Ministry of Finances and Public Administrations have appeared on multiple occasions before the Spanish parliament to present the CORA's main achievements and the resulting savings. Each ministry has also had the opportunity to present its measures in public hearings in parliament as well as in debates regarding the approval of new legislation related to the CORA. Specific sessions devoted to the CORA, though, can only be found in the Congress and the Senate's Constitutional Commissions, and took place far apart from one another, in the Congress on 28 January 2015 and in the Senate on 4 November 2013. This reform is the opportunity to encourage a debate where all political parties can be involved and citizens could also be given more feedback on the outcomes of the whole process. The government of Spain could also benefit from inputs and new proposals from other political parties.

Regarding the civil society's participation, while during the process of elaboration of the CORA reform a relevant number of stakeholders were consulted through an Advisory Council (with the representation of unions, the private sector and academia), there has not been any real follow-up; this body only met twice in two years. There is no evidence either of any follow-up process on the electronic box, which collected more than 2 239 proposals directly from citizens. It has been acknowledged that during the implementation of the CORA measures neither further activities nor initiatives have been carried out to ensure dialogue with or the participation of civil society.

The participation of civil society should be an asset in the consolidation of a robust public administration and should be integrated in the reform throughout the process to make this relationship more dynamic, mutually beneficial and based on reciprocal trust.

The government of Lithuania, for instance, has engaged in an in-depth process to define its national strategy "Lithuania 2030". The State Progress Council, led by the centre of government, was responsible for the drafting process of the strategy: government authorities, business leaders, community groups and prominent public figures participated in its development. Three working groups were set up on smart economy, smart governance and smart society. The consultation involved the national level and Lithuanians living abroad. The council also went on a road trip to discuss with mayors, municipality representatives, young people and non-governmental organisations. Innovative approaches were developed to involve harder to reach groups. Since the elderly were seen not to believe in the strategy, the council reached out to school children, who were trained to interact with the elderly. The outcome is a national strategy which is guiding the policies of the whole country and whose implementation is monitored in an inclusive process (OECD, 2015a; State Progress Council, 2012).

Figure 5.2. **Level of confidence in the national government in Spain and the OECD**



Sources: OECD (2015a), *Government at a Glance 2015*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2015-en; Gallup World Poll.

Recommendations

Citizen engagement and implication in public administration reform

- The consolidation of consultation mechanisms with academics and experts as well as with civil society is essential to consolidate a continuous reform with inputs and proposals from all parts of Spanish society. In that sense, the Advisory Council made up of academics and

civil society organisations should meet and be consulted on a more regular basis.

- Together with increased use of ICT, increasing citizens' participation through a whole-of-government, open government approach would contribute to enhancing all the efforts made over the last few years and move towards inclusive growth. The CORA could be, in that sense, a good instrument to reinforce the open government agenda in Spain.

Better communication and debates through public hearings

- In addition to the efforts made by the Ministry of the Presidency with its publishing of reports and their submission to the Council of Ministers, the Spanish parliament (Cortes Generales) could also become directly involved on a regular basis in the discussions of a better and long-term strategy for a performance-based Spanish public administration. These discussions would be engaged in by both chambers, the Senate in its territorial dimension and the Commission on Constitutional Affairs in the Congress. OPERA could also provide the Senate and Congress with tools to perform this function: annual reports detailing the measures and their corresponding outputs and outcomes. This could even lead to the creation of an ad hoc Standing Committee of Deputies on public administration reform.
- In order to increase visibility and improve communication about the assessment of public policies, annual reports could be presented at the same time in a public fora
- Stressing the key role of a capable public administration in promoting inclusive and balanced growth. In its own work, the OECD underlines the importance of institutional capacity to rebuild citizens' and businesses' confidence and trust.

Notes

1. For updated information on the implementation of the electronic receipt initiative in the different autonomous communities, www.msssi.gob.es/profesionales/recetaElectronicaSNS/NIVEL_DE_IMPLANTACION_octubre_2015.jpg (accessed 13 November 2015).

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Annex A.
Suggested CORA measures

The OECD highlights a number of CORA measures implemented or in an advanced stage of implementation, classified into four groups.

1. Measures with an impact on subnational governments (autonomous communities and local governments).
2. Measures aimed at organic rationalisation of the public administration.
3. Measures with a strong impact on citizens and service-oriented business.
4. Structural legal measures.

