



HANDBOOK

Public Governance Committee

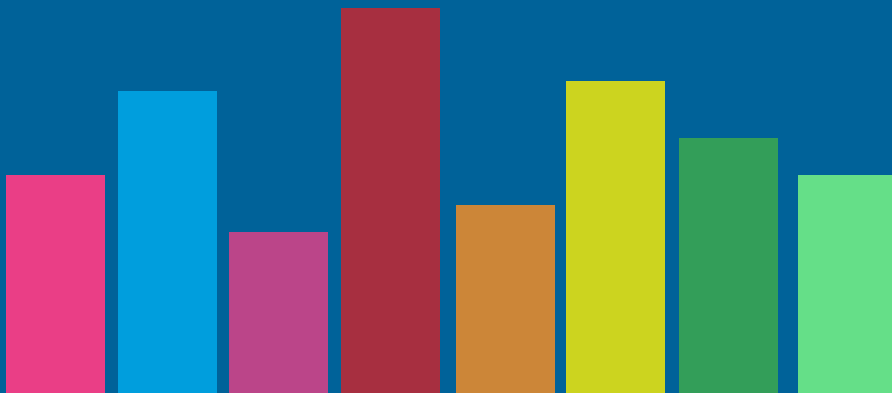


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Handbook

For effective participation in the Public Governance Committee (PGC)

Introduction

This handbook is designed to support effective participation by delegates in Committee activities. It updates earlier documents, which had been prepared in collaboration with the PGC Bureau. Successful governance requires an effective partnership between the Committee and the Secretariat.

Like all partnerships, it is reciprocal. The Secretariat serves the Committee and helps it fulfil its mandate with appropriate relevance and impact. A good Committee can also raise the standard of performance of individual countries by sharing honest reflections about what works and why, and also what does not work and why not. Committees are an essential element in the governance of the OECD.

Committees typically meet in Paris around twice a year. They also meet at Ministerial level around every five years. The two recent Ministerial Meetings of the Public Governance Committee were held in Rotterdam in 2005 and in Venice in 2010. These meetings provide a strategic medium term framework for the Committee's work.

Critical success factors

The success of the Committee's work depends on a number of critical factors, and relies upon individual committee members' commitment.

How can Delegates familiarise themselves with the broader OECD Context?

The OECD makes available to Delegates information on standard meeting protocol, and also the context within which Committee meetings operate. Delegates may wish to familiarise themselves with the current OECD-wide reform and budget process; the Mandate (Annex) and work programme for the Committee and the full range of the Committee's subsidiary bodies. The Secretariat supporting the Committee is available to help in this regard.

Being familiar with the OECD context is important to help guide the Committee on the hard choices that have to be made from time to time on options, priorities and resourcing. A debrief from the previous delegate is very valuable. Continuity of participation is important for the effective working of the Committee.

How can delegates make the most of participating in meetings?

Committee meetings may cover a range of issues: strategic policy making, open government, integrity and ethics, budgeting, service delivery, human resources, ICT and web-based technologies. Delegates may wish to fully familiarise themselves with the substantive documents, including through internal liaison in their own capital. The Secretariat stands ready to answer questions of fact or clarification about the material in advance of the meeting.

How can Delegates help maximise policy coherence through effective decision making by the Committee?

Committees work best when they are in a position to adopt clear positions and are given clear directions. Committee Delegates may wish to be aware of the position adopted at PGC Committee subsidiary bodies and related committees by delegates from their country in order to foster policy coherence. When stating a preference on direction, delegates are representing their country. The principle of 'one country one voice' is fundamental to the success of the OECD's work. Information exchange and co-ordination within a country between relevant ministries/departments before the meeting will help committee preparation and discussions.

How can Delegates maximise the sharing of experience?

The Committee can help Delegates make contacts and connections, share experiences and reflect upon the lessons learnt from other countries. It is a place that can help them share honest reflections about what has worked and why, based on the direct experience of the Government. The biggest insights often come from learning from what didn't work (and why) and what has not been resolved (and how it might be addressed).

How can the Committee result in effective partnerships?

