OECD Public Governance Reviews

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM



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Slovak Republic: Developing a Sustainable Strategic Framework for Public Administration Reform

BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

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Foreword

This report is the third in a series of short thematic contributions under the *OECD Public Governance Reviews* programme, which provides countries with a diagnostic, actionable recommendations, capacity building and implementation support for key public governance issues. The series builds on practical advice and capacity-development activities provided by the OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate to countries undertaking reforms aimed at strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of their public administration. Along with the two other thematic reports in the series – *The Public Sector Salary System in Slovenia* (2012) and *Poland: Developing Good Governance Indicators for Programmes Funded by the European Union* (2013) – this report contributes to the development of a suite of hands-on approaches and methodologies that can prove particularly useful for countries developing and implementing practical actions towards improving the quality of the public administration.

The work underlying this report was led by Caroline Varley, with the encouragement and support of Rolf Alter and Martin Forst. Filippo Cavassini wrote the report. Robert Ball, Natalia Cerrato, Lilas Demmou, Zsuzsanna Lonti, Artur Radziwill and Daniel Trnka provided key contributions and comments. Christiane Arndt and Daniel Trnka were instrumental in developing and organising the workshop during which some of the themes included in this report were discussed and presented. Katarzyna Weil provided unique administrative and organisational support throughout the process. The report benefited from consultant contributions by Francisco Cardona and Heather McAllister.

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Abbreviations

COG	Centre of Government
CSO	Civil Service Office
ESF	European Social Fund
ESO	*Efektívna, spoľahlivá a otvorená (štátna správa)* Effective, reliable, open (state administration)
EU	European Union
HRM	Human resources management
RIA	Regulatory impact assessment

Executive summary

Collaboration will be a key factor for the success of public administration reform

The Slovak Republic is undertaking a comprehensive reform of its public administration to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of the public administration and support growth and development. The strong focus of the EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 on enhancing institutional capacity is providing an opportunity for supporting public administration reform that the government is rightly seizing.

Public administration reform will prove challenging for the Slovak public administration, which tends to be relatively fragmented and organised around strong ministerial silos. While sector ministries play a key role in developing policies and programmes that build on in-depth knowledge of the relevant policy areas, co-ordination and collaboration across ministries is essential to ensure that synergies across policy areas are fully exploited and duplication is avoided. The ESO Programme, the public administration reform programme launched by the Ministry of Interior in 2012, recognises the importance of stronger collaboration and seeks to rationalise the structure of the deconcentrated state administration. This approach seems sensible. A key success factor will be strong collaboration across ministries around the other strategies related to strengthening the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of the public administration. It will be equally crucial to ensure strong collaboration between a streamlined deconcentrated state administration and local self-governments to facilitate regional development and address increasing regional inequalities.

Collaboration around the reform can foster a whole-of-government approach that will positively impact the daily work of the government

The design and implementation of the reform of the public administration offers an opportunity to facilitate the emergence of an integrated public administration that supports a whole-of-government approach to public policies. This approach can promote the use of evidence-based policy making like regulatory impact assessment and simplification tools like e-government that can enhance the impact of public policies, reduce costs, facilitate the daily work of the public administration and enhance the quality of the services provided to citizens and businesses. Such effort needs to build on a clear role of the Centre of Government in steering strategies and policies, robust co-ordination mechanisms, a consolidated strategic framework that is better aligned with the budget, and systematic and robust monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of public policies.

The reform of human resources management is being recognised as a priority for supporting a whole-of-government approach

The ongoing human resources management (HRM) reform agenda offers opportunities to strengthen the quality and the performance of the central civil service. The ESO Programme recognises the importance of improving HRM as a key enabler for achieving growth and employment. It stresses the need for a more co-ordinated approach to HRM policies and stronger monitoring of HRM performance. Some initial performance indicators are identified, and the need to strengthen the professionalism of the civil service is recognised. The ESO Programme seeks to align human resources at the decentralised level with the needs and demands of citizens and businesses.

Plans are also under way to put in place the legal and institutional framework that can support the reforms envisaged in the ESO Programme. According to the Legislative Plan of the Government, the 2009 Law on Civil Service will be replaced by a new law that is expected to enter into force in 2015. The new law is expected to put in place the conditions for achieving and maintaining high professionalism through recruitment, selection and career growth based exclusively on abilities, knowledge and skills based on fair and open competition. Expertise and professionalism in the performance of the civil service will also be guaranteed by improving and upgrading civil servants' qualification and skills.

In addition, some HRM co-ordination functions will be strengthened. As of November 2013, responsibilities in the area of civil service employment relations and work performance were transferred from the Ministry of

Labour, Social Affairs and Family to the Government Office, the Slovak Republic's administrative structure serving the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers.

The challenges to the reform of human resources management need to be clearly recognised and addressed

Among the initiatives aimed at strengthening the management of human resources, the ESO Programme plans to improve the matching between skills and job requirements as a means of reducing the turnover of civil servants as a result of the political cycle. While improving matching can be a necessary step, it is unlikely to be sufficient to address the turnover issue, which usually also requires attention for the professionalism and independence of the civil service *vis-à-vis* the political leadership. In this respect, the development of a professional body of senior civil servants could be considered.

Among the initiatives aimed at strengthening analytical capacity, the ESO Programme intends to assess the performance of analytical centres, improve the way in which they co-operate and develop them where they do not exist. These are welcome steps. They should also be complemented by greater attention for the way in which policies are developed and implemented and the extent to which there is demand for objective and robust analysis in the policy-making process. Moreover, HRM reforms should not be seen merely as a way of downsizing the public workforce. A strong focus on serving citizens and achieving growth and employment objectives should preserve the capacity of the public workforce to attract and retain talent.

Introduction

An efficient and effective public administration is instrumental in fostering growth and well-being. However, improving the quality of the public administration rarely happens overnight or by ignoring the particular reality of each country. Any reform needs to take into consideration the often complex administrative, cultural, legal and political constraints that reformers face. Political will and ownership of reform design and implementation are essential ingredients for sustaining reform over time.

This report identifies the key elements to be considered for the development of a sustainable strategic framework for public administration reform and puts these elements in the Slovak Republic's administrative, cultural, legal and political context. The report deals with the central government, known in the Slovak Republic as the Central Bodies of the State Administration,[1] and focuses on:

- Centre of Government institutional structures to support the development and steering of the strategy, its implementation and monitoring and evaluation of progress
- co-ordination structures linking the key ministries and other Central Bodies of the State Administration involved in the Slovak Republic's public administration reform
- strategic planning processes, linked to budget management and processes, the use of performance information for budget allocation and allocation of resources to priority projects
- tools and processes for effective monitoring and evaluation of progress
- capacities of the central civil service for strategic planning, policy analysis and development, including the capacity of senior civil servants to produce and communicate robust and objective evidence for the development and implementation of public policies

- capacities of the central civil service to work directly with citizens and businesses, including the skills needed to serve citizens and business in one-stop shops
- institutional and legal building blocks that facilitate and support the development of these capacities.

This report is an input into the activities conducted by the Ministry of Interior and other Slovak authorities toward meeting the *ex ante* conditions, the fulfilment of which is necessary for financing public administration reform through the EU structural and investment funds for 2014-20. These conditions were spelled out in the European Council's Country Specific Recommendations to the Slovak Republic and in the Country Position Paper of the European Commission on the development of the Partnership Agreement and programme for the Slovak Republic for the period 2014-2020 (Annex A).

This report is based on a questionnaire prepared by the OECD and completed by the Slovak authorities over the summer 2013 (Annex B), existing OECD data and published sources, information provided by the Slovak authorities during a scoping mission to Bratislava in February 2013, as well as discussions at an interactive workshop organised by the OECD and the Ministry of Interior in Bratislava in December 2013.

Notes

1. The central administration includes the local administrations of the central government that have delegated powers but no legal autonomy *vis-à-vis* the central government (to be distinguished from the local self-government, like municipalities, that is not covered in this report). This report will refer to the local administrations of the central government as the deconcentrated central or state administration. On the structure of the central state administration see Act No. **575/2001** Coll. on Organisation of Governmental Activities and of Central State Administration of the Slovak Republic as amended.

Key messages and recommendations

Key messages

- Central government co-ordination: the transfer of some key horizontal responsibilities to the Government Office, the Slovak Republic's Centre of Government institution, has the potential to improve co-ordination; however, further improvements are needed. There is a wide network of advisory boards, usually attached to specific ministries; the line ministries lead on their policy areas and the Council of Ministers takes final decisions on key issues. This leaves a gap, where complex policies and reforms that cut across traditional ministerial lines of command need to be addressed more collectively before they can be put to the Council of Ministers.
- Strategic planning processes: ongoing efforts seek to set a planning horizon that goes beyond the electoral term of the government in office. However, some system and structure is needed. There is a range of processes for different purposes, including short and much longer term strategic plans, additional to the Programme Declaration of the Government. As line ministries are often in charge of these, timelines and methodologies can vary, which makes it particularly hard to align strategy with budget. Moreover, processes and institutions for ensuring the quality of impact assessment throughout the decision-making process are not yet well developed.
- Monitoring and evaluation: there are relatively large differences in the use of performance measurement across sectors. There is a tendency to focus on inputs and tasks rather than outputs and outcomes.
- Central civil service capacities: positive efforts have been made to improve analytical capacity through analytical centres in key ministries. However, capacity for data collection and use across government needs further attention. There is limited stability in management positions, which could significantly limit the capacity

of the civil service to provide independent and objective advice and ensure the sustainability and continuity of key public policies across electoral cycles.

- Institutional and legal aspects of human resources management: salary, recruitment, retention and dismissal of civil servants have been delegated to line ministers. However, delegation has not been accompanied by guidelines or an effective oversight body at the central level, which has created inconsistency and lack of clarity across the system. Ongoing efforts seek to address these shortcomings. At the end of 2013, HRM responsibilities were transferred from the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family to the Government Office. These responsibilities need to be clearly spelled out, in order to ensure effective central oversight. The new Civil Service Law that is expected to be prepared in 2014 can also offer an opportunity to enhance the stability, professionalism and neutrality of the civil service.

Key recommendations

- Establish co-ordination mechanisms and structures for collective decision making and follow-up on the execution of government decisions.
- Develop tangible incentives for collaborative work across government starting from the development of public policies through to their approval and implementation.
- Evaluate the staffing and organisational structure of the Government Office to facilitate co-operation with individual ministries.
- Enhance communication on policy and reform objectives across the public administration and proactively exchange information with parliament and local self-governments.
- Rationalise the strategic planning framework, focusing on fewer and higher level strategies to be based on high-level guiding principles.
- Strengthen the link with Europe 2020 and review the co-ordination between key institutional actors on EU affairs.
- Develop a systematic and realistic process for assessing the impact of new laws and regulations early in the decision-making process.

- Establish a government-wide monitoring and evaluation system, relying on individual ministries and some central steering, for example in the Government Office.
- Develop actionable indicators to track the achievement of policy objectives and use them to update political leaders on implementation progress and results.
- Consider the establishment of a professional cadre of senior civil servants.
- Spread analytical capacity across line ministries through analysts who are able to use data and evidence in the preparation of policy proposals.
- Strengthen the consistency of human resources management, paying special attention to recruitment and promotion processes and a salary system that is clear, simple, consistent and fair.
- Strengthen the capacity of the Centre of Government to establish clear and consistent human resources standards across the civil service and monitor their implementation.

Chapter 1

Developing a strategic framework for public administration reform in the Slovak Republic

This chapter identifies the key elements to be considered for the development of a comprehensive strategic framework for public administration reform. It first examines some of the key contextual aspects of public administration reform and presents the key strategies and policy initiatives aimed at reforming the public administration. It then moves on to assess Centre of Government institutional structures, inter-ministerial co-ordination mechanisms, strategic planning processes, and tools and institutions for effective monitoring and evaluation.

Key contextual aspects of public administration reform

Public administration reform comes at a crucial time for the Slovak Republic. Fiscal pressures and the need to consolidate public finances impose hard choices on public expenditures, while it becomes even more crucial to provide finances for key sectors which strengthen growth and employment, for example education, science, research, innovation and infrastructure. The public administration is thus confronted with the challenge of providing quality public services with fewer resources and becoming a source of strategic and evidence-based advice on the best policy options for the long-term development of the country.

To meet these challenges, the government is developing a comprehensive public administration reform programme that is expected to be partially supported through the EU Cohesion Policy over the period 2014-20. Reform needs to take into consideration the combination of historical, cultural, social and legal backgrounds that help determine the best policy for the Slovak Republic's needs and reality.

