

Centres of Government (CoGs) are taking a more active role in aligning multi-department workplans to government actions. This trend is driven by the rise of multidimensional issues (e.g. environmental sustainability, competitiveness, inequality, trust) which require whole of government responses, and by growing demands from people for better results in service delivery and better co-ordination in policy formulation and implementation (i.e. minimise duplication and contradiction). This more active role for the centre of government throughout the policy cycle suggests the need for adequate co-ordination and monitoring tools.

Ten out of 12 LAC countries with available information reported that the number of cross-ministerial initiatives has increased over the past years, in line with trends in OECD countries where the CoG is taking on more direct leadership over substantive policy and reform areas (OECD, 2018). Colombia is the only LAC country that reported that the number of such initiatives decreased while in Brazil they have remained stable. In LAC countries, the CoG plays primarily a role to facilitate and support coordination while in OECD countries the CoG often plays a leadership role. In turn, it is more common in OECD countries than in LAC countries that the CoG to participate in discussions about the substance or content of the policy issues at stake.

The most common instruments used by the CoG in LAC countries to promote coordination are the establishment of task forces (12 out of 14 countries) and *ad hoc* meetings of senior officials (11 out of 14 countries). In Chile, coordination takes place exclusively at regular cabinet meetings and *ad hoc* cabinet discussions. Regular Cabinet meetings are the main coordination channel in OECD countries with available information (29 out of 33), but less common in LAC (8 out of 14 countries). A similar proportion of LAC and OECD countries (about a quarter) indicated that the CoG uses performance management systems to promote co-ordination across government (co-ordination is set as an objective and staff are evaluated on it).

The degree of influence of CoGs have over line ministries to promote coordination is heterogeneous across LAC countries. Nine out of the 14 surveyed countries reported a high influence; which implies that the CoG can impose sanctions. Four countries reported moderate levels of influence. In Peru while the CoG can trigger cooperation, it is less successful in ensuring that it is maintained over time in cross governmental projects. The trend is somewhat different in OECD countries where about three quarters of countries consider they only have “moderate” influence, indicating that while the “proximity to power” authority of the centre, is important, it may not be sufficient to exert influence over other parts of the administration (OECD, 2018)

The Bahamas is the only country that, at the time of the survey, reported that the CoG has no influence over other government entities to coordinate policies meaning that it can only express its views. However, this is expected to change as a delivery unit was established in the Prime Ministers’ office to coordinate policies in eight key priority areas (e.g. education, safety and security, infrastructure, modernisation, etc.).

Methodology and definitions

The data were collected via the 2018 OECD-IDB Survey on Organisation and Functions of the Centre of Government, to which 11 LAC countries responded. Brazil, Costa Rica and Mexico answered to the OECD questionnaire. Respondents were senior officials who provide direct support and advice to heads of government and the council of ministers. Data are for the year 2018. Data for the OECD refer to 33 countries (Italy did not complete the full questionnaire), are for 2016, and include Brazil and Costa Rica.

The term Centre of Government refers to the organisations and units that serve the Chief Executive (President or Prime Minister, and the Cabinet collectively) and perform certain cross cutting functions (strategic management, policy coordination, monitoring and improving performance, manage the politics of policies, and communications and accountability). Typical units of the centre of government include the ministry or general secretariat of the presidency, the Office of the Prime Minister, and the Cabinet Office, although other parts of the government can perform these functions.

Further reading

Alessandro, M., M. Lafuente and C. Santiso (2014), *Governing to Deliver: Reinventing the Center of Government in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Inter-American Development Bank, <https://publications.iadb.org/en/governing-deliver-reinventing-center-government-latin-america-and-caribbean>.

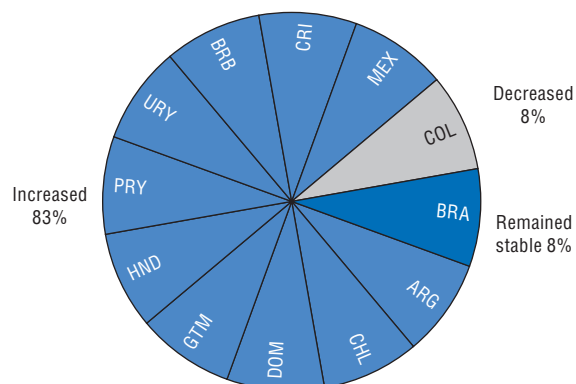
OECD (2018), *Centre Stage 2: The Organisation and Functions of the Centre of Government in OECD Countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://www.oecd.org/gov/centre-stage-2.pdf>

Figure notes

4.4. Bahamas and Peru did not answer to this question.

4.7 (Role of CoG in implementing of cross-governmental policy initiatives, 2018) is available online in Annex F.

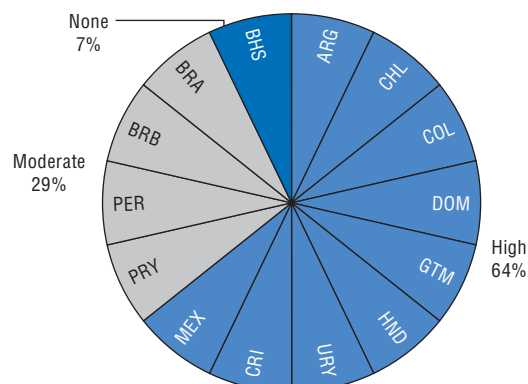
4.4. Variation in the number of cross-ministerial initiatives in recent years, 2018



Source: OECD-IDB (2018) "Survey on Organisation and Functions of the Centre of Government"; OECD (2017) "Survey on Organisation and Functions of the Centre of Government".

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934091733>

4.5. Level of influence of the CoG over line ministries to encourage coordination, 2018



Source: OECD-IDB (2018) "Survey on Organisation and Functions of the Centre of Government"; OECD (2017) "Survey on Organisation and Functions of the Centre of Government".

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934091752>

4.6. Institutional instruments or initiatives used by the CoG to ensure policy co-ordination, 2018

	Ad hoc meetings of senior officials	Task forces	Ad hoc Cabinet discussions	Regular Cabinet meetings	Written guidance	Performance management
Argentina	●	●	●	●	○	●
Bahamas	○	○	○	○	●	○
Barbados	●	●	○	●	○	○
Brazil	●	●	●	○	●	○
Chile	○	○	●	●	○	○
Colombia	●	●	●	○	●	●
Costa Rica	●	●	●	●	●	○
Dominican Republic	●	●	○	○	○	○
Guatemala	●	●	●	●	○	●
Honduras	●	●	○	○	○	○
Mexico	●	●	●	●	○	○
Paraguay	○	●	●	○	○	○
Peru	●	●	○	●	●	○
Uruguay	●	●	●	●	○	○
LAC total						
● Yes	11	12	9	8	5	3
○ No	3	2	5	6	9	11
OECD total						
● Yes	27	26	23	29	18	9
○ No	6	7	10	4	15	24

Source: OECD-IDB (2018) "Survey on Organisation and Functions of the Centre of Government"; OECD (2017) "Survey on Organisation and Functions of the Centre of Government".

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934091771>



From:

Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2020

Access the complete publication at:

<https://doi.org/10.1787/13130fbb-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2020), "Degree of influence and role in policy coordination of Centre of Government", in *Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2020*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/093384dd-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.