The Secretariat is available to support an effective partnership to help the Committee mobilise energy for the good of the Organisation and its members. Delegates can help by providing balanced, positive feedback and constructive suggestions for improvement. Effective partnerships are provided through contributing to meeting feedback and commenting on the materials for discussion. Delegates may also wish to provide a debrief to other country delegates attending subsidiary bodies or related committees.

The Committee's mission

The mission of the committee is framed by its mandate, its main objective being to assist countries in building and strengthening capacity for designing, implementing and assessing adaptive, innovative, anticipatory and citizen-focussed public policies, institutions and services.

The broad objectives for the Committee's work were also framed by the recent Communiqué of Ministers attending the PGC Ministerial Meeting held in Venice in 2010.

In particular, the Committee's work is directed toward helping countries strengthen their capacity to govern by improving policy-making systems and the performance of public institutions.

Through meetings of member country officials and experts, exchanges of information and expertise, and data and analysis, PGC examines what governments do and how they are seeking to improve public policy effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness to citizens and quality of services.

By providing information, overseeing and directing the Secretariat's work, the Committee gives strategic direction to the Organisation's overall perspective on public governance, and how it can contribute to achieving the Organisations' broader economic and social goals, Better Policies for Better Lives.

The Committee's biennial programme of work provides the overarching framework for Committee's activities.

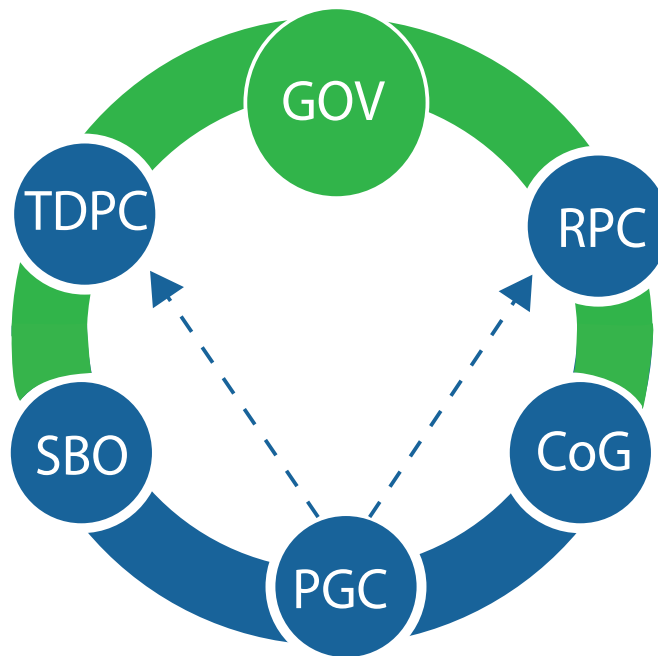
The Committee's work also has to take into account broader membership of the Organisation, following the accession by Chile, Estonia, Israel and Slovenia, and the critical role of Enhanced Engagement countries (Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, South Africa).

As a result, the Committee also developed and adopted a revised strategy for global relations in 2010, recognising that effective public sector institutions play a crucial role in promoting democratic practices in a large range of countries.



Strengthening public governance capacities in a broader range of countries will yield mutually beneficial economic relationships. A specific element of the work on public governance at the OECD is the Sigma Programme - Support for Improvement in Governance and Management.

Operating within the Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, Sigma is a joint initiative of the OECD and the European Union, principally financed by the EU. The initiative supports partner countries in their efforts to improve government and management. It works in partnership with a range of EU candidate countries, as well as western Balkan and Mediterranean countries.



Composition of the Committee

The Public Governance Committee (PGC) is made up of senior civil servants from OECD countries who are nominated as delegates by their governments. Committee members generally have core responsibility for the economy of the public sector and public sector modernisation at large.

They may come from a Cabinet Office/Prime Minister's Department, Ministry of Finance, Interior or Budget, Ministry of Public Administration or other central agency, which has responsibilities with important impact on the organisation, activities and workings of the public sector.

Country delegates typically attend two-day meetings twice a year at the OECD in Paris, and may also serve on task forces and working groups dealing with special topics. These meetings offer senior public sector managers an opportunity to exchange ideas and experience and to discuss strategies to build innovative and open governments?