The fiscal context

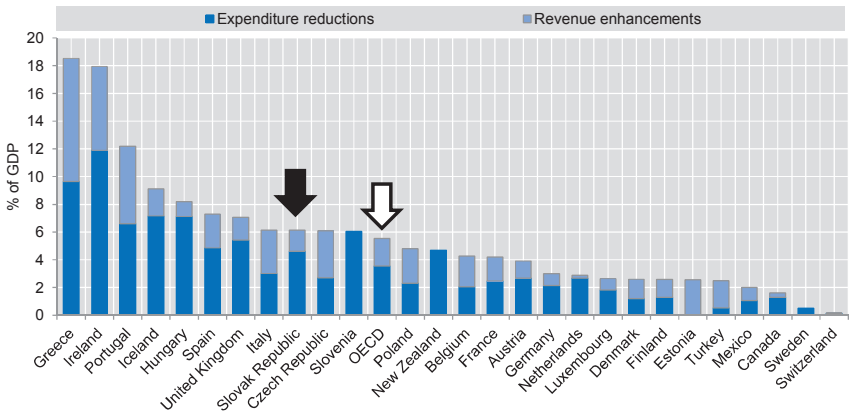
High budget deficits have created the need for fiscal consolidation. Deficit and debt rose significantly during the crisis. The budget balance saw a marked improvement in 2011. However, without additional policy interventions, general government debt would continue to increase rapidly. According to OECD estimates, stabilising debt at 50% of GDP in 2050 would require improving the underlying primary balance by 3%-5% of GDP, on top of the current consolidation efforts, from 2012 onwards, depending on assumptions on the future increases in pension and healthcare spending (OECD, 2012a: 18).[1]

Since 2009, the Slovak Republic has been subject to the Excessive Deficit Procedure under the EU Stability and Growth Pact, which requires corrective actions to reduce public deficit. In 2011, the government introduced new rules to strengthen fiscal discipline. An upper limit of 60% of GDP was set on general government debt until 2017, with graduated sanctions being phased in when the debt level exceeds 50% of GDP. From 2018 onwards, the debt bracket will be cut by 1 percentage point annually, until it reaches the final ceiling of 50% of GDP in 2028. In March 2012, the Slovak Republic also signed the EU Fiscal Compact, which introduces stricter fiscal surveillance (OECD, 2012a: 20).

Debt ceilings are putting constraints on fiscal policy. The government set a deficit target of 3% of GDP for 2013 (OECD, 2013a). For 2014, the headline deficit target was set at 2.8% of GDP (European Commission,

2013a). Deficit reduction is expected to rely heavily on expenditure reductions. Through 2015, the overall reduction in public expenditures is expected to amount to 4.6% of GDP, more than 1 percentage point above the OECD average of 3.5% of GDP (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1. **Expenditure-based and revenue-based fiscal consolidation as a percent of GDP (2009-15)**



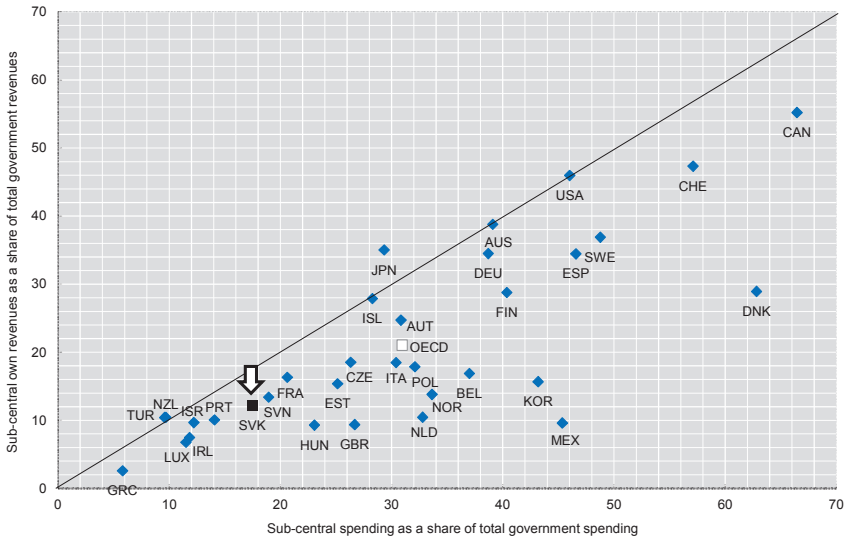
Note: Data are from the 2012 OECD Fiscal Consolidation Survey. The data are the sum of annual incremental consolidation from 2009/10 until 2015 as reported by the national authorities. Only the following countries reported consolidation in 2009: Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Poland and Slovenia. Hungary's 2007-08 consolidation is not included. Austria reports consolidation until 2016. The following participating countries have not reported an announced concrete consolidation plan and are not included in the figure: Japan, Korea and the United States. Australia reports consolidation (especially in 2013) but applies a broader definition of the term consolidation than in this survey. New Zealand and Slovenia have reported some revenue measures but they are not completely quantified.

Source: OECD (2013), *Government at a Glance 2013*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2013-en.

The institutional and legal context

The Slovak Republic is a unitary state with a relatively centralised system of governance. Revenue and spending powers are mostly concentrated within the central administration (Figure 1.2). Since 1990, central administration authorities and local self-government authorities operate in parallel. The local self-government authorities include municipalities and self-governing regions that, in addition to their self-governing tasks, also execute tasks delegated by the central administration.

Figure 1.2. **Sub-central government's share in general government revenues and expenditures (2011)**



Note: Data are from the *OECD National Accounts Statistics database*. Data for Chile are not available. Transfers between levels of government are excluded (with the exception of Australia, Japan and Turkey). For Canada and New Zealand, data refer to 2010. The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Source: OECD (2013), *Government at a Glance 2013*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2013-en.

Executive power is exercised by the government, which is comprised of the Prime Minister, deputy prime ministers and ministers. Within the central administration, ministries play a crucial role. They participate in the development of the unified state policy and their structure extends to the local level, where ministries manage a network of offices whose number and structure vary by sector and area of responsibility.

There is a relatively strong focus on compliance with procedural requirements. Administrative processes tend to be strictly regulated by primary or secondary legislation. General courts examine the lawfulness of public administration authorities' decisions as well as the lawfulness of decisions, measures or other acts of public bodies.

The regional context

Inequality in GDP per capita among the Slovak Republic's regions has increased over time. Inequality increased at a stronger pace from the early to the mid-1990s than it did from the mid-1990s to 2007. The increase of inequality in the Slovak Republic is driven by the Bratislava region (*Bratislavský kraj*) in the western part of the country, which outperforms the other regions, and by lagging regions in the eastern part of the Slovak Republic and the central part of the Slovak Republic falling further behind (OECD, 2011a).

Although *Bratislavský kraj* produces one fourth (24.6%) of the national GDP, due to its faster growth, it contributed a larger proportion to national GDP growth (32.6%) over the past decade. The lagging regions in the eastern and central Slovak Republic fell further behind in their respective GDP per capita levels by growing at a slower pace (3.6% and 3.5% respectively) than the national average (4.2%). The GDP per capita of the eastern Slovak Republic fell from 18% below the national average in 1990 to 27% below the average in 2007, and that of the central Slovak Republic fell from 6% below the national average in 1990 to 20% below it in 2007 (OECD, 2011a).

Public administration reform strategies

The Ministry of Interior has launched a reform of the public administration, known as the ESO Programme,[2] which aims at supporting an effective, reliable and open public administration. The ESO Programme includes a strong focus on improving the delivery of administrative services, with a view of strengthening quality and access in a cost-effective way.

The ESO Programme is being implemented in phases. The first and second phases, rolled out in the course of 2012 and 2013, focused on the integration of specialised deconcentrated offices of the central administration, which were consolidated into single local state offices responsible for most functions carried out by the central administration. These phases are expected to be followed by additional merging and rationalisation of deconcentrated functions, the establishment of one-stop shops for providing access to administrative services to citizens and businesses, and the optimisation of processes and structures of the central administration (Box 1.1).

Box 1.1. **Objectives, scope and implementation of the ESO Programme**

The goals of the ESO Programme are to:

- increase the efficiency and quality of the central administration's processes
- increase the transparency and accessibility of services and reduce red tape for citizens and businesses
- introduce new methods of managing the central administration
- simplify, integrate and establish more transparent structures of the deconcentrated central administration through single points of contact (i.e. one-stop shops).

The ESO Programme covers the entire central administration and 613 local state administration authorities/offices.

Since 1 January 2013, implementation of the 1st phase of the ESO Programme has resulted in:

- the cancellation of 64 regional offices from 3 central administration institutions, 71 budgetary organisations and 3 contributory organisations
- the establishment of 8 regional and 42 district level support offices, providing all the necessary supporting tasks for related regions (asset management, accounting, human resources management, information and communication technologies, and facility management).

Since 1 October 2013, implementation of the 2nd phase of the ESO Programme has resulted in:

- The cancellation of additional specialised local bodies of the state administration.
- The creation of district offices (72) and the integration of cancelled specialised local bodies of the state administration into these offices. The scope of responsibilities of the district offices includes:
  - general agenda (birth register, trade licensing, citizens registry, offences, etc.)
  - environmental agenda
  - infrastructure, transport
  - land and forestry
  - cadastre
  - schools, education.

Box 1.1. **Objectives, scope and implementation of the ESO Programme** (*cont.*)

During these two phases of the ESO Programme, approximately 5 000 civil servants were transferred into the integrated district offices.

Implementation of the ESO Programme is expected to continue through 2020 focusing on:

- further integration of the deconcentrated offices of the central administration (2013-16)
- opening of one-stop shops for citizens and businesses (2014-15)
- optimisation of processes and structures of the central administration .

Source: Information provided by the Ministry of Interior, February 2013.

In addition to the ESO Programme, public administration reform is guided by other strategic documents, which stem in part from EU strategies and policies, including the Europe 2020 Strategy. These strategic documents include:

- National Reform Programme of the Slovak Republic 2013
- Strategic Framework of Public Administration Reform in the Slovak Republic
- Via Knowledge to Prosperity – research and innovation strategy for smart specialization of the Slovak Republic
- National Quality Programme of the Slovak Republic for the period 2013-2016
- Strategy for Informatisation of the Public Administration
- National Concept of Public Administration Informatisation
- National Strategy of Information Safety in the Slovak Republic
- Lifelong Learning Strategy 2011.

Centre of Government institutional structures

An effective Centre of Government (COG) is essential for steering policy development and implementation. It can help overcome ministerial and departmental silos that thwart co-operation and create wasteful duplication of policies and institutions. A well-functioning COG helps

sustain a comprehensive long-term vision, manage risks and crises, and ensure that reforms are widely agreed across government and effectively implemented. It has a key role in communicating on reforms, securing support and monitoring that reforms are implemented (Box 1.2).

Box 1.2. **What is the Centre of Government?**

The term Centre of Government refers to the administrative structure that serves the executive (President or Prime Minister, and the Cabinet collectively). It does not include other units, offices or commissions (e.g. offices for sport or culture) that may report directly to the President or Prime Minister but are, effectively, carrying out line functions that might equally well be carried out by line ministries.

Source: OECD (2013), OECD 2013 Centre of Government Survey, OECD, Paris.

Centre of Government institutions and co-ordination

COG functions tend to be shared across a number of institutions. The Government Office of the Slovak Republic is the central state administration body responsible for overseeing and co-ordinating the performance of tasks in the central administration. The Government Office is also responsible for the co-ordination of horizontal policies and strategies, including:

- anti-corruption policy
- EU strategy for the Danube Region
- European investment and Structural Funds
- national implementation of the EU's Europe 2020 Strategy.

Ministries play a lead role in their respective areas of responsibility. These responsibilities are set by the Competence Act and the daily work at the centre is regulated through administrative documents, including decrees, methodological instructions and rules of procedure. The Programme Declaration of the Government defines the government's main priorities for the respective electoral term and assigns responsibility for identifying policies, priorities, and managing and monitoring initiatives to individual ministers and heads of other state administration authorities. The individual ministries develop policies and priorities for approval by the government and/or by parliament in accordance with the government's main priorities, long-term strategies or international obligations and their own analyses.

There are a number of permanent or *ad hoc* committees, groups and bodies at the political and/or expert levels, which are expected to ensure co-operation and exchange of information across ministries and other state administration bodies. These bodies tend to involve stakeholders outside government and tend to have an advisory rather than an executive function (Box 1.3). For example, the Council of the Government for the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 is chaired by the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic and co-ordinates the preparation for the Partnership Agreement of the Slovak Republic for the period 2014-2020, which is a strategic document for using EU common strategic framework funds to guide the implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the Slovak Republic. The council recommends ways of reaching thematic targets, priorities and measures for the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy and makes recommendations on the preparation of the operational programmes for 2014-20. Council members include all members of government, the Head of the Government Office, the Chairman of the Board of Advisors of the Prime Minister, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for European Affairs and representatives from a number of civil society organisations.

Box 1.3. **Selected advisory bodies**

- Accreditation Commission
  - It monitors, assesses and evaluates independently the quality of educational, research, development, artistic and other creative activities of universities and assists in increasing them.
  - Its chairman is appointed by the government on the recommendation of Minister of Education and after comments from bodies representing the universities; it includes prominent personalities from universities, professional and academic institutions, including foreign experts.
- Council of the Government for Science, Technology and Innovations
  - Standing expert, initiative and co-ordination body of the government in the area of science, technology and innovation, including innovations in the area of wood production and processing, forest management, biotechnologies, the food processing industry, construction products and innovations in healthcare and agriculture.
  - The Prime Minister is the Chairman of the council. The Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport; the Minister of Finance; the Minister of Economy and the Chairman of the Slovak Academy of Science are deputy chairpersons and members of the presidency of the council. Members also include several other related ministers (Health, Agriculture, etc.) and representatives of scientific research, universities as well as the business sector.

Box 1.3. **Selected advisory bodies** (*cont.*)

- Council of the Government for Vocational Education and Preparation
  - Advisory board of the government in the area of vocational education and preparation. It prepares opinions and proposals of measures for the government in the area of vocational education.
  - Chaired by the Minister of Education, the council's management consists of a representative of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family; a representative of self-governing regions; a representative of trade and professional organisations and a representative of trade unions.
- Council of the Government for Support of Export and Investments
  - Advisory, co-ordination and initiative body of the government in the area of state support of international trading and economic co-operation and presentation abroad, with the priority target to support the export and inflow of foreign investment.
  - Co-chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Economy, it includes the Deputy Prime Minister for Investment; the Minister of Finance; the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family; the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development; the Minister of Transport, Construction and Regional Development; the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Development; the Minister of Culture; the Managing Director of Eximbank; the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce; the Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Association of Employer's Unions and Associations; the Vice-President of the Republican Union of Employers; the Chairman of the 500 Club; the Rector of the University of Economics in Bratislava; and the Chairman of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.
- Economic and Social Council
  - Advisory and conciliation body of the government and social partners at the national level.
  - Chaired by the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, it includes seven representatives appointed by the government, seven representatives appointed by associations of employers, seven representatives appointed by associations of trade unions.
- Legislative Council of the Government
  - Standing advisory and co-ordination body of the government in the area of legislation; it discusses and assesses legal regulation proposals submitted at the government meeting.
  - Chaired by the Minister of Justice, its members are appointed and recalled by the government on the recommendation of the chairman.

