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**PUBLIC GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE
PUBLIC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Working Party on Public Employment and Management

OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability

Online Implementation Support – Information Note

Virtual meeting of the Working Party on Public Employment and Management
15 December 2020

This document outlines the proposed structure of a PEM website that will provide content to support the implementation of the Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability. Delegates are invited to share their initial feedback and provide comments to guide its future development.

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Background

1. The OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability (PSLC – hereafter ‘the Recommendation’) provides a shared set of principles to guide work toward more effective public services. In the context of an uncertain future and the impact of megatrends such as globalisation, technology and changing demographics, the Recommendation fills an important gap in public management.
2. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has illustrated the importance of skilled public servants working in flexible organisational structures, and with the right tools and leadership. Post-pandemic, governments may be in a position to review and capitalise on many of the changes introduced, and place them on a more sustainable footing. As such, the principles of the Recommendation are now more relevant than ever:

Figure 1. OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability



3. The purpose of this online implementation support is to provide a key resource for members working on implementation of the principles of the Recommendation. The online implementation support is currently under development and members are invited to share their feedback.

Structure and components

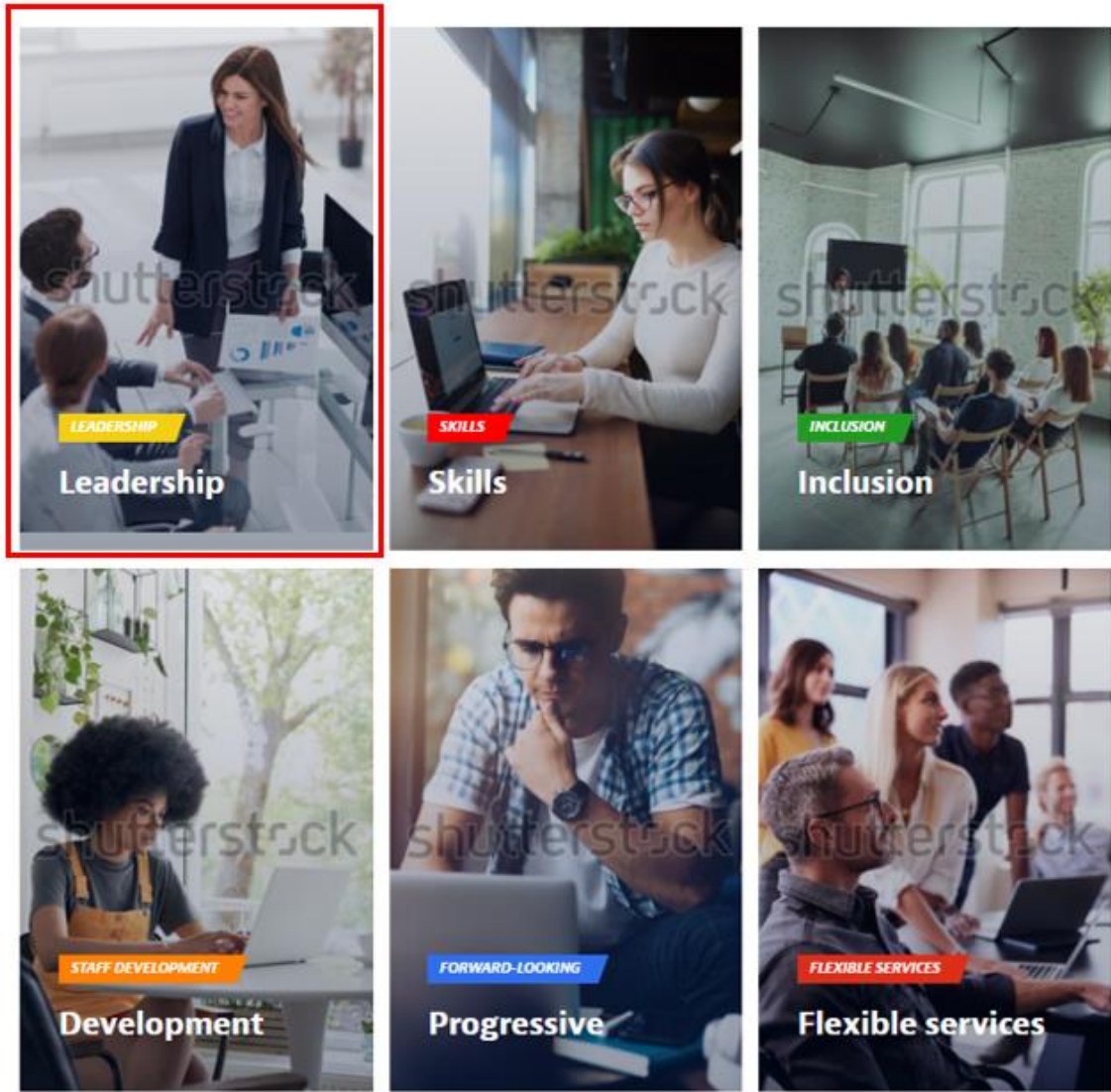
4. The online implementation support will consolidate and structure information that currently exists across a variety of formats: OECD research, country-specific projects, publications, data sources and conferences materials, etc. The purpose of the online implementation support is to make this information more accessible. By making this information more accessible, it will provide a valuable resource for administrations seeking to implement the principles of the Recommendation.
5. The online implementation support will be an online resource accessible to the public through the website of the OECD. There will be two main ways to use the online implementation support. First, the online implementation support will be structured along six key themes that underpin the principles of the Recommendation (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). Second, the online implementation support will be a repository of resources such as case studies and examples of good practices from across the OECD.