The Committee also provides a forum for addressing broad, cross-cutting issues and developments in areas of strategic importance to governments.

The GOV family of public governance bodies

The Committee's work is carried out in collaboration with a range of public governance bodies. Following the In Depth Evaluation carried out in 2009, the Committee has recently streamlined its substructure in 2010. The new sub-structure is set out in the diagram above.

It includes two permanent sub-bodies, that are essential for a whole-of-government perspective, and for which the work cannot be taken over by the PGC or any other existing sub-structure because of its specialised nature (e.g. budgeting or policy co-ordination). These are the Working Party of Senior Budget Officials (SBO) and the Senior Officials from Centres of Government (COG).

Specific networks support the implementation of the Committee's programme of work. The SBO also has its own supporting networks.

In addition, the Committee works closely with the Regulatory Policy Committee which was established by Council in December 2009, as well as with the Territorial Development Policy Committee.

The Secretariat: Supporting Committee's operations

The work of the Committee and of its subsidiary bodies is carried out in collaboration with the OECD Secretariat.

The OECD secretariat serving the Committee belongs to the OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate (GOV). Its role is to support the Committee's work by providing analysis, comparative data, and assessments on public governance arrangements in Members, as well as in non-Members in the context of global relations.

Fostering an open policy dialogue with Civil Society

The role of civil society organisations is critical to the success and impact of the Committee's work. Civil Society organisations, including BIAC, TUAC, Transparency International and Civicus, were invited to the 2010 PGC Ministerial meeting and are consulted on the work prior to Committee meetings through dialogues with the Committee's Bureau.

Reaching out to civil society organisations and maintaining an open dialogue with citizens and businesses is a core feature of modern public governance.

Information on committee's operations and progress

The Programme of Work and Budget provides a description of planned activities over a two-year period. The Secretariat also provides Delegates with regular information packages related to major Committee activities and OECD policy developments.



Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the OECD

The OECD public governance website is also continuously updated to provide information on the latest GOV outputs, and can be located at:
www.oecd.org/governance.

The Committee has a collaborative web portal for exchanging ideas and information outside of Committee meetings:
<https://community.oecd.org/community/pgc>.

Frequently asked questions

What is the role of Committee delegates?

To represent their country in directing and shaping the PGC programme of work; and in giving substantive direction to the development of PGC outputs, to ensure that outputs accurately represent Members' practices and are consistent with their views.

To ensure that the Committee's work attains full relevance and impact, particularly in bringing the attention of Ministers and policy makers at senior level to the outputs of the Committee's work.

To provide country views on major public governance issues of strategic importance to their governments, many of which are cross-cutting in nature.

To serve as the key two-way communications link between the OECD and Members on PGC work:

1. Committee members serve as the main contact for providing information to the OECD on public governance trends and practices in their own countries, as a basis for PGC reports, for Government at a Glance and for exchanging information at PGC Committee meetings; and
2. Committee members assist in promoting PGC work and in disseminating information obtained through PGC reports and meetings to officials within their own governments;

To provide guidance on management issues, including communication strategies, ways to maximise the benefits of PGC work for Members; observership of non-Members and ways to improve the usefulness of PGC meetings.

Committee members are asked to come to the meetings prepared to represent the range of interests and the country's view on all agenda items. Some countries handle co-ordination of country positions through task forces or special meetings, while others use a written procedure.

What are the benefits of participating in the PGC?

Participation in the Committee provides first-hand exposure to innovative practices and a network of senior management practitioners who can provide the benefits of their experience. In addition to the more formal exchanges that occur, many opportunities are available during the two days of meetings for one-on-one exchanges of information.

The information gained from PGC meetings, reports and network contacts offers a valuable source of ideas, innovations and analysis related to public governance challenges across the OECD.

Delegate involvement can help to ensure that their countries' practices are portrayed accurately, and that PGC reports are consistent with their governments' views, and are useful to their governments. Delegate contributions also serve a broader purpose, as PGC work and findings are disseminated widely through publications, reports and a home page on the internet.

Who should serve on the Committee?

Member governments have the discretion to nominate the delegate that they consider most appropriate to represent the government's viewpoint on public sector economics, public governance and the modernisation of the state.