Box 1.3. **Selected advisory bodies** (*cont.*)

- Council of the Government for Non-Governmental and Non-Profit Organisations
  - Standing expert, advisory, co-ordination and consultation body of the government in the area of non-governmental, non-profit organisations that include in particular civil associations, foundations, non-profit organisations providing public services, non-investment funds and interest groups of legal entities and in the area of the civil society development in the Slovak Republic.
  - Chaired by the Minister of Interior. Vice-chairmen include: the State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, the State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a government authorised representative for the development of civil society, the Chairman of the Chamber for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations. The Council of the Government consists of two independent chambers. One chamber is made up of state secretaries of the individual ministries of the government and other members appointed by the government; the other chamber is made up of representatives of platforms of non-governmental, non-profit organisations.
- Interdepartmental Co-ordination Council for Preparation of the Presidency of the Slovak Republic in the Council of the European Union 2016
  - The Co-ordination Council is the advisory, expert and initiative body of the government for issues concerning the preparation for the presidency of the Slovak Republic in the Council of the European Union in 2016.
  - Chaired by the relevant state secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the vice-chairmen include: the Head of the Government Office; the State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance; the State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior. It is composed of state secretaries of other ministries.

Source: OECD Slovak Republic questionnaire developed for this report, August 2013.

The government has started to consolidate and enhance the co-ordinating functions of the COG. Since 1 April 2013, the Government Office of the Slovak Republic has the task of co-ordinating the use of EU Structural and Cohesion Funds. In addition, as of 1 November 2013, an amendment to the Competence Act also transfers responsibilities in the area of civil service relations and legal relations during work performance in the public interest from the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family to the Government Office. Details of the structures and mechanisms that will allow the Government Office to carry out these responsibilities were being defined at the time of writing.

Assessment

The current central government co-ordination and decision-making system need to be strengthened. There is a wide network of advisory boards, usually attached to specific ministries; line ministries lead on their policy areas and the Council of Ministers makes final decisions on key issues. This decision-making system leaves a gap, where multifaceted, and especially complex, policies and reforms cut across traditional ministry lines of command and need to be addressed more collectively before they can be put to the Council of Ministers.

The transfer of some key horizontal responsibilities, like the co-ordination of EU Structural and Cohesion Funds, to the Government Office has the potential to better exploit synergies across government and reduce potential overlapping. To maximise the impact of the reform, however, this transfer of responsibilities needs to factor in the institutional structures and established working practices within the Slovak government, which has tended to put an emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of the individual ministries.

Issues that will need particular attention include:

- Co-ordination mechanisms: the advisory bodies that are currently in place offer an opportunity for consulting across government and with stakeholders outside government; their work could be leveraged and enhanced by appropriate structures that facilitate collective decision making and follow up on execution within the government.
- EU funds: the Council for the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 provides an important platform to facilitate co-ordination and co-operation in the development and implementation of projects and programmes financed through EU Structural and Cohesion Funds and ensure that funds are used to meet strategic objectives. It will be crucial to ensure that the council remains operational beyond the preparation of the Partnership Agreement and its role and functions are aligned with the new role of the Government Office with respect to EU funds.
- COG structure and staffing: the Government Office's organisational structures and staffing would need to be carefully evaluated to determine the extent to which they fit its new responsibilities; attention could be given to organisational models and human resources policies that facilitate to the extent possible co-operation with individual ministries, including the secondment and periodic

rotation of ministry staff within the Government Office. Nordic countries like Estonia, Finland and Sweden could provide useful lessons and experiences.

Co-ordination structures linking the key ministries involved in the Slovak Republic's public administration reform

Public policies usually address needs that cut across the traditional ministerial areas of responsibility. Effective and efficient policies tend to build on a "whole-of-government" approach that ensure that all resources are mobilised and tasks are appropriately shared across ministries through strong co-ordination and collaboration. The development and implementation of policies that are developed and implemented at the central level requires co-ordination and collaboration not only across ministries at the central level, but also at the local level, where the deconcentrated central administration and self-governments often share responsibilities for delivering public services and are closer to the citizens whose needs and expectations governments serve (Box 1.4).

Box 1.4. **What is whole-of-government?**

Whole-of-government approaches are associated with a desire to ensure the horizontal and vertical co-ordination (joint or shared information ensured by information flows among organisations) and collaboration (joint action and a structured relationship between organisations) of government activity in order to improve policy coherence, better use resources, promote and capitalise on synergies and innovation that arise from a multi-stakeholder perspective, and provide seamless service delivery to citizens and businesses.

Whole-of-government requires government bodies, regardless of type or level, to work across portfolio boundaries to achieve shared goals and to provide integrated government responses to policy issues. Such an approach applies to both formal and informal working methods, and to the development, implementation and management of policies, programmes and service delivery. A capacity to genuinely collaborate fundamentally enables a public administration to be more responsive to the needs of government and citizens.

The term whole-of-government applies to both central and sub-national (regional and local) levels and policy sectors. It also includes the relationship between government and external actors.

Source: OECD (2011), *Estonia: Towards a Single Government Approach*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264104860-en.

Horizontal co-ordination and collaboration

Requirements for horizontal co-ordination and collaboration are defined in government plans and resolutions. For example, the Plan of Work of the Government or the Plan of Legislative Tasks of the Government may define the responsible central authority and collaborating central authorities for specific binding tasks. In addition, government resolutions, conclusions of advisory bodies and the Programme Declaration of the Government may require collaboration and co-ordination among ministries.

Both informal and formal mechanisms are used for co-ordination and collaboration among ministries. Informal mechanisms include informal negotiations, standing working groups and *ad hoc* groups. Formal mechanisms include agreements, protocols, contracts and memoranda on collaboration. For example, there is an agreement between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Finance on collaboration and mutual relations.

To help co-ordinate the implementation of public administration reform, the government has created a Steering Committee responsible for co-ordinating public administration reform. The purpose of the Steering Committee is to co-ordinate the implementation of public administration reform and address obstacles and resistance to reform (Box 1.5).

The OECD questionnaire completed by the Slovak authorities for the preparation of this report points to a number of challenges to facilitate horizontal co-ordination and collaboration, including:

- insufficient acceptance of the co-ordinating function of a Centre of Government institution and lack of incentives to facilitate co-ordination and collaboration
- a high level of bureaucratization and a low level of responsiveness between individual central government institutions
- limited ability to enforce agreements
- unclear legislation and non-uniform interpretation by various public administration authorities.

Vertical co-ordination and collaboration

Public administration in the Slovak Republic is based on a separated or dual model of public administration, with the system of state administration authorities (ministries and other central bodies of the state administration, deconcentrated state administration) operating in parallel to the system of

local self-government authorities (municipalities and self-governing regions) which, in addition to self-governing tasks, also perform tasks delegated to them by the state administration.

Box 1.5. **Steering Committee for the co-ordination of public administration reform**

The tasks and responsibilities of the Steering Committee include:

- co-ordinating the implementation of tasks aimed to ensure the reform of the public administration
- ensuring the co-ordination and preparation of materials, background documents, opinions and other outputs resulting from the implementation of tasks related to public administration reform
- considering, where appropriate, conclusions, opinions, proposals of measures or recommendations for further action resulting from the work of expert working groups and other working bodies of individual ministries or other central state administration bodies and submitting its views and comments on them
- ensuring the elaboration and dissemination of the outputs of the Steering Committee
- discussing disputed matters, which are the subject of interdepartmental co-ordination in the context of ensuring the fulfilment of public administration reform tasks
- proposing systemic and other measures in order to eliminate shortcomings for fulfilling tasks arising from the implementation of public administration reform.

The Steering Committee is composed of representatives of the Ministries of Interior; Transport, Construction and Regional Development; Education, Science, Research and Sport; Labour, Social Affairs and Family; Finance; Economy; Health; Environment; Justice; Agriculture; Foreign and European Affairs; Culture; Defence; the Office of Public Procurement; the Government Office of the Slovak Republic; the Office of Geodetics and Cadastre; the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma communities; the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for the development of civil society; the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Slovak Republic; the Union of Regional Territories SK8; the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Investments; the Government Office of the Slovak Republic.

The Steering Committee is chaired by the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Interior, with the Director General of the Public Administration Section of the Ministry of Interior as the Vice-Chairman and a secretary from the Ministry of Interior. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and members of the Steering Committee are appointed and recalled by the Minister of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

Source: Government of the Slovak Republic (2013), "Government Resolution Nr. 388 (10 July 2013)".

Challenges identified by the Slovak authorities in the OECD questionnaire for strengthening vertical co-ordination and collaboration include:

- frequent changes in objectives, strategies and priorities of top management related to changes in the political environment
- inability to transfer all necessary information to local state administration authorities (limited staff training and experience performing such responsibilities) within the required time lines for the introduction of changes
- unclear definition of powers in areas falling under the competence of more than one sector
- insufficient communication and knowledge transfer.

Co-ordination of EU-related policy

Responsibility for the co-ordination of key strategic EU initiatives is shared across a number of ministries and roles. For example:

- The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs is responsible for the co-ordination of positions in negotiating on the EU legislation.
- The Ministry of Justice, the Government Office, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs are responsible for co-ordinating the Slovak Republic's transposition of EU legislation.
- The Ministry of Finance is responsible for co-ordinating the preparation of the National Reform Programme, including its evaluation as well as for the preparation of the Stability Programme in relation to the Europe 2020 Strategy.
- The function of the Deputy Prime Minister for Investment has been established for the co-ordination of large investment projects and use of EU resources in the programming period 2014-20.

The OECD questionnaire completed by the Slovak authorities identifies a number of challenges to strengthen the co-ordination of EU-related policy, including:

- processes for the development of opinions on proposals of EU legislative acts need to be more effective, better arranged or simpler; long-term absence of an electronic information system for monitoring and creating positions on legislative and non-legislative acts of the EU

- absence of methodologies or directions specifying duties and competencies of the central authorities of the state administration and other bodies result in the decrease of efficiency during the performance of assigned tasks
- frequent changes in co-ordination procedures and rules.

Assessment

Co-ordination and collaboration arrangements are subject to frequent changes and even when formal mechanisms are put in place, participation and implementation tend to be elusive. Communication is limited across ministries and government institutions and there seems to be an excessive focus on formal processes rather than the outcomes and results of co-ordination and collaboration efforts.

The establishment of a Steering Committee to facilitate the co-ordination of public administration reform across government is a positive step in creating a mechanism for cross-governmental collaboration around a genuinely horizontal policy like public administration reform. The Steering Committee could also help ensure that the implementation of the different strategies that support the reform of the public administration maximise potential synergies and minimise the risk of duplication. The Steering Committee could be a tool for effectively designing and implementing reform across government, if decisions of the committee are owned and communicated across the public administration.

Establishing and running one-stop shops, which is a key component of the Slovak Republic's public administration reform, will also require strong co-ordination across the public administration and the existence of streamlined and simplified administrative processes to improve the quality of the services provided to citizens and businesses. Some of the challenges related to the design and implementation of one-stop shops were discussed at a seminar for central government officials jointly organised in Bratislava by the OECD and the Slovak Ministry of Interior. Annex C presents a preliminary assessment of the challenges and actions for strengthening the planning and management of one-stop shops and improving mapping and administrative simplification.

Issues that will need particular attention include:

- Communicating effectively across government: there is a need for enhancing communication on policy and reform objectives across the public administration; e-government tools like an intranet government portal with regular updates can support communication; these tools need to be complemented by an effort to proactively

exchange information not only across the executive but also with parliament and local self-governments.

- Embedding co-ordination and collaboration into the daily government business: even when formal and informal mechanisms for co-ordination are in place, they tend to focus more on accomplishing formal procedures than on agreeing on actions and proactively following up on implementation. There is a need for assessing the extent to which incentives could be put in place for facilitating collaborative work across government through the entire policy cycle, starting from the early development of policies to their approval and implementation.
- Steering and leading public administration reform: the Steering Committee includes representatives from different ministries, which is an important asset. A shared leadership with a more direct involvement of other ministries with a particular stake in public administration reform could help enhance ownership of public administration reform and facilitate implementation. At a more technical level, the Steering Committee could also address implementation issues and take a proactive role in solving cross-ministerial obstacles and problems that could emerge.
- COG role: a clear role for the Centre of Government in contributing to steer and lead reform is essential to ensure a "helicopter view" across different policy streams, including but not exclusively, on those policy initiatives directly related to public administration reform.

Strategic planning processes

Effective strategic planning is key to identify present and future challenges and opportunities, set a course for the country, and align resources and capacities within and outside government with this course of action. Effective planning starts with shared visions and strategies that set strategic objectives to guide policies and programmes. Solid evidence informs strategies and policies to maximise impact. Performance information helps allocate resources according to implementation progress and priorities.