Themes

6. The Recommendation consists of 14 principles grouped into three pillars. (Figure 1). The themes reinforce each other, recognising the interconnected nature of public sector workforce development. It is difficult to have forward-looking public services without strong leadership and a culture of inclusion, for example. The purpose of separating the themes is to allow users of the online implementation support to take a closer look into several components of each of the themes. The six themes that underpin the Recommendation, as well as the pillars to which they relate, are listed below:

PILLAR 1	<p>Leadership: Public services require leaders capable of embodying the behaviours they wish to see in their workforce – such as supporting and driving innovation – and in setting norms and expectations. Given the impact of senior leadership groups in policy development and delivery, many countries have distinct competency and performance management frameworks for the senior leadership group. This theme will focus on these frameworks and the tools needed to develop effective leaders.</p>
	<p>Inclusion: Public services must be able to incorporate a variety of perspectives and individual preferences to policy development and employment packages. Workforce diversity means greater representation of people from different genders and backgrounds at all levels of the public service, but also a greater diversity of experience and approaches. This means developing data-driven approaches and mainstreaming efforts to mitigate bias throughout systems and processes. This theme will focus on the tools and frameworks to bring greater diversity to the public service.</p>
PILLAR 2	<p>Skills: In line with the changing policy contexts facing public services, the skills and skill mixes required of public servants are also evolving. Some of these skills and professions are only emerging now. Public administrations will need to reflect on the balance of professionals with deep expertise in specific policy or technical areas and more generalist hires who can learn quickly and adapt to new circumstances as missions evolve. This theme will examine skills needs and present tools, case studies and good practices to address them.</p>
	<p>Workforce development: Managers must have a key role in various facets of human resources – supported by the right tools and advice – to attract, recruit, develop and retain the type of people they need. This places a premium not just on recruitment, but on continuous learning, internal mobility and career growth, and pay and reward packages. This theme will examine the frameworks, data and tools that can be used to build effective workforces.</p>
PILLAR 3	<p>Forward-looking planning: Public administrations need to expand the scope of workforce planning and development to take into account a variety of possible scenarios and desired outcomes. Looking to the future means going beyond day-to-day administration and drawing on data and strategic workforce planning to build the ability to ‘flex’ in response to uncertainty. This theme will examine the frameworks, data and tools that can be used to facilitate forward-looking planning.</p>
	<p>Flexible/agile public employment systems: Flexibility must underpin each of the above themes, which in some cases can mean examining existing procedures and rules to make sure that resources can be directed to where they are most needed and put to work in a way that maximises outcomes. This involves internal mobility programmes (and supporting managers as key enablers of these) and making sure that job classification systems are fit-for-purpose. This theme will present data, tools and country examples that can underpin greater flexibility in the public administration.</p>

