

Executive Summary

The Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance is divided into two parts:

- Part I: The Values and Enablers of Sound Public Governance
- Part II: Sound Public Governance for Policy Formulation, Implementation and Evaluation

Part I: The Values and Enablers of Sound Public Governance

The first part of this Framework presents the importance of key governance values in improving the way governments structure relations internally, with external stakeholders, and with citizens. It then provides an overview of enablers of sound public governance that governments can adopt to pursue effective, equitable decision-making and successful reforms.

The Values of Sound Public Governance

Governance is about meeting the needs of, and improving outcomes for, people. To this end, the OECD suggests building a values-based culture of public governance. While noting that governance values are shaped by a country's specific cultural traditions, the Framework highlights baseline practices in OECD countries that can generate a new culture of governance and orient public decision-making towards the common interest. The OECD pays special attention to:

- *Public sector integrity* as a critical component to prevent corruption, safeguard democratic institutions and guarantee the rule of law.
- *Openness and transparency* policies, as key ingredients to build accountability and trust, which include the accessibility of public information, the proactive disclosure of information and data, and a strategic approach to public communications.
- *Inclusiveness, participation, gender equality and diversity*, which contribute to the quality of democracy and help empower marginalised, disadvantaged and/or vulnerable groups.
- *Accountability and the respect for the rule of law*, which help ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of governments and public institutions, and strengthen citizens' trust. This includes effective and efficient justice systems.

The Enablers of Sound Public Governance

OECD work on public governance has demonstrated that leaders struggle to build “the business case” for engaging stakeholders in comprehensive reforms, which are often perceived as a means of reducing expenditures rather than of addressing policy challenges.

Despite sector-specific differences, the OECD Recommendations of the Council in the area of public governance reflect a common set of baseline enablers that can contribute to a better definition and implementation of reforms across government, including:

- *Commitment, vision and leadership*, both politically and in the civil service, to ensure the sustainability of reforms across the public sector.
- *Equitable and evidence-informed policy-making*, to prevent unbalanced interest-based influence while strengthening good governance in using evidence in decision-making.
- *Whole-of-government co-ordination*, notably but not exclusively led by the *centre of government*, to ensure a coherent, integrated approach to multidimensional challenges.
- *Innovation and change management* to introduce and implement new ideas by reinforcing the state's strategic agility and its forward-looking nature while enabling it to support society in transitioning to a better future.

Part II: Sound Public Governance for Policy Formulation, Implementation and Evaluation

Public governance also refers to the formulation, implementation, communication, and evaluation of government policies. The second part of the Framework presents how governments can shape policy-making at different stages of the policy cycle through the strategic use of policy instruments and management tools.

Toward sound policy formulation and design

While policy-making does not necessarily follow a linear path, the Framework provides guidance on management tools and policy instruments that can support policymakers once a policy challenge has been identified, defined, and framed to determine courses of action.

Evidence suggests that the following **management tools** can improve the quality of policy formulation and design. The Framework stresses the importance of:

- *Strategic planning* to translate political commitments and ambitions into strategies and action plans,
- *Skills for developing policy*, that combine traditional aptitudes with new skills in digital, open and innovative government,
- *Digital capacities* to enable collaboration and enhance transparency,
- *Use of data* to identify or anticipate societal needs and inform policy design.

Governments usually have three main **instruments** at their disposal to achieve their objectives: spending, taxation and regulation. Digital tools and public procurement also provide very powerful avenues for giving effect to policy measures. This chapter highlights the importance of:

- *Regulatory policy and governance* to ensure that regulations meet the desired objectives and new challenges as efficiently as possible.
- *Budgetary governance* to translate political commitments into decisions on what policies receive financing and how these resources are generated.

Toward sound policy implementation

The Framework assesses key determinants of successful policy **implementation** and underscores the importance of:

- Strengthening the *capacities and skills of public employees*,
- Strengthening *digital government strategies* to enable a more strategic use of government data,
- A well-designed *public procurement system*, which allows to use procurement as a strategic level of policy objectives,

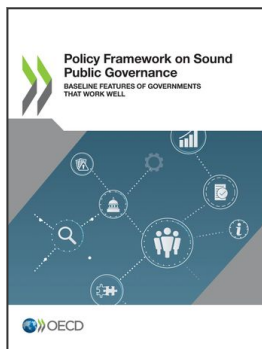
- *Public-private (PPPs) and public-civil partnerships*, to share policy implementation functions and service delivery,
- *Agile and innovative approaches*, to create feedback loops during the implementation and service delivery process,
- *A strategic approach to the implementation of the SDGs*.

Monitoring policy and governance **performance** is essential to ensure the proper implementation of public policies. Monitoring information can feed decision-making and improve performance, helping policymakers track progress and make adjustments when necessary. Monitoring can also promote accountability to stakeholders on issues such as the use of resources, internal processes, and the outputs of a policy. The Framework highlights that:

- OECD countries are increasingly focusing on *monitoring the alignment of policies* as well as their impact.
- *Monitoring the administration's financial performance and budget execution* can help governments assess the effectiveness of public spending against strategic objectives and adjust the allocation of financial resources.
- Many OECD countries *measure regulatory performance* and ensure regulatory compliance works through inspections.

Toward robust policy evaluation

Evaluating performance and policy results helps policymakers understand why some policies work and others do not. If the evidence produced is fed into the policy cycle, policy evaluations can optimise the value for money, accountability and transparency of the policy-making process, and provide legitimacy for the use of public funds and resources. The chapter shows the importance of building institutional frameworks for policy evaluation and promoting the quality and use of evaluation across government. It also highlights the relevance of conducting *ex-post regulatory reviews*, to ensure regulations in place are both relevant and adapted to their aims.



From:
Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance
Baseline Features of Governments that Work Well

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/c03e01b3-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2020), "Executive Summary", in *Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance: Baseline Features of Governments that Work Well*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/d91fb745-en>

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