



Management in Government

Development of OECD Comparative Country Data

International Public Service Rankings Conference

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Summary

- ▶ **In public management, data shortages drive us towards “best practice”, with a very weak debate on public administration**
- ▶ **Proposed OECD response is to work towards an annual publication “Government at a Glance”**
- ▶ **OECD is a good place to start from – strong comparative advantage and good external support**
- ▶ **Underlying strategy is to build up the supply of and demand for credible data – initial emphasis on purely descriptive data, with moves towards evaluative indicators later**
- ▶ **Major review of existing data undertaken - datasets now identified for the first annual Working Paper**

Government is an under-measured sector

- ▶ **Lack of good quality comparative information**
- ▶ **Recent development of “governance indicators” based on subjective assessment and with little relevance for public management**
- ▶ **Consequences:**
 - **Assessing progress made and learning from other countries’ experience limited**
 - **Assumption about “best practice”**
 - **Definitions and terms applied inconsistently, undermining the public administration debate**

Proposed OECD response

- ▶ **Strong interest from the relevant OECD governing body (Public Governance Committee)**
- ▶ **Proposals to produce annual working papers including methodology discussion**
- ▶ **Building to “Government at a Glance” in December 2009**
- ▶ **Consistent with other OECD “at a glance” publications – particularly:**
 - **Society at a Glance**
 - **Health at a Glance**
 - **Education at a Glance**

Key steps

November/
December 2006

Publication of Working Paper Edition 1

- Two parts: data and expert discussion

December 2006

PGC decision to continue working towards WP2

November/
December 2007

Publication of Working Paper Edition 2

- Additional datasets, more analysis and discussion

November/
December 2008

Publication of Working Paper Edition 3

- Discussion of key data gaps and data quality

December 2008

PGC decision to institute the annual publication

December 2009

Publication of “Government at a Glance”

OECD comparative advantage

- ▶ **OECD seen to be a credible and active player**
 - ***Statistics Directorate:*** OECD organizational home of key data concerning government expenditures – likely future collection of volume measures of government outputs. Also planning a forum on Key Indicators which may provide further datasets on outcomes.
 - ***Centre for Tax Policy & Administration:*** data on tax revenue
 - ***Directorate for Education:*** maintains data on educational outputs and outcomes, particularly resulting from the PISA surveys. Some data on institutional and managerial arrangements.
 - ***Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs:*** Health Care Database has information on inputs and outcomes, and some data on functioning and performance of public employment services.
 - ***Economics Department:*** Will analyse the institutional and managerial arrangements within government which influence the technical efficiency of public service providers.
 - ***Development Centre:*** Overview of internationally comparable governance indicators.

Strong external support

- ▶ **Dialogue with EUROSTAT**
- ▶ **Enthusiasm from National Statistical Offices**
- ▶ **Strong interest from senior public managers**

Underlying strategy

- ▶ **Tight definitions of government**
 - Consistent with SNA
 - Solve the problem of publicly funded private sector providers
- ▶ **Initial emphasis on purely descriptive data**
 - Simple classification into inputs, processes and outputs
 - Some consideration of outcomes and contextual data
 - Start from existing data and statistics
 - Gather new data when and if necessary and at minimum cost
- ▶ **Build up the supply and demand for credible data**
 - Bring together the best available data in a well-recognised publication
 - Encourage debate and highlighting gaps
 - Inclusion of datasets in the publication will act as an incentive for development
- ▶ **Consider moves towards evaluative indicators later – much later**
 - Possible productivity/efficiency studies
 - Effectiveness reviews

Strategy might have to be adjusted

- ▶ **Robust descriptive measures will allow:**
 - greater focus and discipline in public management discussions;
 - improved quality and depth of GOV peer reviews.
- ▶ **However, there are pressures for a more evaluative track earlier**
 - Identify how the impact of reforms is to be assessed
 - Pro-active hunt for new data that would allow these assessments
 - Not clear on the degree to which this will imply normative assertions concerning institutional arrangements

Progress made

- ▶ **Review of existing data undertaken:**
 - Assessed the major sources of cross-country data concerned with inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes in government (central/federal, state and local) at the whole-of government level, in key sectors, in some central agencies
 - Using the “Quality Framework for OECD Statistics”
 - Modest set of new GOV data has been identified
- ▶ **Comprehensive literature review**
- ▶ **Establishment of dialogue with data owners and users – project network**

Assessing data quality and relevance

Criteria employed

- ▶ **Relevance**
- ▶ **Accuracy**
- ▶ **Credibility**
- ▶ **Timeliness and punctuality**
- ▶ **Interpretability**
- ▶ **Internal coherence**

Assessment revealed the paucity of data

- ▶ We reviewed 28 OECD datasets and 24 non-OECD datasets
- ▶ Of these, decided only 12 and 3 respectively were relevant and distinctive

Datasets now identified for the first annual Working Paper

- ❑ **Inputs and processes**
 - ▶ **Public employment**
 - Pay and workforce size/composition
 - Institutional and management arrangements
 - Ethical infrastructure and oversight
 - ▶ **Fiscal and budgetary management**
 - Institutional and management arrangements
 - Expenditures/transfers
- ❑ **Processes**
 - ▶ **Policy management/coordination**
 - Open government
 - Centre of government structures
 - ▶ **Non-fiscal policy mechanisms**
 - Regulatory quality
 - Institutional and management arrangements
- ❑ **Outputs**
 - ▶ Health
 - ▶ Education

Mainly from existing available data – although a modest new data collection effort underway

Conclusion

- ▶ **Strategy seems reasonable and well-supported**
- ▶ **Initial emphasis on descriptive measures now agreed – and will provide focus and discipline in public management discussions**
- ▶ **Pressures for a more evaluative approach might lead to a twin-track approach – possibly with some assessments about progress towards preferred institutional arrangements**