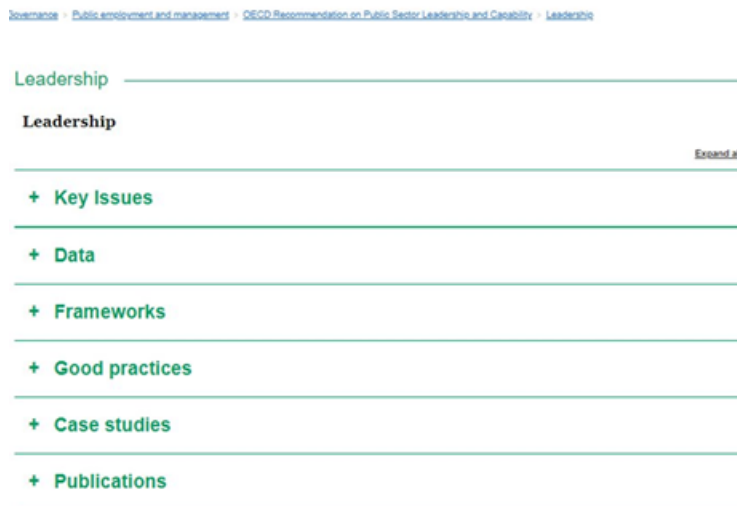
Infographic 1. Mock-up of home page of Online implementation support



7. Clicking on one of the boxes above will bring the user to a thematic page. Each of these pages will have a similar structure divided into the following sections (See annex A for an illustrative example):

- i. **Key issues:** Clicking on the tile will allow users to examine the key issues behind each theme and will include clear links to the relevant principles of the Recommendation. The purpose is to present the issues in an accessible and user-friendly manner while maintaining a clear link to the Recommendation.
- ii. **Frameworks:** Each theme will include relevant frameworks developed by the OECD such as the *Leadership for a High Performing Public Service* (Gerson, 2020^[1]) or the *OECD Skills Model* (OECD, 2017^[2]). The purpose is to reinforce the link between these frameworks and their application in practice.
- iii. **Data:** Each theme will feature one or two relevant data points taken from surveys carried out by the Secretariat. The goal is to make more dynamic use of data.
- iv. **Good practices:** Short country examples of good practices relating to specific themes will be showcased
- v. **Case studies:** Each theme will conclude with links to several in-depth case studies going into more detail than good practices. Examples include the case studies conducted for the project on senior civil service, and those that are being conducted for the paper on the Future of Work in the public service.
- vi. **Self-Assessment tools:** Where relevant, themes will include self-assessment tools or frameworks developed in the course of OECD projects.

Infographic 2. Mock-up of 'Leadership' theme



Resources

8. All the information presented in the six themes will also be organized by resource type allowing users to access information by looking for case studies, data, OECD publications and other tools. .

9. The Sample thematic content in Annex A is a mock-up of the type of content that users of the online implementation support can expect to find for the *Leadership* theme.

Next steps and questions for discussion

10. Development of the online support will continue into 2021. From time to time, the Secretariat may request information/resources from Delegates to be included in the online implementation support. We expect a beta version to go live in early 2021 and invite Delegates to provide feedback around the following questions:

- What content would be most useful for you to profile in this format?
- What aspects of the website design would be most useful to you?
- Have you seen examples of other online resources that we could draw from?

Annex A. Sample thematic content: Leadership



OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability

oe.cd/public-sector-recommendation



Home page

Megatrends such as globalisation, technology – and the Covid-19 pandemic – have already had and will continue to exert big changes on the world of work. These changes mean new skills needs, new ways of working – and a greater urgency in planning. Public service leaders – senior civil servants who lead and improve major government functions – are at the heart of government effectiveness. They translate political direction into the policies and programmes that keep citizens healthy, safe, and economically productive.

Read more below for more information on how the OECD and its Members are working to support leaders in the public service.

