



**PUBLIC GOVERNANCE AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE
PUBLIC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

GOV/PGC(2004)6
Unclassified

ASSESSING MEASURES FOR PROMOTING INTEGRITY AND PREVENTING CORRUPTION

**29th Session of the Public Governance Committee
15-16 April 2004
International Energy Agency, Paris**

This note provides background information for the discussion on assessing measures for promoting integrity and preventing corruption in the public service and also provides an outline of the forthcoming report. Detailed information of national practice can be found in the case studies on the experience of France [GOV/PGC/RD(2004)2] and Korea [GOV/PGC/RD(2004)3].

For further information, please contact János Bertók (tel. +33-1-45.24.93.57,
email janos.bertok@oecd.org).

JT00161262

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ASSESSING MEASURES FOR PROMOTING INTEGRITY AND PREVENTING CORRUPTION

1. This note provides background information for the discussion on assessing measures for promoting integrity and preventing corruption in the public service. It highlights a list of issues that have emerged from the case studies undertaken to date and illustrates them with specific examples of initiatives in OECD countries. The annex highlights the main features of the ongoing OECD project on “Developing Policy Assessment Measures for Integrity and Corruption Prevention Activities in the Public Service” and provides an outline of the forthcoming report.

Questions for discussion

2. Delegates may wish to address some of the following questions during the discussion to exchange views on what countries have learned from assessing integrity measures:

a) **Why assess integrity measures?**

What are the main reasons to assess integrity measures? Which policy measures and tools have been evaluated? What is the main “character” of assessments (i.e. have they focused on selected tools, programme implementation or organisational culture)?

b) **How to assess?**

Which type of assessment is mostly used in your country (e.g. self-assessment, independent assessment)? And why? Do you involve stakeholders in the assessment process (e.g. service users, affected citizens)? If so, at what stage, for what reasons and how do you proceed? How do you identify, gather and share good assessment practices across your administration?

c) **How are assessments integrated into the policy cycle?**

Did the results of assessment influence policy? If so, how was policy adjusted?

d) **Potential roles for international forum: What tasks for the OECD?**

What framework can international organisations, in particular the OECD, provide for identifying innovative solutions and cross-fertilisation of national practices? While separate domestic assessment projects principally observe sectoral and national trends, a comparative international framework has the potential to provide a broader reference and the worldwide context for distinct country experiences. What type of information on the international context could be most beneficial for domestic assessment projects?

Why assess integrity measures?

3. Good governance requires proper assessment of results. Policies to promote integrity and prevent corruption are no exception. Defining approaches and developing appropriate frameworks for assessing the impacts of measures promoting integrity and preventing corruption is an emerging priority in OECD countries.

4. While OECD countries have put growing emphasis on creating and adjusting measures for promoting integrity and preventing corruption in the public sector over the past decades, mainly by improving their legal, institutional and procedural frameworks, only a few countries have actually assessed the implementation of the measures already in place and their impact.

5. In addition, civil society organisations, particularly pressure groups have become more active in this field and have started to develop indices that are extensively cited in the media worldwide. For example, the survey results published by Transparency International (such as the TI Corruption Perceptions Index that indicates how much corruption is perceived to exist among public officials; the Bribe Payers Surveys and the first Global Corruption Barometer survey (see at <http://www.transparency.org/>) have become reference, although their credibility has been widely contested by both government organisations and academic think tanks. While advocacy groups mainly use their opinion surveys and perception indices as a tool for exercising public scrutiny in order to **raise awareness** at the political level and in society at large, assessment initiatives of government administration principally support more traditional organisational objectives, namely:

- **Control and accountability** – to find out whether policy objectives were reached and verify the level of compliance.
- **Prevention and management** – to identify vulnerable areas and support adjustment of organisational processes and daily practices.
- **Learning** – to document experiences, understand and share lessons.

6. While the first two objectives embody the time-dimension (backward-looking and forward-looking approaches), the third objective focuses on the understanding of the problem and ensuring knowledge sharing across the whole public service. As the experience of recent assessment initiatives has shown, they could also contribute to the **strategic aims** of governments. For example, countries aimed at:

- Building and sustaining **trust** in public institutions. The Integrity Perception Index developed by the Korean Independent Commission Against Corruption (KICAC) serves as a barometer based on the actual experiences of service users.
- Demonstrating that the State acts as a **model employer**. A recent survey in Finland produced evidence on how stated values and principles of the State's personnel policy were integrated in the daily practice.

What to assess?