1. Measures with an impact on subnational governments (autonomous communities and local governments)

- PLATEA: circulation of performing arts shows in scenic areas of the local authorities.
- Co-ordination of foreign promotion agencies of the autonomous communities with the activities and services of Spanish Institute of Trade and Investment – ICEX – to boost internationalisation.
- Integration of autonomous promotional agencies in commercial offices abroad.
- Development and implementation of interoperable electronic prescriptions.
- Implementation of the Interoperable Clinical File.
- Creation of a Health Card Database in the framework of the National Health System (NHS) – the National Health Card Identification.

2. Measures aimed at organic rationalisation of the public administration

- Implementation of a productivity/efficiency measurement system.
- Co-ordinated implementation of the registration process for applying for employment and unemployment benefits.
- Co-ordination of decentralise spending with regard to the central government's resources – use of certain central government resources by the autonomous communities.
- General instructions for travel and allowances.
- Centralised procurement for the general state administration on certain items.
- Increase government revenue through the sale or occupation of unoccupied property with particular consideration of rural floors.
- Public sector rationalisation: suppression, integration or reduction of unnecessary, duplicated or inefficient units, agencies and public bodies, based on functional justification and economic sustainability:
  - reorganisation of state-owned enterprises and public foundations
  - reorganisation of public enterprises.

3. Measures with a strong impact on citizens and service-oriented business:

- Implementation of the "Portal Único de Empleo" ("One Job Portal"), to avoid duplication in the creation of regional portals and increase the visibility of job offers in the public employment services.
- Generalisation of the procedure for applying for European health documents online and receiving them by mail.
- Telematics service available in the Electronic Office of Social Security for the request and delivery of certificates of coverage.
- Setting up a centralised database on grants and funding for small and medium-sized enterprises as part of the simplification of start-up procedures.
- Official Gazette on Demand (*Boletín Oficial del Estado a la Carta*).
- Entrepreneurs.

4. Structural legal measures

- Law 20/2013 for Market Unity (*Ley de Unidad de Mercado LGUM*).
- Law for Rationalization and other Public Sector Administrative Reform Measures (*Ley de racionalización del sector público y otras medidas de reforma administrative*).
- Law on Common Administrative Procedure and Law of the Legal Regime of Public Administrations (*Ley de procedimiento administrativo y ley de régimen jurídico*).

Annex B.
Case Studies on Galicia and Murcia

Concern about the different processes of administrative reform has been a constant throughout the recent history of the autonomous communities, which have embarked on various attempts and implemented proposals aimed at making the structures and functions of regional government administration more adept at providing citizens with a wide range of public services.

Since 2011, faced with both a deteriorating financial situation and upward pressure on expenditures, autonomous communities started streamlining and rationalising their public administrations. Galicia and Murcia both had to readjust and carry out public sector reforms while under fiscal pressure, but there were some differences between the two cases.

Political and institutional context of GALICIA and MURCIA

As mentioned in this report, the 2012 Organic Law on Budget Stability and Financial Sustainability established tight fiscal control on all public administrations. To this end, the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations publishes an annual report on budget stability and regional government debt. The autonomous communities who fail to meet the budgetary objectives established for them must then submit to quarterly monitoring by the MINHAP. Galicia, the Canary Islands, the Basque Country and Navarre all met their Budget stability objectives. The rest of autonomous communities, including Murcia, have exceeded the target fixed by the Council of Ministers.

The fiscal situation has also played a key role in shaping the model of administrative reform. Whereas Galicia, traditionally a less dynamic region, started the reform of its public sector in early 2010, Murcia suffered a severe economic and financial crisis and the administrative reform there followed the CORA design.

Table B.1. **Population, unemployment and GDP per capita by autonomous community**

Autonomous community	Population (2015)	Unemployment rate (%, 2015, Q4)	GDP per capita (EUR, 2014)
Andalucia	8.399.043	29,83	16.577
Aragon	1.317.847	14.6	24.713
Asturias	1.051.229	20.33	19.727
Balearic Islands	1.104.479	17.02	23.498
Canary Islands	2.100.306	26.75	19.238
Cantabria	585.179	17.71	20.237
Castille and Leon	2.472.052	17.58	21.063
Castille-La Mancha	2.059.191	24.97	17.636
Catalonia	7.508.106	17.73	26.624
Extremadura	1.092.997	28.07	15.457
Galicia	**2.732.347**	**17,74**	**19.661**
La Rioja	317.053	13.97	24.601
Madrid	6.436.996	16.51	30.755
Murcia	**1.467.288**	**23.51**	**18.325**
Navarra	640.476	13.53	27.709
Basque Country	2.189.257	12.89	29.277
Valencia	4.980.689	21.45	19.693

Source: National Statistics Institute (n.d.), http://www.ine.es/ (accessed 2 February 2016).