Delegates generally are senior officials from an agency such as a cabinet office / prime minister's department, ministry of finance or budget, ministry of public administration or other central agency, affecting the organisation, regulation and operation of the public sector.

Because PGC's work covers a wide range of public governance issues, including budgeting and performance management, human resources management, the use of ICTs and wide-ranging issues of reform, a delegate's consultative abilities and authority to elicit other officials' views are critical.

What are the responsibilities of the Bureau?

A few Committee delegates are designated annually to serve as Bureau members who represent the Committee in providing more detailed direction to the Secretariat on issues of management and planning of the work programme. These representatives, known as “the Bureau” generally serve for 2-3 years.

They participate in planning meetings prior to each Committee meeting and ongoing consultation by telephone and through e-mail and written exchanges. The Chair of the Committee conducts the Committee meetings and is involved in close consultation with the Secretariat on an ongoing basis.

The vice-chairs also provide ongoing guidance, and may be asked to replace the chair in his or her absence. The details of the procedures for designating members of the Bureau are presented in the Annex.

On what basis is the Bureau designated?

The process of selecting Committee Bureau members is a collaborative one between Members and the Secretariat. As consensus of the Committee is required to designate the Bureau members, the Secretariat consults in advance of the meeting as feasible with individual Committee members on a list of possible candidates.

This list will preferably contain representatives of a range of governmental systems, geographic regions and reform experiences, who have senior level positions and past involvement in the Committee.

Following preliminary consultations with Members, designation of the Bureau should happen, at the latest, at the last plenary meeting of the year or no later than 31 December. (For more detail see Annex).



What is the process for obtaining written documents prior to Committee meetings?

The Secretariat aims to have all documents ready for distribution on the OECD Committee Information Service (OLISNext) in the OECD's two official languages, English and French, three weeks in advance of the meeting in original language and one week before for translations. Official OECD policy is that Members are provided access to OECD documents through the OLISNext system, and should use it to obtain all meeting documents.

Delegates can obtain access to OLISNext through a request from their government's OECD delegation in Paris. However, the GOV Secretariat can also distribute the documents by e-mail if a delegate does not have access to the OLIS distribution system. Generally, the agenda is distributed about six weeks in advance, and all or most other documents are distributed 2-4 weeks in advance.

What types of items are placed on the agenda for Committee meetings?

Items are placed on the Committee agenda for a range of purposes: to promote mutual learning and exchange; to provide a forum for identifying emerging trends and practices and discussing viewpoints on major public governance issues; to provide direction and policy guidance on the formulation and implementation of the Committee work programme; to allow for input into work and identification of important issues at an early stage; for revision of work at a later stage; and decisions on whether and how to disseminate work at the final stage.

In general, a balance is sought among **seven** categories of agenda items:

1. Addressing major public governance issues, many of which are cross-cutting (for example, identifying characteristics of good public governance), including by contributing to horizontal work with other relevant OECD Committees;
2. Peer reviewing comprehensive and thematic public governance reviews undertaken under the auspices of the Committee to identify and share best practice.
3. Producing comparative evidence to underpin empirical analysis, which contributes to the flagship product of the Committee, Government at a Glance.
4. Exchange of promising practices through other vehicles, including:
 - expert presentations around a common theme, drawing general lessons for Members;
 - panel discussions with a select group of Members and/or experts comparing country experiences;
 - oral presentation on reforms in a single country, with opportunities for questions and answers;
 - dissemination of short factsheets of 1-3 pages on recent public governance developments, brought to the meeting by each Member (written exchange).

Although these are regular features of Committee meetings, none are obligatory, and this format may be adjusted as desired. Selections of countries for presentations are made with the objective of exposing the Committee to a wide range of countries and promising practices.

5. Discuss and approve the outputs produced under the work programme. These agenda items provide an opportunity for countries to give their viewpoints on emerging public governance issues, and to ensure that the work is accurate and meets with their approval. One of the strengths of PGC work is that it is based on excellent access to information from Member governments.

