

## **2 Co-ordination across administrative units and policy sectors within local self-government units in Poland**

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This chapter discusses the framework for co-ordination across administrative units and policy sectors within local self-government units (LSGUs) in Poland. In particular, it assesses institutional responsibilities for co-ordination within municipalities and counties and provides an overview of institutional mechanisms, partnership practices and the necessary capacity and resources to develop enhanced means of co-ordination. It ends with a series of targeted recommendations to foster effective co-ordination.

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## Introduction

Local governments across the OECD are regularly confronted with public policy challenges that are not limited to one particular policy area or sector but are rather multidimensional and crosscutting in nature (OECD, 2020<sup>[1]</sup>). Ranging from territorial development and urban transport planning to the provision of welfare benefits and the sustainable use of natural resources and environmental protection, these complex policy issues often transcend sectoral boundaries and span across areas of responsibility of several administrative units within a city or municipality. They raise questions such as how can local governments best deal with large infrastructure investments, approach youth policies and manage territorial development in an efficient, coherent and integrated way.

In recent decades, the emergence of complex policy challenges such as climate change, natural hazards, social injustice, healthcare, migration or population ageing, has proven to be particularly challenging to address as they resist simple resolution, involve complex interdependencies and surpass existing policy domains (Lægreid et al., 2015<sup>[2]</sup>). Given its complexity and socio-economic consequences, the COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the vital importance of co-ordination for effective local crisis management to find appropriate policy responses across sectors and institutions (OECD, 2020<sup>[3]</sup>). Faced with an unprecedented public health crisis, governments at all levels have been tasked with responding rapidly, efficiently and coherently to a series of challenges – from setting up emergency responses to managing the immediate economic fallout due to lockdown measures.

Solving such crosscutting policy problems requires an integrated governance approach that overcomes traditional administrative barriers to design, implement and evaluate multidimensional policy responses through robust, sustained co-ordination across administrative units and policy silos (OECD, 2020<sup>[1]</sup>). Without adequate co-ordination across local governments' different units, policy-makers may take decisions based on incorrect, biased or incomplete information (World Bank Group, 2018<sup>[4]</sup>). The resulting policies and services risk being flawed as they were not properly assessed with regard to their costs, potential benefits and impact, consistency with existing policies as well as substantive and procedural legality (World Bank Group, 2018<sup>[4]</sup>). Moreover, the work of the various units existing within a local government may be diametrically opposed or duplicated, with the result that public resources are wasted. Lastly, a lack of co-ordination can lead to burdens for citizens, for instance, through replicative procedures and lengthy bureaucratic processes. Co-ordination can thus be seen as a means to an end – a tool for designing and delivering better policies and services for citizens.

While effective co-ordination has always been a challenge for the public sector (Seidman, 1997<sup>[5]</sup>), many governments have grown in size (World Bank Group, 2018<sup>[4]</sup>) and have witnessed atomisation of administrative structures (Beuselinck, 2008<sup>[6]</sup>; Alessandro, Lafuente and Santiso, 2013<sup>[7]</sup>) within the last decades. When governments, also at the local level, become larger, finding joined-up and interconnected responses to policy-making and service delivery also develops into a bigger challenge, as more stakeholders with a multitude of interests enter the decision-making process (Slack, 2007<sup>[8]</sup>). In parallel, the responsibilities of governments gradually increased and became more complex (OECD, 2020<sup>[1]</sup>; World Bank Group, 2018<sup>[4]</sup>), while at the same time citizens around the world have become more vocal and demanding in terms of quality of public services they expect (OECD, 2019<sup>[9]</sup>). It does thus not come as a surprise that co-ordination is seen as an “endemic concern in public administration” (Per Lagreid, 2015<sup>[10]</sup>) that prompts governments at all levels to search for new approaches to co-ordinated policy-making and service delivery. In recent decades, whole-of-government policy co-ordination across different sectors and institutional entities to achieve greater policy coherence has thus grown in relevance in many OECD and non-OECD member countries and the development of enhanced means of co-ordination is today widely recognised as one of the strategic enablers of sound public governance (OECD, 2020<sup>[1]</sup>).

To promote coherence and foster new levels of policy and service co-ordination in the way LSGUs in Poland work internally across sectors and administrative units, this chapter shows that effective co-ordination at the local level requires more than the simple imposition of authority and use of hierarchical

governance. While the chapter's assessment primarily focuses on Polish municipalities (gminas), the resulting advice may also prove to be relevant for counties (powiats). Based on the findings of the OECD questionnaire and evidence collected during four fact-finding missions, it provides an overview of how policy-makers can develop enhanced means of co-ordination within small and large LSGUs. The chapter's first part assesses the institutional responsibilities for co-ordination in Polish municipalities. Through the presentation of institutional mechanisms, partnership practices and human resource management, the second part shows ways for LSGUs to foster effective co-ordination.