Visions and strategies

The Programme Declaration of the Government identifies key strategic objectives that are the basis for government policies for the term of office of the government. In addition, individual ministries are responsible for a number of medium- to long-term strategies that go beyond the term of office

of the government. Visions and strategies are cascaded to policies through national action programmes, concepts and action plans (Box 1.6).

Box 1.6. **Selected medium- and long-term strategies by ministerial portfolio**

Agriculture and Rural Development

- Concept of agricultural development for 2007-13 and for 2013-20
- Concept of food development for 2014-20 (under preparation)

Economy

- Innovation strategy 2007-13 (7 years)
- Innovation policy for 2008-10 and for 2011-13 (3 years)
- Evaluation of possibilities of directing and conditions of developing the industrial production after 2013 (7 years)
- Energy policy for the period until 2020 and with an outlook until 2030

Education, Science, Research and Sport

- Long-term plan of the state scientific and technical policy until 2015 (strategy Fénix) – 8 years
- Long-term plan in the educational, research, development, artistic and other creative activities for the area of universities until 2014 – within 5 years
- National programme of upbringing and education for the next 15-20 years

Environment

- National Environmental Action Programme I (NEAP I, II, III) – planning horizon until 2020 with an outlook until 2030
- Orientation, principles, priorities and main tasks of the care of the environment, 2014-20
- Concept of water management policy until 2015
- Concept of using hydro-energetic potential of water courses until 2030
- Concept of geological research and survey of the territory of the Slovak Republic for 2012-16 with an outlook until 2020
- Concept of nature and landscape preservation, 2006-15
- Waste management strategy until 2020

Box 1.6. **Selected medium and long-term strategies by ministerial portfolio** (*cont.*)

Finance

- Plan of reforms for the nearest three years in the Slovak Republic presented in the National Programme of Reforms of the Slovak Republic 2013
- Strategic document for the field of digital services growth and the field of next generation access network infrastructure (2014-20)

Foreign and European Affairs

- Medium-term strategy for 2009-13 and for 2014-18
- Other strategic documents drawn up on an *ad hoc* basis: for example, the medium-term strategy of foreign policy until 2015

Interior

- Public administration reform, 2012-16 (5 years)

Justice

- Strategic and conceptual materials related to the prison service (updated concept on prison service in the Slovak Republic for the period 2011-20), to the reform of the judiciary (concept on modernisation and stabilisation of the judiciary), to the recodification of civil law and amendment of various legal regulations falling under the competence of the Ministry of Justice for the period until 2020

Labour, Family and Social Affairs

- National Programme of Active Ageing for 2014-20 (for a 7-year period), approved on 4 December 2013

Transport, Construction and Regional Development

- Transport policy of the Slovak Republic until 2015 and Strategy of Transport Development of the Slovak Republic until 2020 together with the strategy of increasing road transport safety – planning horizon of 10 years
- Preparation and construction of motorways, motor roads and first-class roads – planning horizon of 4 years
- Post office policy until 2014 – planning horizon of 4 years
- Strategy of tourism development until 2020
- National strategy for a wide-range approach – planning horizon of 10 years
- Housing construction concept until 2015 – planning horizon of 5 years

Source: OECD Slovak Republic questionnaire developed for this report, August 2013.

Evidence-based decision making

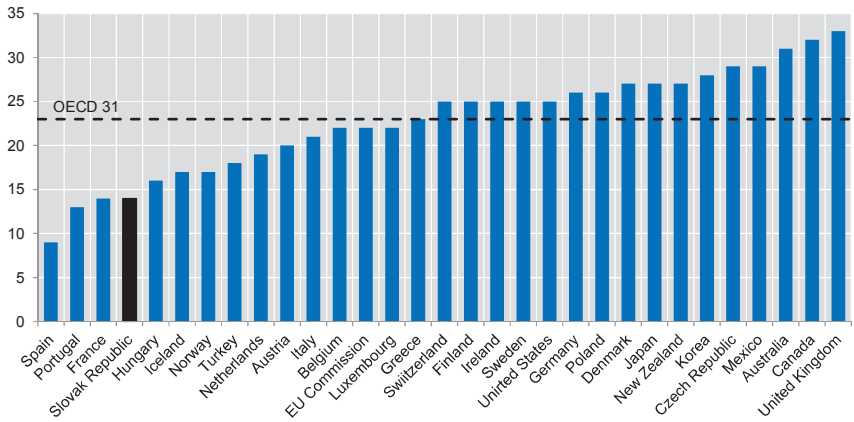
There are formal requirements for conducting an impact assessment of proposed legislation as defined by the *Directive on the preparation and submission of documents for government sessions*. The directive stipulates that all legislative and non-legislative documents which are submitted to the government of the Slovak Republic for negotiation need to include a "clause of impacts" that identifies the effect of the proposed policy on public expenditures and the business environment, as well as on society, the environment and the development of information technology. Act No. 24/2006 Coll. on Environment Impact Assessment requires assessing the impact of strategic documents on the environment in the areas of agriculture, forestry, fishery, industry, energy, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, territorial planning and regional development.

Impact assessment is currently being carried out on the basis of a methodology developed by the Ministry of Economy. Impact assessments accompany legislative and non-legislative proposals and are reviewed by the Ministry of Economy (for impacts on the business environment), the Ministry of Finance (for impacts on the public administration budget and on the informatisation of society), the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (for social impacts) and the Ministry of Environment (for environmental impacts). Institutions and processes supporting the development of comprehensive impact assessment legislation show, however, signs of formalism in many cases. In addition, there is no independent body evaluating the quality of RIAs. Moreover, there is no mechanism like a threshold test that helps single out policy proposals that are likely to have a high economic, social and environmental impact and therefore deserves a particular in-depth assessment. As a consequence, resources and capabilities for conducting impact assessment are less likely to be allocated efficiently (Figure 1.3).

Strengthening the capacity for conducting analysis and producing and using data to inform policy proposals is recognised as a priority. A key component of the current public administration reform is focused on strengthening the analytical capacities of central government institutions. The objective is to have, at a minimum, analytical units in all economic and social ministries as well as at the Government Office of the Slovak Republic. An analytical centre roadmap has been developed to guide the strengthening process, which includes the following elements:

- review of existing analytical centres
- development of analytical centres where they do not exist

Figure 1.3. **Requirements for regulatory impact assessment processes used by central governments (2008)**



Note: The score shows the extent to which formal RIA requirements are aligned with best practice principles; a high score signals a high degree of alignment with best practice principles. Formal RIA requirements include whether an RIA is carried out before new regulation is adopted, at what stage an RIA is prepared, whether there is a government body reviewing the RIA, the existence of a threshold test and guidance on the preparation of RIA, the existence of *ex post* comparisons of predicted impacts and an assessment of the effectiveness of RIA.

Source: OECD (2008), OECD Regulatory Management Systems' Indicators Survey 2008, Question 10, OECD, Paris, www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory-policy/indicators-rms.htm.

- implementation of a system of performance evaluation of analytical centres, with a special emphasis on linking objectives to the Europe 2020 strategy in the context of the Slovak Republic
- establishment of control over the activities of the analytical centres
- creation of a system to support the collection of valuable data and analysis for the purpose of disaster prevention and work closely with analytical centres of public administration to exchange information and experiences.

Alignment of strategic planning with the budget

The alignment of the budget with strategic objectives identified in the national strategies is supported by the European fiscal rules, the Stability and Growth Pact and political decisions. The Slovak Republic has also made efforts to increase the multi-year horizon of the budget and base the budget

on realistic economic forecasts. The medium-term strategic objectives for the budget are set in accordance with the Stability Programme for the following three years. Revenues and expenditures forecasts that inform the budget are prepared by the Institute for Financial Policy of the Ministry of Finance. The institute has a good track record in preparing good quality and objective analysis, and forecasts are vetted by two independent bodies, the Macroeconomic Forecasting Committee and the Tax Policy Committee.[3] Some elements of programme budgeting have also been introduced for the preparation of the state budget.

The OECD questionnaire completed by the Slovak authorities points to some key challenges to better align the strategic planning framework with the budget. These challenges include:

- the lack of a central co-ordination department for strategic planning that would have close interconnection to the individual ministries and to the Ministry of Finance and its Institute for Financial Policy, in order to better align budget implementation at the ministerial level with strategic objectives and budgetary allocations set centrally
- limited availability of data and indicators
- lack of monitoring departments within each ministry to make more extensive use of data in the preparation of the strategies and budget.

Assessment

Effort is being made to set a planning horizon that goes beyond the electoral term of the government in office. However, this effort appears to be in need for some systematization and structure. There is a range of processes for different purposes, including short- and much longer term strategic plans, additional to the Programme Declaration of the Government. As line ministries are often in charge of these processes, timelines and methodologies can vary, and the system is generating too many strategies, which makes it particularly hard to align strategy with budget. Moreover, processes and institutions for ensuring the quality of impact assessment throughout the decision-making process are not yet well developed.

Issues that need attention include:

- Rationalising vision and strategies: a more rationalised planning framework could include fewer and higher level strategies shaped according to high-level guiding principles. The link with the Europe 2020 strategy, which seems to exist for some strategies, also needs to be reinforced, including a review of the co-ordination between the key institutional actors on EU affairs.

- Developing data and the use of evidence: sound data and analysis are essential for strategic planning, and existing information and analytical systems and processes have limitations. Enhancing the analytical capabilities of selected ministries and of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic appears to be a positive step; consideration also needs to be given to a broader use of data and evidence in the daily decision-making and strategy process, beyond the analytical centres.
- Developing a whole-of-government regulatory policy agenda: the current public administration reform agenda addresses administrative simplification, an important step towards increasing the efficiency of the public administration. This reform should be integrated into a broader reform agenda that addresses not only the "stock" of laws and regulations, but also the institutional architecture, processes, tools and methodologies governing the production of new legislative and non-legislative initiatives (the "flow"). This would include the development of a systematic and realistic process for assessing the impact of new laws and regulations early in the decision-making process, with independent quality controls and mechanisms to ensure that impact analysis becomes an instrument for determining the costs and benefits of planned policies and identifies the best policy option in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

Tools and processes for effective monitoring and evaluation of progress

To successfully steer and monitor policies, governments need to be able to chart their course. Performance measurement tracks policy implementation, identifies successes and failures, and produces the information that is needed to allocate resources, design new policies and guide implementation. Periodic reviews of specific policies can provide more in-depth analysis of performance and help assess the continuing relevance of specific policy. In addition, monitoring and evaluation enhance transparency and contribute to strengthening the accountability bond between governments and citizens, thus helping to build trust.

Performance measurement and indicators

There are relatively large differences in the use of performance measurement across sectors. Individual ministries are responsible for reviewing the implementation of policies under their responsibility and, in some cases, a unit may be set up within a ministry for reviewing policy implementation. Some ministries have well-developed performance

measurement systems in place, while others have not developed systematic processes to measure performance.

Quantified targets for specific policies may be set by the ministry with responsibility for the development and implementation of a policy or programme. Both quantitative and qualitative indicators are used for monitoring progress and implementation. Policy reviews may cover policy outcomes as well as spending/financial aspects, with the emphasis depending on the characteristics of the policy or programme. In addition, the Statistical Office participates in the implementation and monitoring of government policies by providing some data and information.

Indicators developed by individual ministries mostly focus on inputs and tasks rather than outputs and outcomes. While it is important that inputs are taken into account, it is equally important that there is sufficient information on the outputs of public policies so that decisions can be taken on the basis of appropriate information and resources can be allocated (or reallocated) according to some assessment of performance.

Assessment

There is a need to secure stronger steering for the development of objectives and indicators which appears to be fragmented and *ad hoc*. Issues and themes that need attention include:

- Establishing a government-wide co-ordinated system for monitoring and evaluation: responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of progress rests with the individual ministry; this function needs, however, to be complemented by shared principles across the central administration and some unified systems and processes. Some central steering would be needed, for example within the Government Office, to ensure coherence and consistency across the system.
- Developing indicators to assess the impact of public policies: particular attention should be paid to the development of indicators that track the achievement of strategic objectives. Indicators need to be linked to a clear policy objective, target and activity to achieve them; they should be able to track at least results and outputs and possibly some impact.
- Ensuring top-level buy-in: it is important to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of government strategies, policies and programmes feed into decision making at the top political level; decision makers should receive regular updates on implementation progress and results. The Government Office of the Slovak Republic could play an important role in this process.

Notes

1. See Sutherland et al. (2012) for the assumptions behind these estimates.
2. ESO is the Slovak language acronym for effective, reliable and open.
3. The committees were formally established by the Constitutional Act on Budgetary Responsibility adopted in December 2011. The committees consist of representatives from private banks, the central bank and independent economic analysts.

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Chapter 2

Developing the Slovak Republic's human resources management strategy

This chapter identifies the key elements to be considered for the development of a human resources management strategy. It first presents the human resources management reform agenda in the Slovak Republic. It then examines the capacities of the central civil service for strategic planning, policy analysis and development, as well as for working directly with citizens and businesses. It then moves on to analyse the institutional and legal aspects of human resources management reform. It finally presents some key conditions for making reform happen.

The human resources management reform agenda in the Slovak Republic

The ESO Programme and ongoing reforms

The Slovak Republic has recognised the importance of developing a comprehensive human resources management (HRM) strategy and improving the skills of the public workforce. The ESO Programme, a reform of the public administration, includes an HRM reform agenda that focuses on improving the management of human resources and strengthening analytical capacities (Box 2.1).