Key issues

This section will briefly illustrate the key issues behind each theme and will include clear links to the relevant principles of the Recommendation. The purpose is to present the issues in an accessible and user-friendly manner while maintaining a clear link to the Recommendation.

Leaders in the public service play a key role in setting a vision for the public administration and in embodying important behaviours and upholding values. They define the values of the public service as much through formal statements as they do through their own personal behaviour.

- Working for the public good is a distinct differentiator of a career in public service, and leaders are responsible for embedding this and other values in decision-making. This requires capable leaders supported by capable systems and processes.
- It means a public service that reflects the diversity of the society it serves, which means valuing a broad range of talents, skills, backgrounds and experiences. This might involve re-examining longstanding ways of doing things, challenging received wisdom and questioning whether established processes are fit-for-purpose and fair.

The following principles of the Recommendation are particularly relevant and may be used as a guide by those wishing to develop leadership capability in the public service:

Principle 1. Define the values of the public service and promote values-based decision-making.

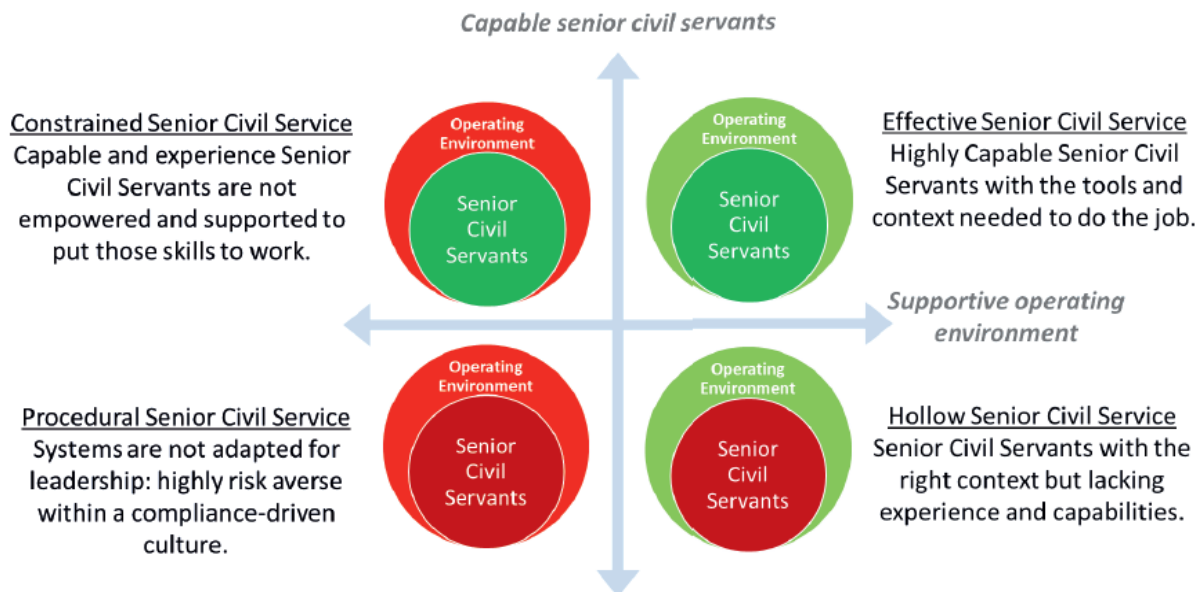
Principle 2. Build leadership capability in the public service.

Principle 3. Ensure an inclusive and safe public service that reflects the diversity of the society it represents.

Principle 4. Build a proactive and innovative public service that takes a long-term perspective in the design and implementation of policy and services.

Frameworks

Each theme will include relevant frameworks developed by the OECD. The purpose is to reinforce the link between these frameworks and their application in practice.



[Click here](#) to access the report on *Leadership for a high performing civil service*

The Civil Service depends to a great degree on empowered leaders working in supportive operating environments. This chart can help members reflect on their current state and serve as a basis to inform internal reform projects. The ideal quadrant is the top right, where SCS are well equipped with capabilities and operating environments that allow them to put those capabilities to best use. Each of the other three quadrants of this matrix suggests different weaknesses of the system and areas where further investment could be directed to develop an effective senior civil service.