Institutional background

Galicia is Spain's westernmost autonomous community, and is bordered by Portugal to the south. With only 2.732.347 inhabitants (2014), the region is sparsely populated; it accounted for 5.8% of Spain's population[1] and 5.2% of national GDP in 2013[2].

Galicia has always preserved a strong sense of regional identity and it is recognised as historical regions (*nacionalidad histórica)* in recognition of its cultural specificities. The region was granted the status of autonomous community in 1981 and from the start opted for the highest possible level of autonomy, as did Catalonia, the Basque Country and Andalusia, while the rest of the autonomous communities chose the more limited autonomy of the "*via lenta*". Galicia is divided into 314 municipalities and 4 provinces.

Murcia is a small autonomous community between Andalusia and the Valencian Community, on the Mediterranean coast. With almost 1.5 million inhabitants (2014), its population is mainly concentrated on the coast and in the capital city of Murcia, which is home to about one third of the total population of the

region. It's a densely populated territory that represented 2.56% of national GDP in 2013.

Murcia is one of the few autonomous communities that consists of a single province. Because of this, the autonomous community and the province are operated as one unit of government. The autonomous community and province is subdivided into 45 municipalities, including the capital city of Murcia.

Implementing CORA at the regional level

The First Public Governance Review of Spain already highlighted the initial reticence of some autonomous communities to the CORA reform, but efforts made by OPERA, the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations and relevant line ministries have contributed to ensuring the essential and effective participation to make the reform happen.

Xunta de Galicia was the first autonomous community to adopt a strategy on modernization of its public administration in February 1990. Other reforms have followed, but it has also been a pioneer launching public sector reforms during this latest economic crisis. In fact, the structure and functioning of Galicia's autonomous regional government (Xunta de Galicia) has since 2009 been undergoing a profound change in its configuration.

The Xunta de Galicia has not published as such a single rationalization and administrative simplification plan (formalised like the CORA reform), but rather has organised its reforms using several instruments that constitute priorities of action. Indeed, the Xunta de Galicia maintains an agenda of reforms initiated, as mentioned above, in 2009, and the effort continues in this second term of its current President, Alberto Nuñez-Feijóo.

It is an agenda of continuous improvement -centered on the modernization of the Autonomous Community, including all regional ministries and associated public entities. This agenda is founded upon around key areas such as transparency, efficiency in spending, reducing paperwork, human resource management, the use of technological potential, simplification of administrative structures and improving the regulatory framework among others.

In the case of **Murcia,** the first attempt of reform started in 1996, with the Murcia region plan for quality Public Administration services, designed to promote modernisation through better services and more efficient administration. In 2013, the Murcia autonomous government launched the Citizen-oriented Public Management Plan (*Plan Gacela*) aimed at a whole-of-a-government strategy divided into 9

priorities (e-government, administrative simplification, human resources, public sector streamlining and evaluation of public policies, among others).

With the publication of the CORA reform, the **Xunta de Galicia's** reaction was one of institutional support for the reforms, coupled with a defence of its own powers enshrined in the Spanish Constitution.

The reform is being led at a high political and technical level by the Vice-presidency and Ministry of the Presidency, Public Administrations and Justice and its special unit dedicated to Monitoring and Administrative Reform (*Dirección Xeral de Avaliación e Reforma Administrativa*).

Among many other initiatives, Galicia introduced in 2011 an online platform for public procurement that has already earned praise from the OECD as a good practice (OECD, 2012). The platform centralises information about companies and improves access to information. The introduction of this new tool has also reduced contracting costs for municipalities, especially small ones, and it enjoys widespread acceptance among SMEs in the community[3]. The criteria for defining and publishing offers have been harmonised.

