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DRAFT QUESTIONNAIRE ON STRENGTHENING GOVERNMENT-CITIZEN CONNECTIONS

**1st Session of the Working Group on Strengthening Government-Citizen Connections
15-16 February 1999**

This draft questionnaire, aimed at gathering information on the overall framework, policies and practices of OECD countries for providing information and consulting with citizens, is provided to members of the working group on "Strengthening Government-Citizen Relations" for their review and comment.

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Introduction to the PUMA questionnaire on “Strengthening Government-Citizen Connections”

Objectives: This draft proposal aims to support development of an initial understanding of the overall legal, policy and management framework in all OECD Member countries for providing information for citizens, consulting with the public, and promoting citizen participation. It also addresses to a limited degree the question of availability of information on government use of the Internet and World Wide Web to communicate with citizens in anticipation of a follow-up questionnaire to begin development of information technology indicators. The results should be considered a first step toward achieving the activity’s overall objective: to support government efforts to strengthen public participation, transparency and democratic accountability, and ultimately, policy effectiveness, through development of comparative information, analysis and advice.

Methods and timing of work: In order to obtain responses from as many countries as possible, it is essential to minimise the burden of collecting information and preparing written responses by limiting the questionnaire to a few, basic and key questions in each issue area. However, this draft should also be seen as very preliminary, with complete flexibility to revise as necessary to best meet country interests. Following review and revision of the questionnaire based on input from the working group in February and the PUMA Committee in March, the questionnaire will be sent to representatives of all Member countries for a co-ordinated government response by mid-May. Responses will be requested from “Citizens” working group members for those countries that are participating in the working group, and from PUMA Committee contacts or their designated representatives in non-working group countries. These and related issues will also be pursued in greater depth through selected country case studies focusing on examples in particular sectors, and based on interviews with a broad range of participants in the policy process (government officials, non-governmental organisations, media, academics, etc.).

A second working group meeting to consider a questionnaire to develop information technology indicators is planned in June. Results of the two questionnaires and initial case studies will be presented to the working group for consideration in late 1999. Based on these preliminary results, the working group will be asked to consider how further work should be carried out, whether a follow-up “Strengthening Government-Citizen Connections” questionnaire should be launched to develop more specific and comparable information, and how these results can be most usefully disseminated more broadly.

Working group discussion: There are a number of other, sometimes more difficult and subjective, questions of interest that could be asked, but which could perhaps be answered more effectively through informal discussion of the working group, rather than through a questionnaire. For example:

- What are the government’s objectives and motivations for pursuing these different aspects of government-citizen relations?
- How have government policies and actions evolved in these areas and what motivated their evolution?
- What are the main benefits and difficulties associated with public consultation?
- Will information on policies and actions at the national (central) level be sufficiently useful to meet your government’s interests, or should PUMA work in this area be broadened to address actions by local governments and regional offices? If research is broadened, how should this be pursued (i.e. through PUMA national contacts as intermediaries, or additional local contacts).

The working group is asked to be prepared to discuss the situation in their countries informally to provide an initial context for moving ahead with the written questionnaire. Countries are not expected to have prepared responses to the questionnaire in time for the February meeting, though preliminary discussion of answers to these questions will be welcome. Rather, they are asked to comment on the usefulness, relevance and capacity to obtain information that responds to these questions; and whether certain questions should be clarified, eliminated, or alternative questions considered.

**Questions for written survey on
“Strengthening Government-Citizen Connections”**

Draft for Comment

The attached questionnaire will be sent to all Member countries in the context of the Public Management Committee’s work on Strengthening Government-Citizen Connections.

The completed questionnaire should be returned to **Christian Vergez** and **Daniel Blume** at the Public Management Service by 14 May, 1999, care of:

OECD Public Management Service
2, rue André-Pascal
75775 Paris Cedex 16
Fax: (33-1) 45 24 87 96

Any enquiries regarding this questionnaire should be addressed to Mr. Vergez or Mr. Blume.

Mr. Vergez can be reached at (33-1) 45 24 90 44; e-mail: christian.vergez@oecd.org;

Mr. Blume can be reached at (33-1) 45 24 97 59; E-mail: daniel.blume@oecd.org.

Please insert the name and title of the person who completed the questionnaire:

Name.....
Title.....
Address.....
.....
Telephone.....
Fax.....
E-mail.....

Questions for written survey on “Strengthening Government-Citizen Connections”

Legal and policy framework for strengthening government-citizen connections

1. What laws and policies have been adopted, and what are their key points, in the following areas:

- 1.1. To ensure citizen access to government information, and to promote its dissemination?
- 1.2. To promote citizen participation in government decision-making?
- 1.3. To ensure citizen involvement in improving the quality and responsiveness of service delivery?

Please include relevant texts. If available, English or French texts will be appreciated..

2. Can you provide examples of policy **sectors** where special laws or policies are in place:

- 2.1. Emphasising access to information (e.g., environmental information, information to protect consumers, etc.)?
- 2.2. Promoting citizen participation in decision-making or improvement of services?

Implementation and Tools

3. What kinds of institutions (e.g. special department or agency, commission, task force, ombudsman, etc.), tools (communication and management tools) and resources (financial and human) are in place to ensure that these laws and policies are implemented effectively?

4. Does the government measure its use of different communication tools, and the relative balance among their use for communication with the public (e.g. press releases, press conferences, TV, radio, newspapers, regular mail, e-mail, telephone, fax, publication on the Web, face-to-face contact, intermediary institutions, information kiosks, etc.)?

5. If so, what is the balance among these different communication tools, and how is it changing, if at all?

Implementation and Tools (continued)

6. The OECD is considering whether to develop indicators involving the use of IT in government communications, consultation, and delivery of services. In exploring this possibility, it would be of interest to know what kind of information is already collected and might be useful on a comparative basis, for example, do you have quantitative information on:

- % of government ministries and departments with Web pages;
- Most popular government Web site (in terms of number of users per month);
- Access figures for main gateway(s) to government information and services;
- % of public servants with access to e-mail;
- % of public servants with access to government intranet;
- % of public servants with access to World Wide Web;
- % of citizens with access to e-mail;
- % of citizens with access to World Wide Web;
- % of government services available on-line;
- % of government services provided on-line;
- other measures of IT use to suggest that would be of interest on a comparative basis.

Actual figures are not sought at this stage, but if possible, please specify data sources.

Evaluating results

7. How does the government evaluate how well information, communication and consultation policies and practices are working?

8. Can you provide examples of “promising practices,” explaining what worked and why, addressing:

8.1. information for citizens?

8.2. citizen consultation/participation with individuals, with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), or other intermediaries representing the public (e.g. social partners)?

9. Can you provide examples in these areas of experience that worked less well, and why? What were the main barriers to success? How can such difficulties be overcome?