Committee members are the crucial link in the information-gathering and development process. This access is available in part because Members have the assurance that they will be involved in both the information-gathering and in the development of outputs, and that they will have the opportunity to review them for accuracy and final approval.

Discussion at the Committee level facilitates the achievement of consensus, and also serves as a stage in the communications process for disseminating conclusions of PGC work.

6. Committee policy and planning issues. This includes consideration of the programme of work and budget, communications strategies, planning of major meetings, outreach to non-Members, and following Sigma work. Committee input on these matters is important for the effective functioning of both the Committee and the quality of work that is produced.

7. Informational updates. Certain items on the agenda are provided for informational purposes, including reports on recent developments related to PGC work, activity meetings, horizontal work within the OECD, reform within the organisation, budgetary decisions, etc. These do not generally require Committee input or preparation in advance, and only take a small portion of the meeting.

How are specific agenda items determined for each meeting?

Agenda items may be initiated through a request by the Committee, the Chair or Vice-Chairs or an individual Committee member. In other cases, they are initiated by the Secretariat in close consultation with the Bureau. As described in the previous question, a balance is sought among a variety of items to meet the range of Committee objectives.

The greatest discretion in agenda planning relates to which work outputs are brought to the Committee for discussion, guidance, and if appropriate, approval. Not enough time is available during meetings to discuss all work that is under way, so a selection is made with the objective of bringing to the Committee those items of greatest significance, potential impact, and interest.

The selection is also influenced by the timing of the meeting, that is, whether the work has been developed to a point that either Committee approval is sought or early direction from the Committee is considered to be beneficial. An attempt is also made over the course of several meetings to bring to the Committee the full range of issues and activities in which it is involved.

The Secretariat also seeks to minimise the amount of documentation necessary for review and discussion at Committee meetings to maintain a manageable workload for delegates. All substantive documents include an executive summary.

The Committee's agenda and the documents' cover notes provide clear directions for action by delegates.

Generally, the Committee considers executive summaries, synthesis chapters or other excerpts, rather than full length publications. Longer documents are circulated to Members outside of Committee meetings through written procedure, or are provided for reference but are not required for discussion.



Meetings generally begin at 9:30 and continue until 18:00, with a 1½ to 2-hour lunch break and breaks for coffee in the morning and afternoon to allow for individual networking. Delegates are usually invited to a cocktail at the end of the first day.

Each agenda is annotated to provide specific information on timing. Meetings are also often held back-to-back with those of the Committee's networks and related bodies in order to facilitate the sharing of information and the cross-fertilisation of Committee's activities.

What is circulated to Committee members outside of meetings by written procedure?

Because of the desire to maintain a manageable amount of reading material required to prepare for Committee meetings, most publications and unclassified documents are circulated to Members for review via written procedure outside of Committee meetings. Countries are generally given three to six weeks to respond, depending on the length of the document and timing requirements for final dissemination.

Committee representatives can circulate these within their government for comment as appropriate. Documents may be approved through written procedure, with a “silence is consent rule”, under which the absence of a response is considered as agreement.

In addition, certain policy issues are raised to Committee members outside of the Committee meeting when deadlines do not allow a decision to wait until the actual Committee meeting. For example, unforeseen changes in the GOV budget may require consultation with Committee members before being implemented. A desire to streamline the decision-making process may also result in circulation of policy proposals outside of the Committee meeting.

What issues are handled primarily through consultation with specialist networks?

PGC’s specialist networks address issues of policy-making (senior officials from centres of government), budget management, Integrity, Public employment and e-government. Like the Committee, these networks are composed primarily of government officials from central management agencies. They are involved in directing the work as well as in contributing information and reviewing reports. Committee responsibility for work in these speciality areas is generally delegated to the representatives of the networks, but the most significant outputs are also reviewed at the Committee level.



Annex 1.