Box 2.1. **The ESO Programme's HRM reform agenda**

Improving the management of human resources

Objective	Indicators	Initiative
Stimulate growth and jobs via efficient and effective employees and processes	– Ratio of trained/all public administration employees – Ratio of used/offered trainings	– Analysis, setup and operation, evaluation of employment positions for efficient and transparent selection and subsequent assignment of employees to appropriate jobs given their education, skills and experience, thus helping to eliminate employee turnover as a result of political cycles – Implementation of skill-gap analyses for future effective functioning of HRM – Creation and deployment of a performance management system for the public administration – Development and implementation of a methodology and set up an integration system of graduates from secondary and higher education institutions into public administration, in order to achieve essential work habits and knowledge about internal government procedures – Establishment of methodological centres for staff supports through coaching, mentoring and job rotation not just within one but several ministries or in between multiple horizontal structures including material and technical support
Reduce the administrative burden on citizens and business	– Number of audited processes – Number of improved processes	
Human capital growth and improvement of labour market participation	– Average time spent on training – Employee retention – Number of recruited employees just after school	
Maximise benefits/ contain costs	– Amount of budget allocated to human resources	– Introduction of feedback on the performance of civil servants – According to the National Programme of Education, ensuring an increased level of preparedness of public administration employees and self-government, police department, firefighters and workers of the integrated basic system with the application of the newest scientific methods, supporting the connection between scientific research and practical application, hence ensuring maximal use of EU funds

Box 2.1. **The ESO Programme's HRM reform agenda** (*cont.*)

Strengthening analytical capacities

Objective	Indicators	Initiative
Stimulate growth and jobs via efficient and effective employees and processes	– Number of new services – Satisfaction survey about new services	– Review existing analytical centres in terms of their objectives, tasks and assignments in accordance with performance or improvement of reorganisation, creation of a more efficient analytical co-operation within all centres – Develop analytical centres where they do not exist in terms of methodology, personnel and management – Involve non-governmental organisations, high schools, universities and the academic community in the work of public administration and analytical centres – Implement a system of performance evaluation of analytical centres, with a special emphasis on linking to the objectives to the Europe 2020 strategy in the context of the Slovak Republic – Establish control over the activities of the analytical centres on the principle of short-, medium- and long-term performance indicators of the authorities of the EU, OECD or other international bodies – Ensure resilience of the public administration before and after possible natural disasters with the support of monitoring the state of areas with an emphasis on the connection to the fire, rescue and civil protection team, which are an integral part of the public administration in the Slovak Republic – Create a system to support the collection of valuable data and analysis for the purpose of disaster prevention and work closely with analytical centres of public administration to exchange information and experiences of individual components
Reduce the administrative burden on citizens and business	– Number of audited processes – Number of improved processes	
Human capital growth and improvement of labour market participation	– % of state assets in state real estate office – % of connected local state services – Number of reduced "handoffs" in key processes	
Maximise benefits/ contain costs	– Amount of budget allocated to analytical capacities – % of coverage for state assets	

Source: "Modern and professional public administration in The Slovak Republic", presentation of the government of the Slovak Republic to the informal dialogue meeting with the European Commission on the modern and professional administration priority, Bratislava, 21 February 2013.

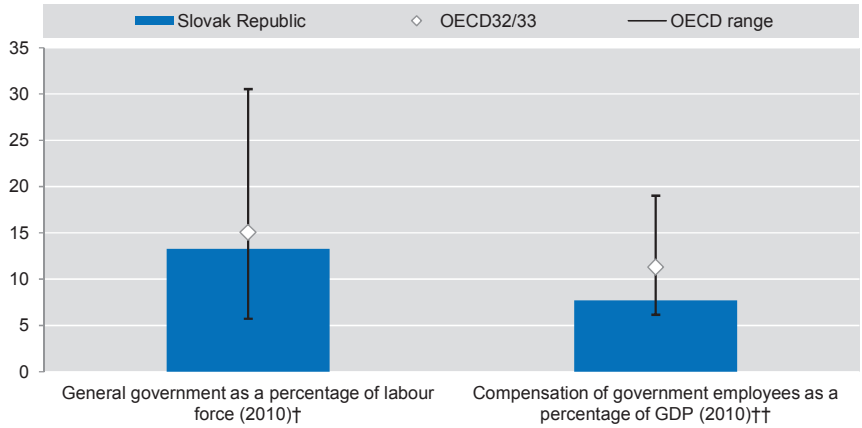
Important reforms are being introduced in the institutional and legal structure underpinning HRM. As of November 2013, responsibilities in the area of civil service employment relations and work performance were transferred from the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family to the Government Office of the Slovak Republic. In 2014, the Government Office is expected to prepare a new Civil Service Law, which will replace the currently valid Act. 400/2009 Coll. on the Civil Service, so as to ensure that

the reform of the civil service is carried out in accordance with the principles of a stable, professional and politically neutral civil service.

Fiscal and economic context

Similarly to other OECD member countries, the Slovak Republic has implemented measures aimed at reducing the cost of public sector employment, in order to address the fiscal and economic crisis. These measures have included a hiring freeze, and the current consolidation plan aims to cut the state wage bill by 10%, which would represent 0.9% of nominal GDP by 2015 (OECD, 2012a). Yet, the size and cost of the Slovak public workforce appear to be already below OECD averages. General government sector employment (excluding public corporations) represented 13.3% of the labour force in 2010 (against an OECD average of approximately 15%). Compensation of public employees represented 7.7% of GDP (against an OECD average of approximately 11%), among the lowest across OECD countries (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. **General government employment in the Slovak Republic (2010)**



Note: General government includes central, state and local governments as well as social security funds. Public corporations are excluded from the general government sector.

Source: † *ILO LABORISTA Database* and *OECD National Accounts Database*; †† OECD (2011), *Government at a Glance 2011*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2011-en.

Capacities of the central civil service for strategic planning, policy analysis and development

Improving the capacity of the government to steer and lead policy relies on a well-managed and competent cadre of senior civil servants. These senior leaders are responsible for executing high-level policy directives quickly and effectively and using the institutional knowledge and experience of the civil service to contribute to evidence-based decision making. Senior civil servants need to be accountable to and respond to the government of the day to effectively develop and implement those policies for which an elected government is ultimately accountable to citizens. At the same time, it is important that civil servants provide objective and non-partisan advice to policy makers to allow them to take the best decision to support the country's development. For this purpose, senior civil servants need to be backed by appropriate institutions and mechanisms to conduct robust and objective analysis.

Senior civil service

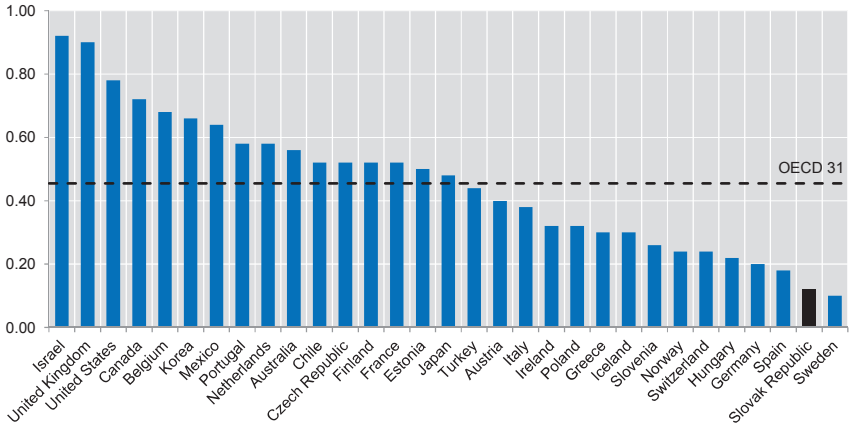
The Slovak Republic does not use separate HRM practices for senior civil servants (Figure 2.2).

There is limited stability in management positions. The 2010 OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management collected data on the turnover of civil servants with each government change. The Slovak Republic stands out as one of the countries where even relatively junior positions change with a change in government (Figure 2.3).

This trend does not appear to have changed since 2010. The OECD conducted a survey of Centres of Government (COGs), to which the Slovak Republic responded in August 2013. In the Slovak Republic's Government Office, more than half of all staff changes with a change of government.

Figure 2.2. **Use of separate human resources management practices for senior civil servants (2010)**

0 = HRM practices are not differentiated
1 = HRM practices are highly differentiated



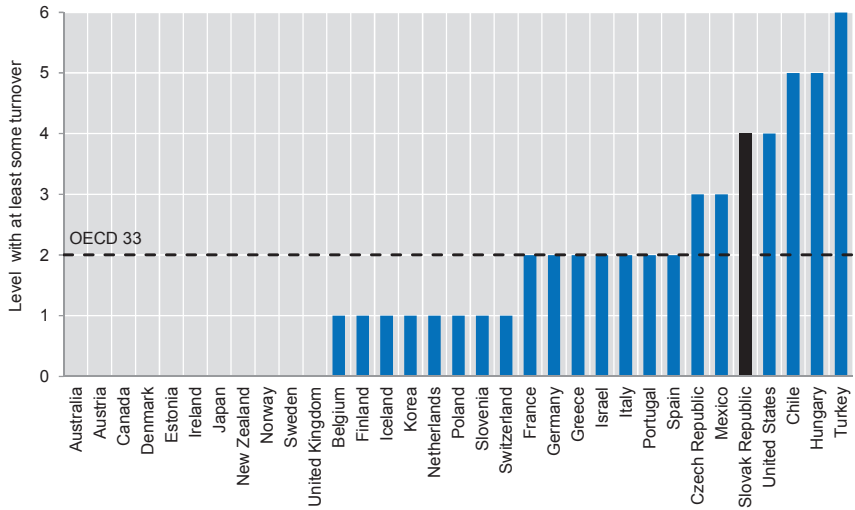
Note: Data are from the 2010 OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management in Central/Federal Governments. The index is composed of the following variables: the existence of a separate group of senior civil servants (SCS); the existence of policies for the identification of potential SCS early in their careers; the use of a centrally defined skills profile for SCS; and the use of separate recruitment, performance management and performance-related pay practices for SCS. Missing data for countries were estimated by mean replacement. Data for Luxembourg are not available. Denmark and New Zealand do not have a centralised HRM policy regarding senior civil servants and have therefore been removed. The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Source: OECD (2011), *Government at a Glance 2011*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2011-en.

Civil service reforms introduced in the Slovak Republic between 2001 and 2003 tried to provide some stability and professionalism at the top level of the civil service, by introducing different positions for ministerial advisors and senior civil servants. However, the systematisation process failed, partly as a result of tensions at the co-ordination level between the then existing Civil Service Office and the Ministry of Finance. Line ministries also complained about an excessive rigidity in the decisions on the number and type of positions (Box 2.2).

Figure 2.3. **Turnover of civil servants with a change of government (2010)**

1 (highest) to 6 (lowest)



Note: Data are from the 2010 OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management in Central/Federal Governments. Data for Luxembourg are not available. Data on turnover in levels 5 and 6 are not available for Portugal and the United States. Data on turnover in level 6 only are not available for the Czech Republic, Hungary, Israel and Spain. In New Zealand, a change of government does not affect the employment of public servants. The exception to this is a small number of public servants employed in ministerial offices on an event-based contract, with the event triggering the termination of their contract being the conclusion of their relevant minister's term in office. The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Source: OECD (2011), *Government at a Glance 2011*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2011-en.

While it is important to avoid the co-ordination failures that marred past reforms, the establishment of a professional cadre of top civil servants is an option that could be considered. The creation of a senior civil service as a distinct group can help create a corporate culture at the top and clarify the boundaries between politics and administration. A senior civil service group can safeguard the continuity of institutions and the sustainability of public programmes and service delivery and be accountable for results, thus enhancing political responsiveness. Key features of a senior civil service group include:

Box 2.2. **Systematisation of political and civil service positions in the Slovak Republic**

The Civil Service Law introduced two new types of positions:

- Temporary civil service for political functions, elected and recalled by the parliament or appointed and recalled by the President, the government, the President of the parliament, the Chairman of the Constitutional Court. On the level of ministry these included: state secretary, head of the service office, head of and staff of the minister's cabinet. In addition, the amendment to the Civil Service Law in 2002 also included into the law advisors under the term of "professional performing tasks for a member of the government, the President, Chairman of the National Council or Vice-Chairmen of the National Council".

- Nominated civil service, brought in by the 2003 reform, to reward top officials with specific salaries (a 50% pay increase) and job protection in the form of security of tenure together with pension and health benefits. Civil servants applying for the nominated civil service needed to pass a nomination exam. It was expected that approximately 1 000 civil servants would be part of the "nominated service" with tenure and clear career path.

The career system in the civil service was to be managed and maintained by the Civil Service Office via a so-called systematisation (and civil service registry) that would include the number of permanent, temporary, nominated and other civil service posts, ranked by position resulting from the organisational structure of the ministry (or other state administrative body). In addition, the systematisation had to state the volume of financial resources allocated for the remuneration of civil servants. The systematisation had to be approved by the government when discussing the draft budget and voted on by parliament as part of the state budget.

The process of systematisation created tension between the Civil Service Office and the Ministry of Finance, as both considered themselves as having the authority for final decisions on the number of posts and related expenditure. In practice, the Ministry of Finance had the final word on expenditures for civil servants, providing arguments that they are members of the government, not of the Civil Service Office. As a result, ministries complained about the structure of systematisation and the inflexibility in making changes and the fact that it was not clear whether to contact the Ministry of Finance or the Civil Service Office. Systematisation was abolished in the 2006 reform package, including the civil service registry.

Source: Staroňová, K. (2013), "Innovative elements in civil service reform in Slovakia: Road to professionalization?", paper presented at the 21st NISPAcee Annual Conference on 16-18 May, Belgrade, Serbia, www.nispa.org/conf_papers_list.php?s_wg_select=124&cid=21.