Moving from organisational capabilities to focus on the individual leadership skills required of public servants, the OECD has mapped four distinct capabilities: starting at the core, individual SCS are required

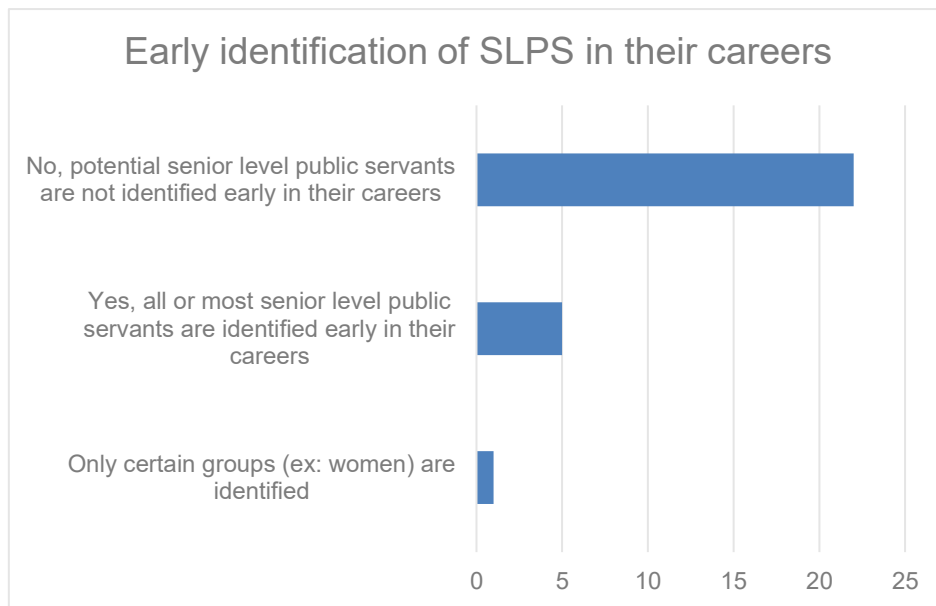


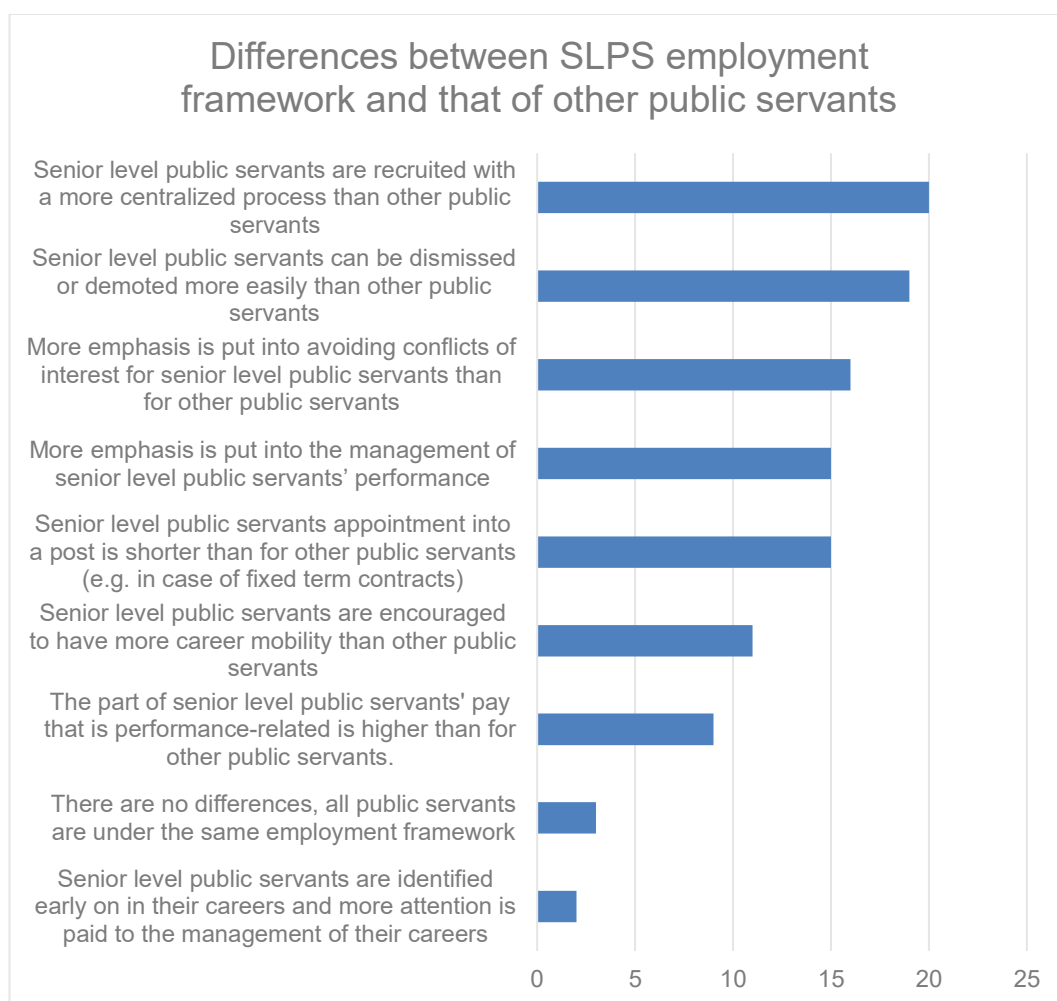
to be values-based leaders, negotiating multiple and often competing values that guide their decisions making towards the public interest. Successful leaders challenge their own internal perceptions through open inclusion – by