Mandate of the Public Governance Committee

Objectives

a) The objective of the Public Governance Committee is to assist countries in building and strengthening future capacity for designing, implementing and assessing adaptive, innovative, anticipatory and citizen-focussed public policies, institutions and services.

b) The intermediary objectives of the Committee include:

- i) Identifying the current and emerging strategic public governance challenges that governments face, including in a context of global crisis;
- ii) Assisting countries in developing and delivering public policies based on a whole-of-government approach and grounded in the core values of the public sector;
- iii) Assisting countries in designing and implementing coherent and effective public sector reform policies, including building future capability;
- iv) Building and maintaining a body of robust quantitative and qualitative data and indicators on public sector inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and performance, for carrying out comparative evidence-based analysis;
- v) Assessing the performance of countries' public sectors through peer reviews;
- vi) Contributing a public governance perspective on critical public policy issues;
- vii) Promoting and providing a forum for policy dialogue, co-operation and exchange of experience among those responsible for the public sector, as well as with other relevant stakeholders, including international organisations and institutions, and the private sector.

Co-operation arrangements

a) The Committee shall co-operate with other OECD committees on matters related to public governance and participate in horizontal activities.

b) The Committee will in particular seek close co-operation with the Regulatory Policy Committee and the Territorial Development Policy Committee, served by the same Directorate.



c) The Committee shall keep itself informed of the activities related to public governance and management carried out in other international organisations. It will promote and develop, as practicable, partnerships with these organisations and seek to ensure effective complementarities while avoiding undue duplication with other international organisations as appropriate.

d) The Committee shall consider the views and input of BIAC, TUAC and other major stakeholders in the field of public governance.

e) The Committee shall encourage participation by non-Members in the Committee's work (including undertaking country reviews and contributing to Government at a Glance and thematic work) and their implementation of the Committee's recommendations and good practices.

Annex 2. Bureau designation guidelines

Considerations

Any guidelines adopted must be consistent with the OECD Rules of Procedures and other relevant OECD rules and practices. The guidelines should apply both to the selection of a Chair and Bureau members.

There is a need to bring clarity and provide the Committee with a shared understanding of the process for Bureau designations. This will assist in the smooth functioning of the Committee and Bureau, in that all members will act on the basis of shared expectations and support collaborative relationships. A key challenge develops when there are more candidates than openings. Any guidelines would need to address this situation to ensure fairness in the approach taken.

OECD Rules and Practices

The designation of the Bureau members of the PGC will be carried out in accordance with OECD rules and practices. The following guidelines are intended exclusively to facilitate the application of these rules and practices.

Size of the Bureau

The size of the Bureau is determined by the PGC and should be relatively small. Maximum ceilings should be adhered to. It is currently comprised of a minimum of three and a maximum of seven seats.

Bureau Enlargement

Any further enlargement of the Bureau should be decided by the PGC on the basis of a well-grounded rationale. Such a decision must be taken before a new round of designations is opened, otherwise the maximum ceiling will be respected. Confirmation of the maximum ceiling will be sought at the Committee meeting prior to the Committee meeting at which designations take place.

Key Points

Bureau members are to be designated at the last Committee meeting of the calendar year, to take effect on 1st January of the following year.

Members should normally hold these positions for a maximum of three consecutive years;

- the decision of appointing Chairs should not be formalised (i.e. avoid formal voting);
- Chairs and Bureau members should be designated from amongst their own Committee membership;
- the best qualified person(s) should be elected - criteria: effective, helpful, impartial;
- nationality should have no bearing on choice;
- over time, each Member should have a chance to serve as Chair (and member of the Bureau);
- the Secretariat should assist the Committee and ensure the necessary consultations of all delegations take place;
- politicisation of the process or deadlock should be avoided (i.e. avoid government and/or diplomatic intervention - no country should normally veto a candidate - block voting or the presentation of joint candidates should be avoided);
- the number of Bureau members are determined by each body in the light of experience and taking into account the need for efficiency;
- the Bureau should not take the place of the subsidiary body in the form of an enlarged Bureau including all delegations.

These guidelines were approved by the Bureau in 2005.

Designation of Bureau Members

Bureau members should be designated from among the PGC delegates and normally for a maximum of three consecutive years.

Committee members who wish to be considered as candidates for the Bureau should have shown an active interest and participation in the activities of the Committee.

Each candidate must be supported by their sponsoring country. Before any designation, the Chair, with the help of the Secretariat, takes soundings in order to determine who the potential candidates may be in relation to the number of vacancies expected. When the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacant seats, informal consultation should be carried out by the Chair in close collaboration with the Secretariat, to determine whether all candidates wish to continue with their candidacy or whether some of them will withdraw.