- Top positions: the senior civil service occupies the higher positions below the political leadership. These positions can be defined by a specific range of positions or by the pay band.

- Competitive appointment: appointment is advertised for internal and/or external candidates and is based upon merit, qualifications, experience and performance.
- Checks and balances: mechanisms for appointment, removal and promotion help guarantee open competition and limit partisan interference.
- Functions: core functions exercised by senior civil servants should include policy advice as well as managing resources to achieve expected results. Policy advice should accurately present the options and facts on the basis of objective and comprehensive evidence to help the political leadership take the best possible decision.
- Formal separation and central management: as a separate body, the senior civil service has different rules and arrangements from the rest of the civil service. At the same time, it is centrally managed or monitored to prevent political interference.
- Flexibility with due process: some flexibility in appointing and retaining senior civil servants is key to ensure a smooth and effective working relationship between senior civil servants and the political leadership. For example, the minister could have the possibility of dismissing a senior civil servant for loss of trust or inadequate performance. However, to avoid arbitrary decisions, due process should be given appropriate consideration, allowing, for example, for an independent assessment.

The Slovak Republic makes relatively little use of analytical tools to inform policy making. For example, there are little requirements to use these tools – regulatory impact assessment (RIA). This is, in turn, creating little demand for the use of analytical tools in the policy-making process (Figure 2.4).

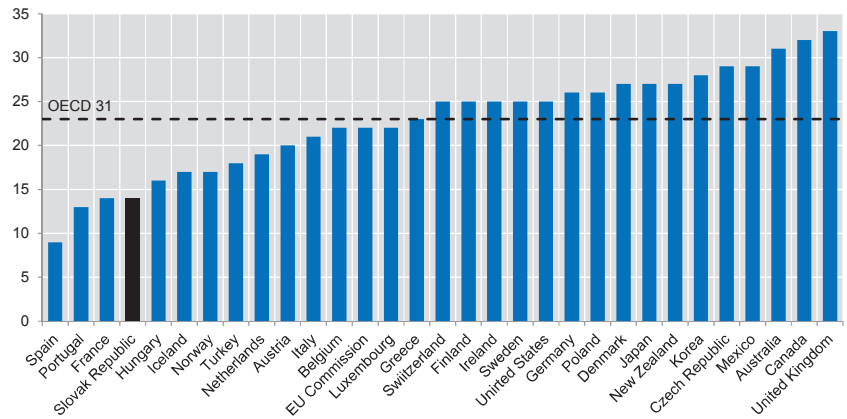
However, adding formal requirements is not enough if there is not sufficient capacity within the civil service to collect and use data to analyse the impact of different policy options. There are currently seven analytical centres attached to economic and social ministries. The ESO Programme envisages building up capacity within these centres and opening new centres if necessary. This approach is sensible, as it builds on what is already in place. At the same time, it would be important to:

- Assess the effectiveness of these analytical centres and scale up good practices: feedback provided by the Slovak authorities suggest that some of these centres, like the Institute for Financial Policy attached to the Ministry of Finance, have a good track record in

providing objective and good quality analysis. The second phase of the OECD support for public administration reform in the Slovak Republic could assess these emerging good practices and explore opportunities for scaling up.

- Consider spreading analytical capacity in line ministries: analytical centres can carry out complex analysis and collect data. To be effective, their work would need to be complemented by analysts in ministries who are able to use the data in the preparation of policy proposals. On the analytical capacity in line ministries, there appears to be relatively little data. For the 2010 OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management, the Slovak Republic did not provide a breakdown of professional versus clerical staff.

Figure 2.4. **Requirements for regulatory impact assessment processes used by central governments**



Note: The score shows the extent to which formal RIA requirements are aligned with best practice principles; a high score signals a high degree of alignment with best practice principles. Formal RIA requirements include whether an RIA is carried out before new regulation is adopted, at what stage an RIA is prepared, whether there is a government body reviewing the RIA, the existence of a threshold test and guidance on the preparation of the RIA, the existence of *ex post* comparisons of predicted impacts and an assessment of the effectiveness of RIA.

Source: OECD (2008), OECD Regulatory Management Systems' Indicators Survey 2008, Question 10, OECD, Paris, www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory-policy/indicators-rms.htm.

Capacities of the public administration employees who work at the frontline directly with citizens and businesses

One of the objectives of the current ESO administrative reform is to reduce administrative burdens and simplify procedures through the creation of single points of contact and integrated service points (IOM), which will facilitate e-services to those citizens who due to various reasons require assisted e-services, e.g. insufficient technical equipment or technical skills. These efforts will require meeting the European requirements for points of single contact, especially the Services Directive 2006/123/EC.

The Services Directive covers not only administrative procedures leading to licenses, authorisations and permits but also any other formalities such as registrations, announcements, etc. and other activities without the character of an administrative decision. EU member countries are free to decide how to organise the points of single contact, but have to ensure that they are available for all service producers to complete all procedures and formalities relating to services and all matters falling within the scope of the directive. These characteristics will need to be reflected in the human resources that will be deployed in the one-stop shop offices.

HRM and customer service are key to the success of a frontline service. Staff will meet daily with citizens to respond to their requests. Accordingly, it is important to align citizens' expectations with staff skills and motivation. On one side of the counter, each citizen tends to regard his or her case as unique and expect good customer service. On the other side of the counter, staff tend to handle similar cases on a daily basis and, caught in the routine, might lose sight of the importance of the service they are providing for the next citizen in line. Moreover, the skills needed to handle requests from businesses are different from the skills needed to handle requests from citizens.

Issues related to staff selection, training, motivation and the implementation of quality management systems to maintain a good customer service over time will need to be taken into consideration. Areas that will need particular attention include:

- Skills and training needs related to service provision: a work-flow model should be identified upfront so that training can address the skills that are needed. For example, if administrative procedures are handled as life events (i.e. loss of personal documents, change of address, paying payroll taxes, etc.), training for staff would need to focus on skills that help handle multiple transactions for a single service. In addition, training in the use of IT systems is likely to be key.

- Incentives and motivation: it will be important to consider motivation mechanisms such as promotion, learning, economic remuneration, and appropriate communication and involvement of all participants. Possible change resistance issues will also need to be considered, including working hours and shifts, or the relocation of staff.
- Customer satisfaction and quality management instruments: a customer satisfaction survey will need to be designed; the survey should be oriented towards identifying practical actions to improve customer service, including waiting time and the number of trips to the office before the successful completion of an administrative procedure. IT systems can be deployed to track citizens' and business' satisfaction and a queuing system to track waiting times.

Institutional and legal aspects of human resources management reform

Civil servants alone cannot guarantee quality public policies and better interaction with citizens and businesses. Civil servants need to operate in an institutional and legal environment that support their daily work and help them deliver for citizens and businesses.

The Slovak Republic could improve the HRM institutional framework. Decisions concerning hiring and firing are highly decentralised, not necessarily a negative aspect as hiring decisions are closer to the government bodies that will eventually deploy these resources. However, this high degree of decentralisation undermines mobility across government institutions, which in turn makes it difficult to re-deploy resources as needs and priorities change. Moreover, hiring criteria risk being opaque and vary significantly across government institutions, which in turn undermine the credibility and trust in the civil service.

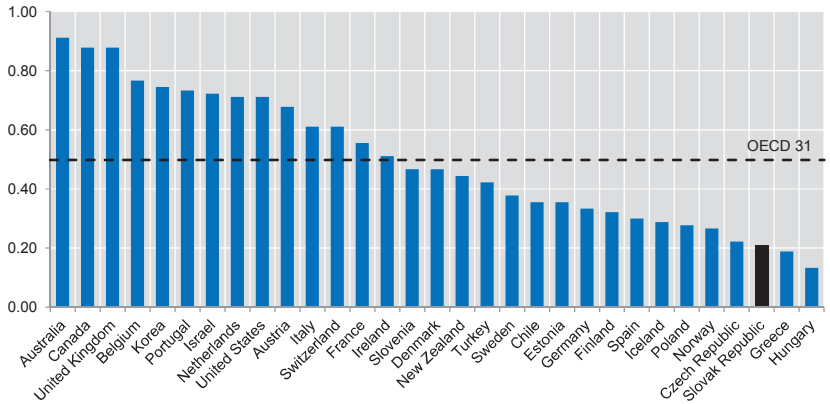
A stronger institutional framework would need to be backed by a supportive legal and regulatory framework. The revised Civil Service Law should support an impartial, professional and stable civil service. Appropriate tools and institutions at the central level should ensure the consistent implementation of the law across the civil service.

Strategic management of human resources

A comprehensive HRM strategic framework does not appear to be in place. Data collected through the 2010 OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management points to a lack of a general accountability framework, poor planning, no regular reviews of ministries' HRM capacities, and little planning and forecasting of HR needs (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5. **Utilisation of strategic HRM practices in central government (2010)**

0 = low utilisation of strategic HRM practices
1 = high utilisation of strategic HRM practices



Note: Data are from the 2010 OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management in Central/Federal Governments. Data for Japan, Luxembourg and Mexico are not available. The composite index of strategic human resources management looks at the extent to which centralised HRM bodies use performance assessments, capacity reviews and other tools to engage in and promote strategic workforce planning. The index includes the following factors: existence of a general accountability framework for middle and top managers which incorporates strategic HRM components; use of HRM targets in the performance assessment of middle and top managers; assessment of ministries'/departments' performance in terms of following good HRM practices; use of workforce planning.

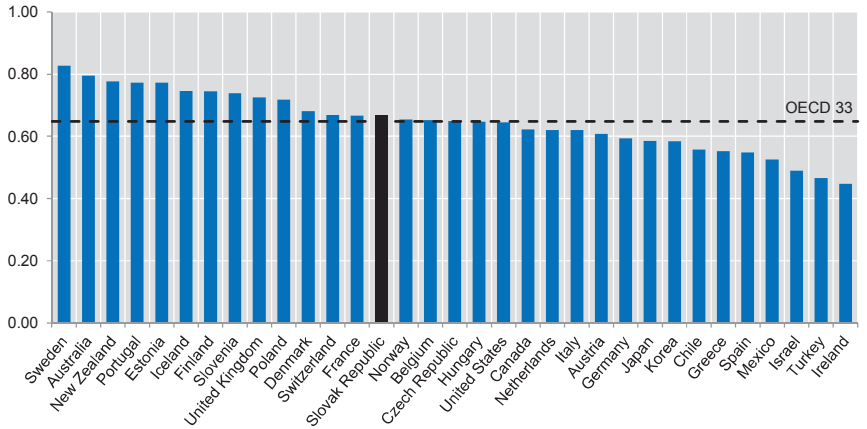
Source: OECD (2011), *Government at a Glance 2011*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2011-en.

The Slovak Republic has delegated significant responsibilities for salary, recruitment, retention and dismissal to line ministries. This is not uncommon across OECD countries (Figure 2.6). However, delegation has not been accompanied by guidelines nor by an effective oversight body at the central level to create some consistency and coherence across the system.

A Civil Service Office was in place until 2006. However, recruitment functions were soon delegated to line ministries and the Civil Service Office remained under-staffed and under-resourced (Box 2.3).

Figure 2.6. **Delegation of HRM practices to line ministries in central government (2010)**

0 (no delegation) – 1 (high level of delegation)



Note: Data are from the 2010 OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management in Central/Federal Governments. Data for Luxembourg are not available. The index is composed of the following variables: the existence of a central HRM body and the role of line ministries in determining: the number and types posts within organisations; the allocation of the budget envelope between payroll and other expenses; staff compensation levels; position classification, recruitment and dismissals; and conditions of employment.

Source: OECD (2011), *Government at a Glance 2011*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2011-en.

High delegation and limited co-ordination appear to have important consequences on careers and compensation:

- No foreseeable or predictable career path exists within the civil service as promotion and tenure are dependent on discretionary managerial decisions, which negatively affects the attractiveness of the civil service and the overall quality of staff.
- Discretionary personal performance bonuses can reach up to 100% of the basic salary established in the Law on Civil Service. This is to be added to the special 50%-100% bonuses or rewards for certain posts (special posts and nominated civil service posts) and other benefits, which are individually determined. No ceiling exists for these top-ups for higher civil servants, but it is up to 20% for ordinary civil servants at the proposal of their superior (Staroňová, 2013).

Box 2.3. **The Civil Service Office**

The Civil Service Office (CSO) was created as a central co-ordination structure in March 2002 with a remit to develop a unified, professional and ethical civil service based on the relevant legislation. The CSO was a central state administration body that was given the responsibility of ensuring professional, politically neutral and efficient performance of the state's tasks. The CSO issued secondary service regulations to provide details on civil servants' performance.

The CSO initially managed the entire recruitment process. It announced the vacancy based on the job description given by line ministry, prepared examinations, based on which candidates were selected and created committees, which the CSO member was a part of. The ministries had tried to avoid many of the rules and procedures and often revolted against the decisions made by the CSO, which was apparent in their rejecting of candidates recruited through the fast-stream system.

Mainly for lack of human and material resources, the CSO had to delegate the competences in recruitment to line ministries. In regards of training, the CSO employees did organise or even perform a number of horizontal trainings for ministries. The decision-making competence over what type of training, for what group of civil servants and by whom it would be delivered for what price was up to the service offices. The trainings managed by the CSO directly only complemented it. The amendment of 2006 terminated the operation of the CSO as of 1 June 2006.