7. Ex-post assessment of integrity and corruption-prevention policies is a cross-cutting topic that relates to core governance and public management issues. While the more traditional assessment initiatives have mainly focused on the implementation of selected tools, in particular laws, codes of conduct, administrative procedures, some countries have developed a more holistic approach to examine key factors influencing the wider organisational culture:

- **Tools** – The central aim of evaluation in Japan was to understand how the Ethics Law and Ethics Code were applied in central ministries, and how they have affected daily practices.
- **Risks** – Such as procedures in vulnerable areas. For example, in the United Kingdom a report published in March 2004 put the spotlight on the levels of fraud and error occurring in claims for Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance Figures.
- **Performance** – In New Zealand, recognised expectations and standards are systematically reviewed as part of the broader evaluation of ministry performance conducted by the State Services Commission. Such reviews focus on organisational integrity and not on the individual conduct of officials.
- **Programme** – The effectiveness of the ethics programme within the Executive Branch administered by the United States Office of Government Ethics has been assessed from an employee perspective and also with regard to the ethical culture of the executive branch.

8. While the proper identification of measurable outputs and outcomes is a precondition for assessing how particular tools function as part of a system, assessing the **impact** of the whole integrity policy requires both the recognition of causality of inputs and impacts, and the creation of credible indicators that highlight their relationships.

9. Providing evidence on impact is an emerging issue that urges governments to develop the necessary capacity to examine more complex issues such as the impact of values in the daily processes of the administration. The March 2004 report on "Values as Part of the Daily Job" reviews 'values in action', in particular how declared public service values have been integrated in the daily practice of operative units in Finland.

Assessment by whom?

10. Ensuring the credibility of assessments is a key concern across OECD countries. Although public sector managers are still the central actors in assessing the implementation of integrity and corruption-prevention measures, involving independent experts and civil society representatives in programme reviews is an emerging trend. In addition, an increasing number of assessment initiatives have also been undertaken by independent institutions:

- **Supreme audit institutions** – The Canadian Auditor-General regularly reviews values and ethics issues in the federal public sector. The most recent report, for example, includes a chapter on "Accountability and Ethics in Government" (Chapter 2 of the November 2003 report that can be accessed at <http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/reports.nsf/html/20031102ce.html#ch2hd3a>), while previous reports also examined ethics in public institutions at the federal level (for example Chapter 12 of the 2000 report on Values and Ethics in the Federal Public Sector, <http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/reports.nsf/html/0012ce.html#0.2.0AKH9E.78C5D1.QX482G.QE>). Moreover, state auditor-generals review ethics at the sub-national level administrations (for example the 2001 Report of the Quebec Auditor-General reviews ethics in public institutions in Quebec, http://www.vgq.gouv.qc.ca/publications/rapp_2001_1/Faits/Index.html).
- **External consultants** – Private sector consultancy firms and research firms have been involved in conducting surveys, such as the Commonwealth's employee survey in Australia that provided evidence on the application of values for the 2002-2003 State of the Service Report of the Australian Public Service Commissioner. The ethics programme within the Executive Branch of the United States was assessed by a major private consultancy firm in 2000.

- **Academic research institutions** – The Seoul Institute of Transparency has developed complex indicators both for central government organisations and the Seoul Metropolitan Government (details of the survey methodology can be found in the case study on the experience of Korea at PGC-GOV-RD[2004]3).

How to assess?

11. Developing appropriate methods to capture useful evidence for assessment is a condition that should go hand in hand with the capacity for examining the information collected. A critical factor in the selection of methods is to ensure the balancing of objective data and subjective opinions (potential perception of managers, personnel and citizens) that may over or under emphasize actual effects. While surveys have become a popular tool for a growing number of administrations, they have been widely applied in the private sector (for example computer assisted telephone interviewing was used for the 2003 National Business Ethics Survey in the United States, see at <http://www.ethics.org/nbes2003/index.html>). The experience of OECD countries shows increasing intention in the public sector to balance methods by combining:

- Traditional administrative control methods and **targeted opinion surveys** of stakeholders – The Integrity Perception Index developed by the Korea Independent Commission Against Corruption (KICAC) is based on direct feedback from public service users and partners of public administration instead of general survey of perceptions in business and the public at large (details of the complex indicators used in Korea can be found in the case study on the Korean experiences at PGC-GOV-RD[2004]3).
- Surveys and **focus groups** – In addition to the survey of employees on the implementation of the Ethics Law and Code of Conduct in Japan, the Ethics Board also involved focus groups to gather opinions from private sector managers, representatives of local governments, media and academia.
- Informal and **public hearings** – In addition to publishing ‘consultation papers’ and inviting submissions, over the last decade the UK Committee on Standards in Public Life has conducted a series of informal meetings with stakeholders and formal public hearings on issues of principal concern.