Galicia agreed to the integration of common software platforms and the unification of registers, with the proviso that it be able to retain its autonomy, especially when it comes to maintaining a close and fluid interaction and dialogue with SMEs and municipalities. As in other OECD countries, one issue often discussed is the fear that SME**s** may be at a disadvantage in the awarding of framework agreements on the national level (OECD, 2011). Consequently, **Murcia has** its own trading platform. However , it aims comply with the provisions of Law for Market Unity and guarantee the interconnection of the two platforms and move toward a second phase consisting of the final integration into a single public procurement system[4]. Both agreements have been signed and the platform is fully operational.

Another interesting initiative being spearheaded by **Murcia** is the human resources redeployment plan, launched in late 2012. It is aimed at contributing to efficiency in the provision of services and in the use of available financial resources, acting to help achieve improvements including ensuring a suitable number of staff members, better distribution of workers, training, career advancement and mobility, by means of a Management Plan for Human Resources (*Plan de Ordenación de la Función Pública Regional*). Like the vast majority of the Spanish Public Administration, the regional government of Murcia reduced the recruitment of technical assistance (60% of reduction from 2010-2014 according to DG of Human

Resources of Regional Government of Murcia), but this initiative has also included job reassignment according to needs and priorities detected. Staff members have essentially been reallocated to Social Services, education centres, Environment and the Tax Agency. Out of 9,040 total jobs, the process has affected 1,065 jobs and saved 31.9 million € (savings from technical assistance reduced excluded).

In this sense, the main purpose of Human Resources Management (HRM) strategies and policies is to promote organisational success in the future and to respond proactively to upcoming challenges, but also to support leaders in their daily business and to shape a value-driven culture inside public administration. HRM is about more than administering staff. HRM also has an important role to play, as a business partner, in planning for the future with foresight and responding to needs and future challenges within the organisation. The example of the Flemish government (Belgium) could be an interesting experience to be taken into consideration to deepen Murcia's strategy initiative.

Box B.1: **Assisting HR business partners in aligning employee engagement studies with HR strategy**

The Flemish government conducts a (non-mandatory) employee engagement survey every two years. Participating entities receive an entity-report and an overall report at the Flemish Government level.

A workshop is provided for HR business partners to assist them to align the outcomes of the study with their HR strategy. The workshop outlines methods to make a management summary of the graphs and numbers, how to link this to HR strategy and how to engage both employees and management in converting the outcomes into actions.

The workshop consists of different parts. First the focus is on getting the management summary right: what do the numbers and graphs 'say', independently of the strategy. This is the 'first screening' of results. The focus is on benchmarking employee engagement on different levels: benchmarking is provided by age groups, gender, and organizational entity and by a general mean of all participating entities. Also a benchmark is provided over time, so the evolution of different items becomes apparent. These benchmarks are supported by statistical methods e.g. confidence intervals and box plot methods.

The second part focusses on how to bring in HR strategy, this is the in-depth analysis. A method is provided whereby HR professionals can determine which items in the engagement study are most important for their organizations and set targets (e.g. being in the top 25% for this item) for those items. HR professionals are advised to add more metrics from other surveys in the organization and analyze hard data to enrich the numbers. In that way a pattern can become clear, and the metrics can provide real insights in the organization. A template is made available for plotting targets against obtained results, in more detail than in the previous parts.

Box B.1: **Assisting HR business partners in aligning employee engagement studies with HR strategy** (*continued)*

In the last part methods are discussed for engaging both employees and managers in converting numbers into actions. This includes a discussion of different roles and stresses the importance of broad communication and follow-up. Overall, the importance of a long term perspective is stressed throughout the workshop: integrating employee engagement studies in defining HR and organizational targets, using them in benchmarking the evolution and further organizational development. This also assists in meaningful communication and avoids a one-shot approach that may be more harmful then helpful.

The Flemish Government aims for more in-depth analysis in future editions by adding more meaningful variables. For example, type of jobs is an interesting variable used throughout the HR systems of the Flemish government, but until now it has not been implemented in the engagement study. The target is to integrate this perception data with hard HR and organizational data (e.g. illness levels, exit rates …). The goal consists of bringing the HR graphs into business questions so it becomes clear what benefits are connected with leveraging employee engagement studies. In this way HR professionals in the Flemish government can really take up their role as HR business partners.

Source: Provided to the OECD by the Flemish Government.