Following its abolition, some of the tasks were handed over to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, some to the Government Office, some to individual ministries and some completely disappeared. The tasks related to human resource management (recruitment, remuneration, education, deployment, etc.) were handed over to individual ministries, to heads of the service office and are now fully decentralised. One task, the organisation of exams for the nominated civil service, was handed over to the Head of the Government Office. Thus, in these cases, the responsibilities were handed over to political nominees. The responsibility for preparing secondary legislation (such as Ethical Codex for Civil Servants or List of Civil Service Posts Available for Slovak Citizens Only) was given to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

Source: Staroňová, K. and L. Staňová (2013), "The role of central structures for co-ordination, management and control of the civil service: The case of Slovakia", paper presented at the 2013 Conference of NISPAcee, available at: www.nispa.org/files/conferences/2013/papers/201306251534110.Staronova,Stanova.pdf?fs_papersPage=4.

Without reproducing the mistakes of past reforms, it will be important to strengthen consistency and co-ordination across the system. The following management instruments could be considered:

- Strategic workforce planning: this would include preparing annual or multiannual staffing plans in line with the budget. Co-operation between the Government Office and the Ministry of Finance would be crucial. A good classification of the civil service helps to achieve a sound manpower planning.
- Recruitment and promotion on merit and through pre-established competitive and transparent procedures: recruitment and promotion should guarantee the constitutional right to equal access of every citizen to public office. They should also make it possible to attract qualified employees. The recruitment and promotion decisions should be adopted collectively through a collegial body, not entrusted to a person individually, regardless of his or her rank in the hierarchy.
- Remuneration: the salary scheme should be clear, simple, consistent and fair. Take-home pay should be predictable. The base salary should be set at an appropriate level and the use of bonuses and top-ups should be regulated.
- Performance feedback: in order to improve performance and motivation, civil servants should receive permanent, periodic and regular feedback from their superiors on the quality of their work, attitudes towards the service and advice on adapted ways to improve their effectiveness and skills. This performance dialogue should take place regularly, at least once a year.
- Strengthen the capacity of the Centre of Government for civil service and HRM policy proposals, monitoring and evaluation of strategic managerial practices across the board: some clearly established standards will need to be applied homogeneously across all central civil service, in order to secure consistent quality of human resources across ministries and other state agencies.

Legal and regulatory framework

The 2001 Civil Service Law introduced a meritocratic recruitment system with some centralised control and co-ordination mechanisms (Box 2.4). It will be particularly important to evaluate the lessons from past reforms and understand what went wrong and how past failures can be avoided.

Box 2.4. **The Civil Service Law in the Slovak Republic, 2001-09**

Major reforms of the legal framework regulating the civil service were launched at the beginning of the 2000s, in connection with the Slovak Republic's accession to the EU in 2004.

- In 2001, a Civil Service Law regulated the civil service in state administration bodies, with the aim of introducing merit-based, competitive recruitment and promotion. Under the 2001 Civil Service Law, recruitment and promotion had to be based on open competition and on the results of a selection procedure. Direct appointment without competition was only possible for superior officers in a political position and certain other superior officers (e.g. ministers, one secretary of state per ministry, and ambassadors). Vacancies had to be announced in the *Civil Service Gazette* and in commercial newspapers. All positions in the civil service were open to outside applicants, as long as they fulfilled the stated requirements for the position. Professional experience acquired outside the civil service could be taken into account. All selection commissions had to be established by the Chairman of the Civil Service Office (CSO). These commissions were made up of five members, at least three of which were chosen from the corresponding sector of the civil service. The selection commission had to assess candidates on the basis of skills, professional knowledge and other factors relevant to the vacant position, such as psychological aptitude. The law provided for a rather cumbersome screening process for all existing civil servants within a transition period which was scheduled to last until 31 March 2004.

- Fundamental changes were introduced in 2003 with the passage of a novelization of the Civil Service Law that introduced a "fast-stream" recruitment procedure inspired by the UK experience. It also established the performance appraisal and performance-related pay (up to 100% of the take-home pay, for which savings from unfilled vacancies could be used) as well as the internal promotion through competition (known as the "nominated civil service"). Performance bonuses were used discretionarily to offset the low salaries.

- In 2006, the Civil Service Office was closed down amidst allegations that it was inefficient and costly. Its functions were distributed among ministries or simply abolished. For example, the entry examinations became simple job interviews, bonuses were granted across-the-board at the discretion of managers and became a major part of the take-home pay. These changes introduced a number of uncertainties into the system, not least the removal of job security for civil servants. Efforts to create a special cadre of highly qualified civil servants by external and internal recruitment (the so-called "fast-stream system") failed because of poor implementation.

Box 2.4. **The Civil Service Law in the Slovak Republic, 2001-09** (*cont.*)

- In 2009, a new Law on Civil Service abolished most of the remaining meritocratic aspects of the 2001-03 reforms, including the performance appraisal, internal promotion on merit and fast-stream recruitment to the civil service. Following the termination of the Civil Service Office, very little was done to develop new mechanisms for integration, co-ordination and oversight".

Source: Cardona, F. (2006), "Recruitment in civil service systems of EU members and some candidate states", paper presented at the Seminar on Civil Service Recruitment Procedures held in Vilnius, Lithuania on 21-22 March 2006, available at: www.oecd.org/countries/lithuania/36762218.pdf; Staroňová, K. and R. Brown (2006), "Administrative capacity in the EU 8: Slovakia country report, background paper", World Bank, Washington DC; Staroňová, K. (2013), "Innovative elements in civil service reform in Slovakia: Road to professionalization?", paper presented at the 21st NISPAcee Annual Conference on 16-18 May 2013, Belgrade, Serbia, available at: www.nispa.org/conf_papers_list.php?s_wg_select=124&cid=21.

The upcoming new Law on Civil Service represents an opportunity to introduce a better civil service policy. The strategic objectives of such a policy should be:

- Reduce politicisation: the new law should tackle in earnest the issue of limiting the politicisation of the civil service. A well-defined scope of the civil service, which separates politics from administration, would be helpful. Political appointments may be necessary to cover certain government positions, but they should be clearly separated and distinct from the administrative or professional ones.
- Underpin a new type of professionalism: the service orientation of the new civil service should be a permanent goal. Alongside open competition based on merit, other elements help foster professionalism: training, transparent mechanisms for promotion and for assigning salaries, and a relatively acceptable level of remuneration that is affordable for the country, are required conditions upon which to build up a professional, democratic civil service. A set of duties and rights that take into account constitutional requirements on public administration are needed to raise professional standards. Clear lines of accountability reinforce not only the accountability of civil servants, but their professionalism as well.

- Stabilise the civil service: keeping the public administration in a constant state of flux works against the reliability of the state and makes the public service unattractive for good and well-qualified individuals. A certain degree of tenure and employment guarantees for civil servants work in favour of stability and professionalism.

Making reform happen

HR reforms are interdependent and systemic. To be successful, they need to be owned across the government and implemented as a whole. The Slovak Republic went through a wave of innovative HR reforms, which were, however, quickly reversed. It will be paramount to avoid the problems that undermined the implementation of those reforms.

Building ownership of reform across stakeholders

Agreement among all key stakeholders on reform objectives and content can help make it sustainable over time. Lessons from other OECD countries in developing and implementing complex horizontal reforms (Box 2.5) point to the following areas that will deserve particular attention:

- Political backing: buy-in and backing across the political spectrum can help ensure that the reform can live through the electoral cycle and resist any change in government.
- Co-ordination within the executive: the reform needs to enjoy support from key players within the executive, including the Ministries of Finance, Interior and the Government Office. Some permanent co-ordination structure can ensure continuous communication and exchanges.
- Communication: the objectives and content of the reform needs to be communicated clearly to all relevant stakeholders within and outside government already in the phase of preparation of the reform. This is key to receive feedback and avoid surprises and misunderstandings.

Managing the daily implementation of the reform

Complex reforms that cut across ministerial silos need to strike the right balance between centralisation and flexibility. Achieving this balance will require careful thinking on the role and responsibilities to be assigned to the Government Office. One of the major challenges that confronted the Civil Service Office before its demise was a lack of resources. The issue of

Box 2.5. **Austria's budget reform**

The Austrian budget reform combines horizontal policy making with financial and political planning and steering processes and the systematic use of evidence. The success factors of this comprehensive reform include long-term engagement of relevant stakeholders.

To bring all relevant stakeholders on board, a broad political consensus was sought from the design phase of the reform. In the fall of 2004, an informal parliamentary budget reform committee was established to integrate all political parties represented in parliament. This platform enabled a broad discussion, during which all different stakeholders could voice their concerns and visions. Beside parliament, the Federal Court of Audit was an important stakeholder and supporter of the budget reform process. The public also received information on the reform and had an opportunity to provide feedback. Civil servants were consulted and involved in the design of the reform.

A clear co-ordination mechanism between the Federal Chancellery and the Ministry of Finance supported the implementation of the reform across the public administration. A new unit within the Federal Chancellery – the Performance Management Office – was created immediately after the approval of the reform. This unit was in direct communication with all ministries regarding the necessary steps for performance management. In the Ministry of Finance, a task force was established to develop the concepts and the legal framework, to support co-operation and co-ordination with other administrative units, and finally to implement the reform.

Source: Governments for the Future (2013), *Main Report 2013*, Ministry of Finance, Finland.

resources will therefore need attention. In addition, the tasks assigned to the Government Office will need to be clearly spelled out and the Government Office will need to have the authority and legitimacy to lead on these tasks and functions. Lessons from other OECD countries (Box 2.6) point to the following areas that will deserve particular attention:

- Political *vs*. professional responsibilities: a central employer's office implies a clear delegation of human resource management powers from the political level to a separately managed professional body. It remains responsible to the political hierarchy, and central collective agreements may have to be approved by the political level.
- Implementation *vs*. oversight: the function of the central HR institution is to design and oversee the application of core HR policies, while leaving implementation to line ministries' HR bodies and line managers. A central HR institution typically does not centralise all decisions and processes. It usually operates within a

framework of significant decentralised HR responsibilities to managers across the administration, providing them with advice and support in their decisions, as well as enforcing shared systems. In fact, a strong centre enables more effective delegation of certain aspects of HR management to line ministries.

Box 2.6. **Central HR functions in OECD countries**

A professional central public employer office operating at arm's-length from the political level can be found in many OECD countries, for example in Denmark (*Personalestyrelsen*), Finland (*Valtion tyomarkkinalaitos/Statens Arbetsmarknadsverk*) and Sweden (*Arbetsgivarverket*).

The mandate and tasks of central HR institutions (employer offices) vary across OECD member countries. Broadly, however, they are responsible for promoting professional human resource management with budget users at arm's-length from the political level, and they are themselves a professional HRM body. Core responsibilities may include:

- strategic workforce planning across the whole-of-government
- the design, promotion and enforcement of shared systems such as job classification, competence management, career management and performance assessments
- the oversight and promotion of public service values and ethics
- whole-of-service training
- guidelines for recruitment and retention
- management of the senior public service.

Responsibilities may also include budget-related elements of HRM, although these are often allocated to ministries of finance. These would include wage setting, representation of the government as an employer in central bargaining covering some or all groups of budget users, and setting the parameters for decentralised bargaining, either unilaterally or through a central collective agreement. If HRM responsibilities are shared in this way, it is very important to establish close and effective co-ordination between the Finance Ministry and the central employer office.

Source: OECD (2012), *Slovenia: Towards a Strategic and Efficient State*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264173262-en.

Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the reform

The implementation of the reform will need to be carefully monitored. This will require developing a set of indicators that track and evaluate outcomes of the HRM strategy, as well as a monitoring unit with knowledge

and resources to collect data (Box 2.7). Information should be regularly provided to policy makers in order to ensure that reform implementation stays on track. The following areas will need particular attention:

- HRM indicators: indicators should track the key objectives that the reform seeks to achieve. They should be linked to clear HRM targets and actions and track not only outputs but, to the extent possible, outcomes. When designing HRM indicators, it will be important to be practical and realistic and consider which data are available and which data can be realistically developed.
- Monitoring: monitoring should be conducted by a dedicated unit, ideally within the Government Office given its responsibility for HR policies across the civil service. The unit should be sufficiently and appropriately staffed to carry out this task. Monitoring should not be considered a side-job.
- Reporting: a progress report on the implementation of the reform should be produced regularly (at least once a year), shared widely and discussed at the highest political level to ensure that the reform stays on track and is bringing results.

Box 2.7. **The OECD seven-step methodology for indicator development**

The OECD has developed a methodology of seven sequential steps for indicator development. This methodology is intended to address such critical issues as: establishing policy priorities; ensuring that targets are realistic and clearly expressed; defining indicators as precisely as possible; establishing more tailored impact indicators where possible or developing a statement of desired impact. The seven sequential steps are:

1. Establish priority policies for meeting each specific objective.
2. Define targets.
3. Identify key activities that support the achievement of each target.
4. Establish output indicators.
5. Establish result indicators.
6. Identify desired impact.
7. Identify qualitative research methods to complement the quantitative indicators.

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.

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Annex A

EU Cohesion Policy and *ex ante* conditionality

The reform of the public administration and *ex ante* conditionality

EU Cohesion Policy for 2014-20 focuses strongly on improving the quality of the public administration as a key enabler for sustainable and equitable economic growth in EU member countries. The European Social Fund (ESF), one of the EU funds that supports the implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy, finances EU member countries' programmes aimed at enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration.

The release of part of the funds will be contingent on meeting *ex ante* conditions, including having developed a strategy for reinforcing administrative efficiency. The fulfilment of these conditions will be assessed in 2014. If conditions are not fulfilled, member countries will need to implement actions, for which implementation will be assessed in 2016.

Ex ante conditionality and public administration reform

The core *ex ante* conditionality for public administration reform is "the existence of a strategic policy framework for reinforcing the member [country]'s public authorities and their skills", linked to the thematic objective 11 "Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration".