If no candidate withdraws, informal consultations will take place with all Members to determine where consensus may lie and which candidates have the widest support. Following this feedback, if no candidate withdraws there will be an indicative straw poll taken at the Committee. The straw poll will be organised by the Secretariat.

The Committee recognizes that over time all countries should have an opportunity to participate in the Bureau, so as not to have the Bureau dominated by a set of countries. Especially when the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies, consideration should be given to ensuring a representative balance in the composition of the Committee particularly given that the work of the OECD is context dependant.



Annex 3.

Communiqué of 2010 Ministerial Meeting, Venice

Since our 2005 Ministerial meeting in Rotterdam, devoted to strengthening trust in government, the world has lived through a deep financial and economic crisis. As the economic outlook remains characterized by uncertainty, it is clear that improving public sector productivity is crucial to economic recovery.

This requires innovation in governance, public management and public service delivery, for which information and communications technology can be an important ally. Trust remains an overarching goal, to be built on openness, integrity and transparency.

Recognising this, we, OECD Ministers and our counterparts from Brazil, Egypt, Estonia, Morocco, Russia, South Africa and Ukraine, acknowledge the importance of certain key principles, including fostering an effective and performance-driven public sector, delivering better public services more efficiently and effectively, and promoting open and transparent government.

Ministers acknowledged the importance of:

Leadership

Our political commitment, leadership and accountability are essential for deciding where, when and how governments can strengthen their strategic capacity and promote public sector innovation and co-ordination. New working methods and skills will be needed to benefit from technological opportunities. They are equally important for establishing partnerships with citizens, civil society (including the social partners) and the business sector to build momentum for change and strengthen the capacity to prevent future crises.

Fostering efficiency and effectiveness through innovation in the public sector

Promoting and enabling an environment conducive to innovation is crucial to generating a dynamic public sector focused on performance and greater productivity at no additional cost.

This could entail maximizing the use of new technologies, making things simpler and more transparent for citizens and businesses, preventing corruption, and building human capital. Incentives, new tools to share successful initiatives and the removal of administrative barriers are important considerations in fostering a new environment. The public sector could also draw on the expertise and creativity of the private and not-for-profit sector. The wide sharing of information electronically across sectors and boundaries within the public sector is critical to fostering innovation and reducing administrative burdens.

Openness, integrity and transparency

Open government can help strengthen trust and build indispensable support for reform. Greater engagement with citizens and civil society is a key part of open and transparent government. Open government can also lead to more direct and effective engagement with citizens, civil society and businesses. Reaffirming the core values of the public sector will help improve public sector performance.

Preparedness for future challenges

Public sectors must be forward looking, agile and prepare for the challenges of the future. They should have the capacity to identify and assess these challenges, change strategic direction, and allocate human and financial resources accordingly.

Ministerial guidance to the OECD

We invite the OECD and its Public Governance Committee to support our efforts by:

Providing evidence on government performance
The OECD should continue to collect data, develop comparative analysis, and build indicators on public sector performance and innovation, to better advise us on how public governance policies, practices and arrangements contribute to improved economic performance.

Fostering a more efficient, effective and innovative public sector

The OECD should assess the main current and future challenges and constraints facing governments, and should propose innovative approaches for building a more efficient, effective and well-performing public sector with a focus on identifying best practice.

Venice Ministerial, 2010

It should draw lessons from country experience and, where possible, develop policy guidance on key levers for agility and performance such as:

- a) e-government and the use of new technologies;
- b) human resource management and human capital;
- c) budgeting and public expenditure; d) cutting red tape and administrative simplification; e) partnerships with citizens, civil society and the private sector, and
- f) developing evaluation frameworks to measure the effectiveness of government initiatives.

Offering guidance for strengthening trust, openness and integrity

Building on past experience, the OECD should provide guidance on strengthening integrity safeguarding the public interest, and levelling the playing field for the private sector. It should provide guidance for increasing openness and transparency in public policy making, highlighting how to improve and strengthen citizens' involvement. In this respect, it should explore the possibilities as well as the limits of new technologies and help strengthen the development of instruments for steering relationships with the private sector.