Regarding co-ordination on Employment and Support Allowances, some progress has been made to assure better coordination, and collaboration agreements have been signed for the coordinated management of employment by the Galicia and Murcia and for the management of unemployment benefits by the State Public Employment Service. The "*Servicio Regional de Empleo y Formación*" from the Autonomous Community of Murcia is using the platform of the National System of Employment to disseminate its jobs offers, whereas Galicia has an integrated information system for management of job offers and employment applications and can interconnect and exchange data with the National System of Employment.

Substantial progress has been made for a more integrated and co-ordinated approach to **health care**. As has been outlined in the report above, interoperable electronic prescriptions, the implementation of the interoperable Clinical File and the creation of a national health card are 3 important measures where the active co-operation of the autonomous communities has been essential. These measures imply not only a connection with the national system, but also a better and more integrated co-ordination with other autonomous communities, which is still a major challenge in many other areas.

Murcia: The degree of implementation of **Interoperable Electronic Prescriptions** in Murcia is 100% for health centers and clinics; the extension to

hospitals has not yet begun. **Galicia:** Electronic prescriptions are required in more than 97% of cases (situations such as the transfer to other Autonomous Community or cases of household emergencies are an exception). The Galician Health Service has been incorporated into the project of interoperable electronic prescriptions in the National Health System.

In the same priority line, the Interoperable Clinical File is being implemented. In the case of Murcia, the Autonomous Community is connected to the system as transmitter and receiver: 100% of the clinical files in the region can be consulted through the system. The shared information includes: Medical History Summary Report, Outpatient Report, External Consultation, Emergency Report, and other test results. As for Galicia, it has joined almost all systems attached to the medical record systems, laboratory management, testing and even specific applications of certain welfare services, to integrate an enormous amount of care documentation for the benefit of patients. The Autonomous Community acts as transmitter and receiver of medical information.

The interoperability with the National Health System in Murcia is complete and the Autonomous Community is following the indications from the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality. As for Galicia, the measure has been accepted and it is expected that in approximately five years the process of changing to a uniform health card will be completed.

Conclusions: Strengths and challenges of the Spanish public sector reform at regional level

The particular characteristics of the decentralised model and the associated multilevel governance arrangements in Spain have meant that CORA measures have not only been approved in sectoral conferences but also require subsequent bilateral agreements with each region. This is the reason why the state of implementation and agreements may vary from one autonomous community to another depending on their individual, autonomous legislation and specificities.

On the whole, the measures assessed in this review (30 in total) show that all of them that have an impact on a regional level are being implemented with the support of the autonomous government of Galicia and Murcia.

Thus, Galicia and Murcia could take into consideration the following recommendations:

- Promote better interregional co-ordination and a more integrated approach, especially with neighbouring regions. Good practices such as

the ones between Murcia and Valencia on health care benefits are a good example that could be further enhanced by the national government.

- Sectoral Conferences should be the occasion for more a comprehensive exchange on the challenges and difficulties of public sector reform at the regional level.
- The suggested advisory body, which would be to deal with administrative reform, along with OPERA, could also contribute to the encouragement of this exchange of experiences and know-how in this process.
- Good governance also requires constant follow-up and consultation with the relevant stakeholders at the sectoral level, as well as an overall assessment on the reform. In order to ensure that this overall assessment is measurable and more efficient, it could be posed not only in terms of strategies abut also in terms of evaluation indicators with the national strategies on public sector reform, and it would be highly recommendable to undertake a comprehensive assessment such as the one CORA does to ensure good follow-up.
- As mentioned in chapter 2, mechanisms to ensure better accountability of autonomous communities to the Council of Transparency and Good Governance would be an asset in the consolidation of the newly created mechanisms.
- The initial CORA consultation mechanisms, with academics and experts as well as with civil society, are also essential for the consolidation of constant reform at the regional level, and they should include input and proposals from the territory. In that sense, autonomous communities could convene advisory Councils on an ad hoc basis to give input on regional needs on the ground, and they could meet and be consulted on a more regular basis.
- An open government approach at the local level could also be enhanced regarding autonomous public administration reform and bring administration closer to citizens.