A Strategic Policy Framework "consists of a document, or several documents which set out a limited number of coherent priorities established on the basis of evidence, and a timeframe for their implementation, and which may include a monitoring mechanism". It is a self-assessment of the elements that need to be in place, or are in place/in the process of being implemented. These elements include:

1. an analysis and strategic planning of legal, organisational and/or procedural reform actions

2. the development of quality management systems
3. integrated actions for the simplification and rationalisation of administrative procedures
4. the development and implementation of human resources strategies and policies covering main gaps identified in this field
5. the development of skills at all levels of the professional hierarchy within public authorities
6. the development of procedures and tools for monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic framework for public administration reform

The key *ex ante* condition that the Slovak Republic will need to assess during the preparation of the Partnership Agreement is the existence of a strategy for reinforcing the member country's administrative efficiency including public administration reform. The European Council's recommendations for the 2013 EU semester and the 2012 European Commission's position paper on the funding priority for the 2014-20 EU Cohesion Policy highlight some priority areas for strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of the public administration:

- strengthen analytical capacities for policy development; improve tax governance and the quality of spending
- strengthen civil society public oversight role and enhance the capacities of social partners and civil society organisations to contribute to public policy making and monitoring of policy implementation
- improve the efficiency and quality of justice procedures and processes, increase the enforcement of court decisions (particularly in relation to the development of court cases, to reducing the average length of court proceedings, to eliminating delays in court procedures and to the quality of court decisions and court staff), and promote alternative dispute resolution mechanisms
- modernise court infrastructure and their organisation
- curb corruption and ensure transparent and effective application of public procurement rules.

Other key *ex ante* conditions fall under the theme of "Growth in the field of digital services and next generation access network infrastructure", which is not covered in this report. These conditions include the following:

- adopt an appropriate legislative framework for e-government and define conditions for interoperability of information systems and e-registers
- reinforce technical and administrative capacity of ministries/institutions involved in ICT implementation
- streamline the governance of strategic e-government projects and speed up their implementation, in particular those aimed at developing government-to-government and government-to-citizen services
- increase the sophistication and availability of online public services.

Human resources management reform

The *ex ante* conditions that the Slovak Republic will need to assess during the preparation of the Partnership Agreement are expected to focus strongly on human resources management. EU institutions highlight three priority areas for strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of the public workforce:

- civil service's independence
- management of human resources
- analytical capacities in key ministries.

Annex B

The OECD questionnaire

The questionnaire developed by the OECD for the preparation of this report included approximately 50 questions and was structured in 5 parts:

1. Centre of Government institutional structures
2. co-ordination structures linking key line ministries
3. strategic planning, linked to budget management and processes
4. tools and processes for effective monitoring and evaluation of progress
5. key contextual aspects.

Data collection involved key government stakeholders. The Ministry of Interior co-ordinated the collection of data and information. A contact person was appointed in each concerned ministry and government institution to serve as a focal point. Meetings between the co-ordination team at the Ministry of Interior and the contact persons clarified the purpose of the questionnaire and addressed questions and issues concerning the methodology and terminology of the questionnaire.

The completed questionnaire was submitted at the end of August 2013.

Annex C

The development and implementation of one-stop shops

The Ministry of Interior plans to open 89 one-stop shops over the period 2014-15 in order to provide access to central government administrative services at the local level. A pilot was launched in 2013 and the opening of additional one-stop shops has been in process since the beginning of 2014 (as of 1 April 2014, 9 one-stop shops had been launched).

In parallel to the establishment of one-stop shops, the Ministry of Interior has conducted a detailed and extensive mapping of administrative processes; the mapping has identified the individual steps for a number of administrative processes with the view of simplifying and eliminating unnecessary steps.

On 11 December 2013, the OECD organised jointly with the Ministry of Interior a seminar that assembled approximately 50 government officials across the central government administration, with a view of facilitating discussion on policy actions, implementation challenges and international experience in developing and implementing one-stop shops. Representatives of Germany and Portugal shared their experience and lessons on developing and implementing one-stop shops.

The seminar focused on two of the themes that are particular importance in the early stages of the development of one-stop shops: planning and managing one-stop shop projects and linking one-stop shop projects to administrative simplification and process mapping.

Project planning and management

Adequate planning and good management of the different phases and actors that participate in the implementation of one-stop shop programmes is essential in ensuring that all relevant actors, including central ministries and agencies, training institutions, offices responsible for dealing with citizens

and end users, are involved and co-ordinated and that resource needs are identified from the beginning.

Most countries have recognised the importance of sound project management to guarantee the success of one-stop shop programmes. The implementation of a one-stop shop must deal with a number of government agencies that have different mandates, priorities, organisational cultures and practices. Countries have tried to address this challenge by identifying clear project management responsibilities and reporting structures to ensure that all these agencies work towards common objectives and follow a single master plan.

Seminar discussions pointed to the following challenges:

- financial sustainability of the development and implementation of one-stop shops over the medium to long term
- simplification and integration of existing deconcentrated state administration offices
- co-ordination across different central government institutions responsible for the services to be provided in the one-stop shops and linkages between different information systems
- participation and buy-in of front-office staff
- training of staff for customer service
- the necessity to enhance public awareness of the changes under preparation and being implemented, which are related to changes in the execution of state administration.

To address some of these challenges and strengthen project planning and management, the Slovak Republic could consider the following:

Evaluate resource needs for programme implementation over the medium to long term and prioritise

- Assess the timeline for rolling out the programme in the light of what can be realistically and successfully achieved over the medium to long term. The experience of virtually all countries shows that the implementation of similar programmes has been spread over a relatively long time frame. A phased implementation can help reduce the risk of falling short of funds and of large costly problems.
- Break down the programme into components that can stand alone and already provide services to citizens. It is usually easier to mobilise funds for an individual component.

- Carefully evaluate the findings of the pilots and consider the rolling out of additional pilots before moving to full-scale implementation.

Ensure participation and co-ordination across all key stakeholders

- Evaluate existing co-ordination mechanisms and ensure that all relevant stakeholders are proactively involved. In other countries, a steering committee involving all relevant stakeholders tends to serve this purpose. The committee would need to meet regularly and frequently, have the power to take decisions and the capacity to implement them.

Scale up communication with front-office staff and across all participating institutions

- Establish continuous lines of communication between the central administration and the operational staff in the district offices. This could be achieved, for example, by identifying contact points at the district office level that could communicate and meet regularly with leaders and teams responsible for the different programme components.
- Share information through a dedicated intranet website or a password-protected Internet site.

Define a service model upfront and evaluate skills and training needs

- Establish a working group charged with the task of defining HR needs for front-office and back-office functions. The working group should define how the service will be provided in one-stop shop offices and determine how many staff and what skills are needed for the different areas of service provision.
- Identify upfront a work-flow model on the basis of which training needs can be tailored. For example, if administrative procedures are handled as life events, training for staff would need to focus on skills that help handle multiple transactions for a single service.
- Follow a step-by-step approach to training and take into account the absorption capacity of staff. In the initial phase, training could focus on the cases (or life events) that most frequently affect citizens' daily life with continuous training on the remaining cases afterwards.

- Complement training material with operational manuals and a list of frequently asked questions to facilitate staff's daily work and ensure a consistent approach to citizens' requests.

Process mapping and simplification of administrative procedures

Administrative simplification and one-stop shops both contribute to improving the daily interactions of citizens and businesses with the public administration. One-stop shops constitute front-line workplaces, the aim of which is to bring citizens and businesses closer to the public administration, in order to reduce administrative burden by providing pro-client oriented services with the purpose of supporting a business-friendly environment. Accordingly, administrative simplification and one-stop shops need to be closely co-ordinated and, ideally, follow a sequenced approach, where significant cuts in red tape precede or at least are rapidly deployed to facilitate directly the design and working of one-stop shops.

The experience of other OECD countries strongly suggests the importance of simplifying administrative procedures before they are implemented in one-stop shops. This can imply changes to regulations – for example, a reduction in the number of licenses required – and the elimination of unnecessary formalities. It can also require reviewing forms, simplifying processes or using a simpler language. Once they are in place, one-stop shop offices can provide valuable feedback on further possibilities for administrative simplification, helping identify the most cumbersome procedures and thus further enhancing simplification.

Seminar discussions pointed to the following challenges:

- legislative barriers that might limit the use of one-stop shops (for example, territorial jurisdiction that obliges citizens to perform administrative procedures in the place of residence)
- incorporating findings of the mapping process into the legislative process.

To address some of these challenges and strengthen project planning and management, the Slovak Republic could consider the following:

Consider the legislative actions that are necessary to facilitate the use of one-stop shops

- Identify possible legislative barriers to the use of one-stop shops and proactively include any solution in the legislative programme of the government. The territorial jurisdiction might emerge as an issue

that could limit the development of one-stop shops as a national network where citizens can access services anywhere in the country. Relenting this constraint would have practical and legislative implications that will need to be evaluated to identify possible solutions.

Embed the mapping and administrative simplification process in a wider Better Regulation agenda

- Ensure that findings of the mapping process are taken into account in the development of new legislation. The unique mapping effort conducted should feed into the preparation of laws and regulations so that appropriate simplification actions can be taken. This will require co-ordinating closely with all relevant stakeholders in the legislative process, including the Ministry of Economy which is responsible for Better Regulation, to ensure that, for example, findings are used for regulatory impact assessments.

Glossary

Centre of Government: the term refers to the administrative structure that serves the executive (President or Prime Minister and the Cabinet collectively). This excludes other units, offices and commissions (e.g. offices for sport or culture) that may report directly to the Prime Minister but are, effectively, carrying out line functions that might equally well be carried out by line ministries.

Civil servant: an employee of the state, either permanent or on a long-term contract, who would remain a state employee if the government changes.

Co-ordination: joint or shared information ensured by information flows among organisations.

Collaboration: joint action and a structured relationship between organisations.

Deconcentrated central/state administration: local administrations of the central government that have delegated powers but no legal autonomy *vis-à-vis* the central government.

Europe 2020: the EU strategy to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, adopted by the European Council in 2010. It sets objectives to be achieved by 2020 in five main areas:

- Employment: 75% of the population aged 20-64 employed
- Innovation: 3% of the EU's GDP invested in research and development
- Climate change: "20-20-20" targets achieved:
  - reduction in EU greenhouse gas emissions of at least 20% below 1990 levels
  - 20% of EU energy consumption to come from renewable resources

  - 20% reduction in primary energy use compared with projected levels, to be achieved by improving energy efficiency.

- Education: share of early school leavers under 10% and at least 40% of 30-34 year-olds having completed a tertiary or equivalent education
- Poverty: 20 million people lifted out of the risk of poverty or exclusion.

Indicator: a quantitative or qualitative measure derived from a series of observed facts that can reveal relative positions in a given area.

Local self-government: elected government units at the sub-national level.

Ministerial committee: committees of ministers, usually set up to deal with specific sectors of government activity and policy such as economic affairs, social affairs, EU issues, in order to confirm a course of action and to resolve disagreements. They are usually chaired by a relevant senior minister. A key objective is to minimise the number of issues that need to be put to the Cabinet, and to identify the priority issues that merit the Cabinet's attention. Ministerial committees are often "shadowed" by committees of officials, with the equivalent aim of preparing the ministerial committees, identifying priority issues for ministerial attention and resolving disagreements.

Ministry: an organisation which forms part of the central core of the executive branch of government. A ministry is responsible for the design and implementation of an area or sector of public policy and administration (e.g. agriculture, education, economy, foreign affairs), in line with the government programme and strategy. A ministry is also responsible for the direction of agencies under its authority.

Policy: a consistent course of action designed to meet a goal or objective, respond to an issue or problem identified by the state as requiring action or reform. It is implemented by a public body (ministry, agency, etc.), although elements may be delegated to other bodies. Examples include a public policy to tackle climate change, educational reform, support for entrepreneurship. A public policy is, or should be, linked to the government programme and its strategic planning. It is often given a formal framework through legislation and/or secondary regulations, especially in countries with a system of civil law. It is given practical effect through a defined course of action, programmes and activities. It is, as necessary, funded from the state budget. A priority policy is a policy which matters more than others for the achievement of the government's strategic objectives. The

responsibility for taking forward a public policy may rest with the relevant line ministry, or, in the case of policies that cut across ministerial boundaries, may be shared by relevant ministries.

Performance measurement: process of quantifying the output and outcomes of activities and/or programmes.

Professional staff: staff who usually have a university degree, and may have leadership responsibilities over a field of work or various projects. They develop and analyse policies guiding the design, implementation and modification of government operations and programmes; review existing policies and legislation; analyse and formulate policy options, prepare briefing papers and recommendations for policy changes. Moreover, they assess the impact, financial implications and political and administrative feasibility of public policies. Their areas of expertise may include law, economics, politics, public administration, international relations, engineering, environment, pedagogy, health economics, etc.

Regulatory impact assessment: systematic process of identification and quantification of important benefits and costs likely to flow from the adoption of a proposed regulation or a non-regulatory policy option under consideration. May be based on benefit/cost analysis, cost effectiveness analysis, business impact analysis, etc.

Strategic objective: a high-level policy goal. For example, to increase employment among the youth population.

Strategic planning: a tool for identifying short-, medium- and long-term objectives (e.g. "improve education" or "achieve energy security") and laying out a set of present and future (collective) actions for achieving them.

Target: a concrete goal that states the degree of achievement that is expected with respect to an associated policy.

Unit: generic term referring to departments, sectors, directorates, sections or any other organisational segment that can be identified within the government.

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SLOVAK REPUBLIC

DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

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