12. Further details on national experiences of assessing integrity and corruption prevention measures and practices can be found in the following background documents:

- Study on the Assessment of the Effectiveness of Measures Preventing and Countering Corruption in France, [GOV/PGC/RD(2004)2].
- Review on Assessing Effectiveness of Integrity Measures in the Public Service: the Case of the Government of Korea, [GOV/PGC/RD(2004)3].

ANNEX

The OECD project on Developing Policy Assessment Measures for Integrity and Corruption Prevention Activities in the Public Service

Objectives

13. While previous OECD surveys aimed to review formal arrangements, to provide a snapshot of existing mechanisms in place and to highlight trends in member countries, this ongoing project assists a more empirically and evidence-based policy-making in member countries. The project shifts the emphasis from 'policy intention' to 'capture the reality', in particular by:

- Improving governments' understanding about possible approaches, processes and methods for assessing integrity and corruption prevention measures.
- Developing capacity to assess existing solutions and provide critical/decisive feedback to recognise the gaps between policy intention and actual practices, and give directions for policy adjustment based on evidence.
- Developing an initial inventory of integrity and corruption-prevention measures that have proved effective and the conditions identified for their success.

Working methods and outputs

14. The OECD project was launched in mid-2003 to bring together leading organisations, share their experiences and develop a unique international benchmark. Key steps of the project include:

- a) **Mapping existing assessment strategies and practices** – The project started with the collection of information on existing approaches, tools, methods and practices used in member countries for assessing the impact of integrity and corruption prevention measures. Understanding the national context is particularly critical in this project, consequently a set of country studies helps recognise how assessment efforts fit into the administrative, political and legal contexts of individual countries.
- b) **Developing an analytical framework** – Based on the analyses of concrete practices in OECD countries, the project reviews key components of sound policy assessment and also examines the feasibility of an innovative generic assessment framework. An Expert Group (whose meeting is scheduled for 9-10 September 2004) will provide guidance in developing the assessment framework.
- c) **Assessment of policy-assessment strategies** – The Expert Group will review the validity of the analytical framework for accurate comparison and its practicality in guiding managers and policy-makers in the design and running of self-assessment undertakings. Countries will also be invited to test the analytical framework by undertaking self-assessments of their existing arrangements against the analytical framework.
- d) **Identifying the building blocks of effective integrity policy based on evidence** – The project will also collect information on the empirical findings of assessment projects in member countries. The

Expert Group will identify **measures that proved effective** or **gaps recognised** in the implementation of integrity and corruption prevention policy. The measures that work well and the conditions identified for their success will contribute to the revision of existing inventory of key building blocks for an effective integrity and corruption prevention policy.

Synthesis report

15. Findings and conclusions of the project will be published in a comprehensive **report**, scheduled for end 2004. The report will be structured into the following three main parts:

a) **A genuine inventory of methods and solutions**

The first part of the report will present the comparative inventory of solutions used by public organisations for assessing the implementation of integrity and corruption prevention measures. It will start by reviewing existing tools, methods and practices used by champion organisations (e.g. output statistics, programme reviews, audits, tailored surveys, focus groups, hearings), and analyse their strengths and weaknesses. Concrete country examples will illustrate good practices and also show how the approach used fits into the organisational and country contexts. Country examples will be drawn from the database produced in the course of mapping existing assessment strategies and practices across OECD countries.

b) **The assessment framework**

The second part of the report will introduce the ‘assessment framework’ that identifies approaches, fundamental conditions, institutional and procedural arrangements for effectively assessing policy and practice for promoting integrity and preventing corruption. In particular, it will list key components of sound policy assessment, both procedural and substantial elements that public sector managers can use as a generic framework for designing and conducting future assessment initiatives.

c) **Case studies**

A set of four country studies will illustrate how public institutions have used multiple approaches and methods for assessing measures to promote integrity and prevent corruption in different country contexts. Case studies will outline the experience of both the central government and sub-national level in:

- Australia – recent initiatives of the Australian Public Service Commission at the Commonwealth level and of specialised agencies in three states. The study will be reviewed at the Expert Group meeting on 9-10 September 2004.
- Korea – the emerging practice of the Korea Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Seoul Metropolitan Government. The background document GOV/PGC/RD(2004)3 provides more details on the Review on Assessing Effectiveness of Integrity Measures in the Public Service: the Case of the Government of Korea.

The European experiences will be reviewed both in:

- The continental administrative context – the Study on the Assessment of the Effectiveness of Measures Preventing and Countering Corruption in France is provided as background document under [GOV/PGC/RD(2004)2].

- The Scandinavian context – based on the recent assessment projects in Finland, particularly on the March 2004 report on "Values to be Part of the Daily Job". The study will be reviewed at the Expert Group meeting on 9-10 September 2004.