Supporting a whole-of-government perspective through strategic coordination and policy coherence

The OECD should help us foster strategic coordination and proactive capacity, by promoting high-level policy dialogue among peers, and identifying common challenges and solutions based on specific country studies. It should provide comprehensive frameworks for the analysis of public governance policies and practices from a multidisciplinary perspective. Ensuring co-ordination across ministries and levels of government should be a key component of these frameworks.

The Venice Initiative for Dialogue with Civil Society Organisations

The Venice pledge for affordable and effective government underlined government determination to provide high quality public services, while dealing effectively with fiscal pressures and consolidating economic recovery. Ministers agreed that continuing dialogue amongst governments on ways to ensure effective, efficient and affordable government should remain one of the key issues of the agenda of the OECD Public Governance Committee.

In this context, Ministers invite the OECD to explore the potential for dialogue on best practices of public sector reform with Civil Society Organisations.



Delegates in discussion



Aerial view of the 2010 Ministerial, held in Venice, Italy

The dialogue would allow for an exchange on the challenges, opportunities and implementation of public sector reforms in times of fiscal pressure, and on the search for sources of sustainable growth.

Promoting good public governance globally

In the interest of broadening the level playing field for business, investment and the mobility of people, the OECD should provide a forum for global policy dialogue with non-member economies, and discuss ways to strengthen and improve public governance. This will require pursuing existing partnerships, for example with enhanced engagement countries, or through regional programmes such as MENA and the Latin American Countries (LAC). This work will also support co-operation with low-income and post-conflict countries.

We also agree that sustaining change in the public sector will require careful monitoring and analysis of progress, for example through measuring performance. We invite the OECD to provide us with regular updates.

Glossary of frequently cited OECD terms and concepts

BIAC

The OECD Business and Industry Advisory Committee represents business and industry associations from OECD Members. It is one of the OECD's two social partners along with the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC). PGC Committee Bureau members hold consultation meetings with BIAC and the Secretariat consults with its representatives as appropriate to obtain input into PGC work.

Document classification

Much of OECD work is restricted to selected officials from Member governments, particularly in its early stages before it has been reviewed and agreed upon by Members.

There are three main classifications for documents:

1. Confidential

This is the most restricted classification.

Unauthorised disclosure of material under this classification would seriously prejudice the interest of the Organisation or any of its Members. PGC Committee documents are rarely issued with the confidential status except for such issues as observership.

2. For official use

Documents under this classification are restricted to officials of Member governments. They should not be disseminated to the general public.

3. Unclassified

These documents may be disseminated freely, as a publication, or through other means, such as electronic dissemination on the Internet.

Global Relations Secretariat

The Global Relations Secretariat assists OECD's senior management in the strategic planning and prioritisation of the Organisation's Global Relations (i.e. its work with non-Members and with other international organisations), ensuring the work programme is coherent and is implemented in accordance with the Secretary-General's strategic objectives. It promotes non-Members' participation in OECD Committees and adherence to OECD standards and instruments and acts as their general contact point in the Organisation. It also serves the External Relations Committee, which oversees the OECD's overall Global Relations.

OECD Council

Composed of ambassadors from each OECD delegation and chaired by the OECD Secretary General, the OECD Council is the focal point for ongoing review of Committees by Member governments. It decides on the Programme of Work and Budget of the OECD and stimulates thinking on the overall goals of the Organisation and on its future course. The Council may agree on Decisions which are legally binding under international law, or on Recommendations, which are expressions of political will to follow the policies set forth.

OLISnext

The OECD Committee Information Service (OLISnext) is used to disseminate OECD documents to Members. Committee delegates should request access to this system through their OECD delegation office or, alternatively, through a contact point in their government who already has access to the OLISnext system.

Outreach

OECD work and dialogue with selected non-Members.

TUAC

The OECD Trade Union Advisory Committee represents government trade unions from OECD Members. It is one of the OECD's two social partners along with the Business and Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC). PGC Committee Bureau members hold an annual consultation meeting with TUAC and the Secretariat consults with its representatives.