Notes

1. According to Spanish National Institute of Statistics www.ine.es.
2. OECD Regional database.
3. http://www.contratosdegalicia.es/portada.jsp?lang=es.
4. www.carm.es/web/pagina?IDCONTENIDO=709&IDTIPO=140&RASTRO=c$m120,128 (accessed 2 January 2016).

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Annex C.
Key Well-Being Indicators on Galicia and Murcia

Galicia

Well-being in detail

Access to services

Galicia reaches **5.9** / 10 points in **Access to services.**

0 5 10

This puts the region in position **18** / 19 regions in Spain.

0 5 10

Compared across all OECD regions, the region is in the **bottom 29%** in **Access to services.**

bottom 20% median top 20%

Indicators

Households Broadband access: **59.3** %

Compare Spain to other countries

Civic Engagement

Galicia reaches **4.3** / 10 points in **Civic Engagement.**

0 5 10

This puts the region in position **15** / 19 regions in Spain.

0 10

Compared across all OECD regions, the region is in the **bottom 36%** in **Civic Engagement.**

bottom 20% median top 20%

Indicators

Voter turnout: **62.2** %

Compare Spain to other countries

Education

Galicia reaches **4.1** / 10 points in **Education.**

0 5 10

This puts the region in position **10** / 19 regions in Spain.

0 10

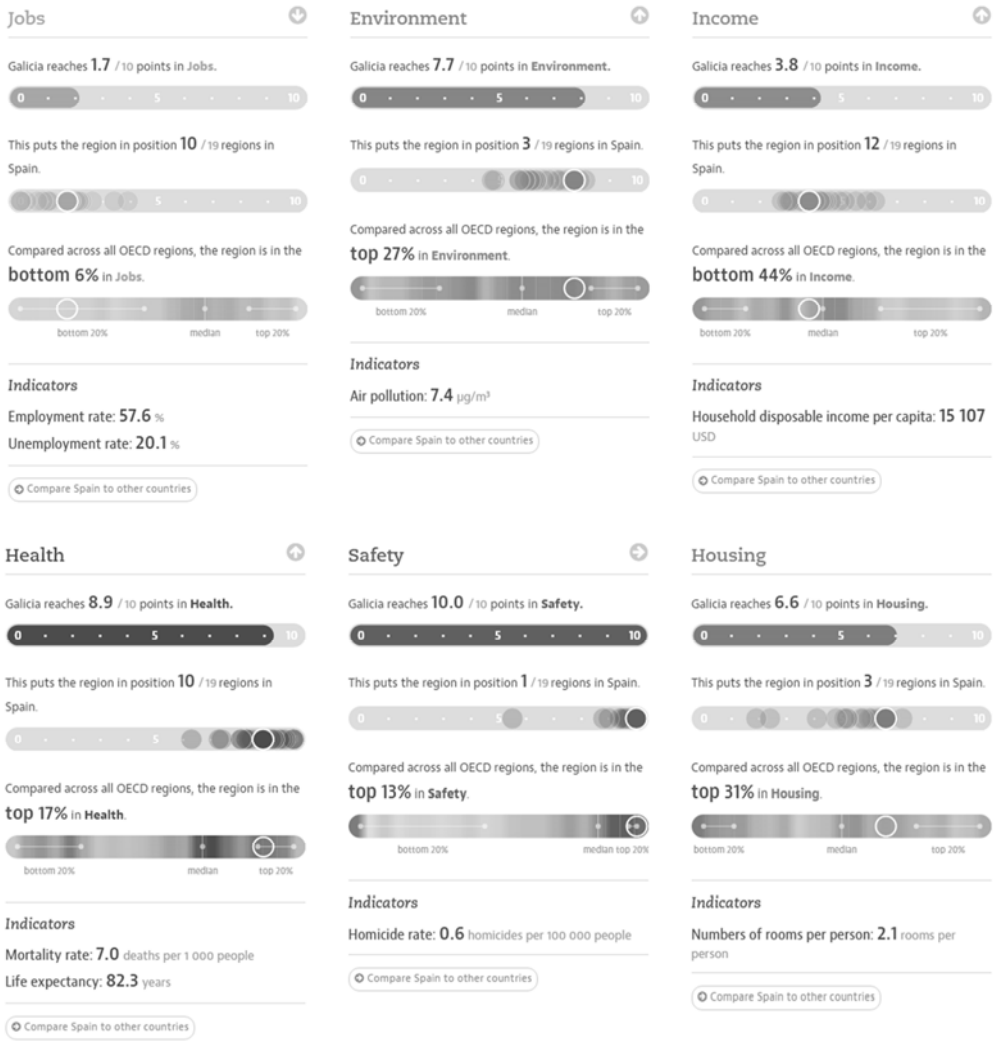
Compared across all OECD regions, the region is in the **bottom 20%** in **Education.**

bottom 20% median top 20%

Indicators

Share of labour force with at least secondary education: **56.4** %

Compare Spain to other countries



Source: OECD regional well-being, www.oecdregionalwellbeing.org.