searching for voices and perspectives beyond those they normally hear from (open) and ensuring psychological safety for these voices to contribute to their leadership challenges (inclusion). They act as organisational stewards by reinforcing a trust- and values-based culture and equipping their workforce with the right skills, tools and working environments. Finally, looking beyond their own organisation, successful SCS are adept at collaborating through networks, with other government actors, and beyond.

Data





Each theme will feature one or two relevant data points taken from surveys carried out by the Secretariat. The goal is to make more dynamic use of data provided by PEM delegates.





Good practices on Leadership

Those wishing to learn from other country experiences can access short examples relating to specific themes.

-  **Australia's employee census:** When asked whether they thought senior leaders in their organisation were sufficiently visible, employees who strongly agreed showed substantially higher scores (double in some cases) on all components of employee engagement. [Click here to find out more.](#)
-  **Brazil's Sigepe Talent Bank:** The Sigepe Talent Bank is a platform serving as a skills database for public servants who would like to access leadership positions. [Click here to find out more.](#)
-  **Chile's Senior Executive Service:** The Chilean government created the Sistema de Alta Dirección Pública (SADP), a central senior civil service system to establish a professional senior management cadre. [Click here to find out more.](#)
-  **Estonia's employer branding for senior civil servants:** Estonia has invested in employer branding to promote careers as a senior public servant. Previous advertising campaigns have

emphasised the mission-oriented nature of public service and appealed to candidates' motivation to have impact and serve the public good. [Click here to find out more.](#)

- 🇳🇱 Netherlands vision of public sector leadership:** The Dutch vision of public sector leadership recognises that there is not one single ideal type of leader; rather there are qualities every public leader should show. [Click here to find out more.](#)

In-Depth Case studies on Leadership

Each theme will conclude with links to several in-depth case studies going into more detail than good practices. Examples include the case studies conducted for the project on senior civil service, and those that are being conducted for the paper on the Future of Work in the public service.

[each of these will link to the longer PDF document]

- + Finland: Leadership for Systems Change - Building leadership capabilities for implementing horizontal priorities in Finland**

The Finnish case study looks at how Directors General work collaboratively across sectors to achieve common goals for society. The case study explores two sets of issues which challenge the implementation of horizontal working methods through vertical ministries: first, leaders' capabilities to balance horizontal and vertical priorities, and to adapt to new ways of working; second, a range of institutional factors outside the leadership capability realm such as resources allocations for horizontal projects, structural arrangements, and accountability mechanisms.

- 🇮🇪 Ireland: Building Leadership Capabilities for Innovation in a Digital Government - The case of senior leadership in the Irish Public Service**

Ireland intends to boost the innovation culture in its public service organisations and strengthen leadership for empowering innovation. To this end, the Irish Government piloted a learning-oriented workshop developed by the OECD among a group of its senior public service leaders in order to better understand and develop sustainable innovative organizations. This case study is the output of this workshop which brings together existing OECD work on digital transformation, senior public leadership, and core skills for public sector innovation to explore how Ireland's senior leaders support innovation within their organisations and what interventions could build their capabilities – and the capabilities of their workforce – to drive more innovation.

- 🇫🇷 France: Building Capacity to Lead the Digital Transformation: a new mind-set in the French civil service**

This case study discusses how France is preparing its senior civil servants to support and steer digital technologies to create public value, namely in the context of France's strategy for the future of public service, Administration Publique 2022. As the fast pace of digital transformation is placing new expectations on SCS, various French public organisations are piloting initiatives to strengthen SCS capacity to lead the digital transformation. This case study presents some of these initiatives.

- 🇦🇺 Australia: Inclusive Leadership in the Public Service of New South Wales, Australia**

This case study looks at the leadership challenges of designing and implementing 'next generation' diversity and inclusion (D&I) strategies in the state of New South Wales (NSW), Australia. Specifically, it looks at how inclusive leaders in the NSW public sector workforce are building evidence-based approaches to achieving D&I targets, are embedding D&I throughout the employee lifecycle to ensure coherence and broaden the reach of policies, are tackling implementation gaps by "nudging" towards change, and are building sound governance structures that promote accountability for results.

Canada: Building Leadership Competencies on Diversity and Inclusion

The Canadian case study looks at how senior civil servants develop an inclusive culture to achieve better organisational performance and health. These “inclusive leaders” need to have a strong grasp of the changing notions of diversity, the past barriers to implementation, and the skills necessary to translate diversity and inclusion into beneficial outcomes. The case study suggests a range of areas that Canada can explore to build on their strong commitment to D&I agenda, including ways of expanding the diversity of perspective and experience in the public service.

Israel: Working with stakeholders to build a talented workforce, the role of the Senior Civil Servants

As some organisations in the public sector struggle to attract talented civil servants, an emerging practice is the active involvement of senior civil servants (SCS) in key aspects of recruitment such as candidate outreach, job profiling, and interviewing/assessment. This case study focusses on four examples from the Israeli Civil Service where SCS have played an active role in bringing in needed skills to their organisation. They primarily achieved this through either encouraging candidates with sought-after skills to apply to work in government and/or through taking a greater personal role in the process of job profiling, testing and hiring the candidates.

Netherlands: Senior Civil Servants as Societal Partners

More and more, Dutch senior civil servants are finding that they need to work with external stakeholders (other levels of government, private sector agents, civil society organisations and even individual citizens) in order to address a wide range of public policy challenges. This case study explores the changing context/landscape in which Dutch senior civil servants currently work, and discusses how they could improve their roles as societal partners to provide public value through greater engagement and co-operation with stakeholders.

Estonia: Leadership prepared for the challenges of today and the future

This case study uses the experience of Estonia and the Top Civil Service Excellence Centre to explore questions about the future of leadership development in a public sector system. What is the role of continuous development? Who is responsible? How do we measure the results and make it sustainable? How does this link to the overall leadership system and lifecycle (recruitment, development, retention)?

Korea’s Competency Assessment Test for Senior Civil Service

This case study looks at how Korea has implemented a competency model and assessment process. The case study shows how Korea has used its competency assessment system not only to improve the leadership competencies of its senior civil servants, but as a tool to transform the culture of the civil service. The case study introduces Korea’s civil service, describes the model and the assessment process, and concludes with reflections on opportunities for further development.

[Find out more](#) 

Self-assessment tools

Where relevant, themes will include self-assessment tools or frameworks developed in the course of OECD projects such as Public Governance Reviews.

Senior Civil Service System self-assessment tool

The OECD has developed a self-assessment tool (a 'checklist') to provoke reflection and generate discussion. It translates the key components of what makes a senior civil service system into specific statements that should be true for countries to be placed in the effective senior civil service category.