Murcia

Well-being in detail

Access to services

Murcia reaches **6.5** / 10 points in **Access to services.**

This puts the region in position **11** / 19 regions in Spain.

Compared across all OECD regions, the region is in the **bottom 40%** in **Access to services.**

bottom 20% median top 20%

Indicators

Households Broadband access: **63.0** %

Compare Spain to other countries

Civic Engagement

Murcia reaches **6.8** / 10 points in **Civic Engagement.**

This puts the region in position **2** / 19 regions in Spain.

Compared across all OECD regions, the region is in the **top 35%** in **Civic Engagement.**

bottom 20% median top 20%

Indicators

Voter turnout: **74.1** %

Compare Spain to other countries

Education

Murcia reaches **3.1** / 10 points in **Education.**

This puts the region in position **15** / 19 regions in Spain.

Compared across all OECD regions, the region is in the **bottom 18%** in **Education.**

bottom 20% median top 20%

Indicators

Share of labour force with at least secondary education: **50.2** %

Compare Spain to other countries

Jobs

Murcia reaches **1.0** / 10 points in **Jobs.**

This puts the region in position **12** / 19 regions in Spain.

Compared across all OECD regions, the region is in the **bottom 4%** in **Jobs.**

bottom 20% median top 20%

Indicators

Employment rate: **53.5** %

Unemployment rate: **27.6** %

Compare Spain to other countries

Environment

Murcia reaches **5.9** / 10 points in **Environment.**

This puts the region in position **14** / 19 regions in Spain.

Compared across all OECD regions, the region is in the **top 50%** in **Environment.**

bottom 20% median top 20%

Indicators

Air pollution: **10.9** µg/m³

Compare Spain to other countries

Income

Murcia reaches **3.1** / 10 points in **Income.**

This puts the region in position **16** / 19 regions in Spain.

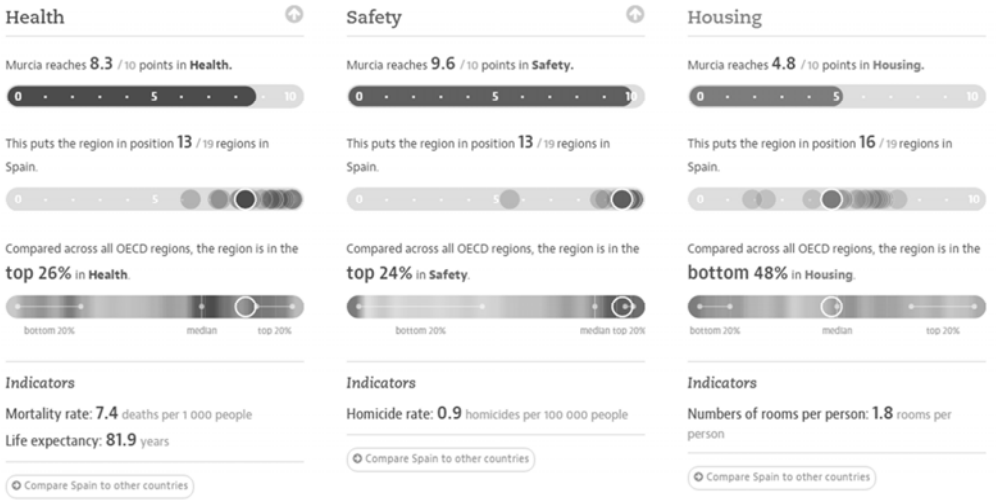
Compared across all OECD regions, the region is in the **bottom 35%** in **Income.**

bottom 20% median top 20%

Indicators

Household disposable income per capita: **13 241** USD

Compare Spain to other countries



Source: OECD regional well-being, www.oecdregionalwellbeing.org.

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