Some policy issues may require not only the involvement of different actors within the LSGU but also the engagement of other levels of government and actors outside the LSGU (e.g. civil society organisations and citizens). This chapter focuses only on intra-LSGU co-ordination. Chapter 6 on multi-level governance analyses vertical co-ordination across the national-subnational axis as well as horizontal co-ordination between different LSGUs. Chapter 8 on open government focuses on engagement and co-ordination with civil society organisations and citizens.

### ***Defining co-ordination***

Co-ordination is essential for integrated strategic planning, the effective delivery of multiple services and ensuring that policies are funded properly. However, despite the vital importance of co-ordination for all forms of policy-making and service delivery and the existence of a wide range of academic literature trying to capture the concept, it remains ill-defined and contested (Per Lagreid, 2015<sup>[10]</sup>). Numerous definitions exist and co-ordination has repeatedly been described as a “philosopher’s stone” as it represents a much-sought concept that is often meant to cure major challenges governments at all levels face (March and Simon, 1993<sup>[11]</sup>).

In order to approach the concept for the purpose of this chapter, three different levels, each involving more substantive efforts, will be used to describe the nature and purpose of co-ordination. The levels draw on Peters’ models of co-ordination (2004<sup>[12]</sup>) and form part of the OECD Self-Assessment Tool for LSGUs in Poland. The scale these levels represent shows how in theory local governments can progressively move to more complex and integrated co-ordination approaches over time. While the scale depicts an ideal trajectory, progress in practice is not always linear and local governments may cover two levels at the same time as some units may have already implemented certain co-ordination measures, whereas other teams still work in silos.

A **first and basic level of co-ordination** across administrative units and policy sectors within Polish LSGUs is the ad hoc exchange of information between independent organisational units and/or between LSGU departments to support each other in achieving their respective goals. Decisions taken in one organisational unit/department consider those made in others and attempt to avoid conflict and negative impact such as increased costs, lack of consistency between policies, duplication of effort and burden for citizens. Often labelled negative co-ordination (Peters, 2004<sup>[12]</sup>), this level of co-ordination can help cities and municipalities to improve simple service delivery at minimal costs but does not change the overall way policies are made.

Moving up the trajectory, a **second form of co-ordination** is positive co-ordination. As part of this level, individual efforts of organisational units and departments not only aim to avoid overlaps and conflicts but seek to find ways to co-operate on the delivery of services and policies. By moving from mere recognition to active co-operation, units can create synergies for the delivery of their work. Administrative units continue to work autonomously and follow their own objectives but a regular formal exchange of information and documents with other relevant teams contributes to the delivery of overall goals and programmes.

The **third and most complex level of co-ordination** that LSGUs can pursue is the systematic strategic integration of units/departments’ work around joint strategic goals. Administrative units co-ordinate not only for the delivery of their individual work but pursue integrated objectives to define and implement interlinked,

coherent and multi-dimensional development strategies/plans that reflect the LSGU's budget and fiscal framework. This level of co-ordination thus also aims to align the development strategy/plan with various other LSGU policy documents and higher-level government plans to ensure coherence and consistency of the approach. This third level can also entail the joint development of strategies (e.g. for housing development, mobility and environmental protection) that transcend different policy sectors or other strategic documents that set a vision for the future of the LSGU. To achieve this third level of co-ordination, units may be formally bound to exchange information. As objectives need to be integrated, this level of co-ordination may require substantial political prioritisation and leadership.

### ***The main challenges for intra-LSGU co-ordination in Poland***

In response to the OECD questionnaire, a sample of 36 municipalities and 10 counties across Poland ranked a number of challenges they are facing with regard to effective co-ordination. Figure 2.1 provides an overview of the main co-ordination challenges that were reported. A lack of financial resources (86% of surveyed municipalities), a lack of time (83% of surveyed municipalities) and a lack of human resources (81% of surveyed municipalities) were the 3 most frequently cited challenges for effective co-ordination across administrative units and policy sectors. In addition to the challenges reported in the OECD questionnaire, interviews during fact-finding missions showed the existence of relatively low levels of awareness of the importance of intra-LSGU co-ordination and the related benefits more effective co-ordination can bring.

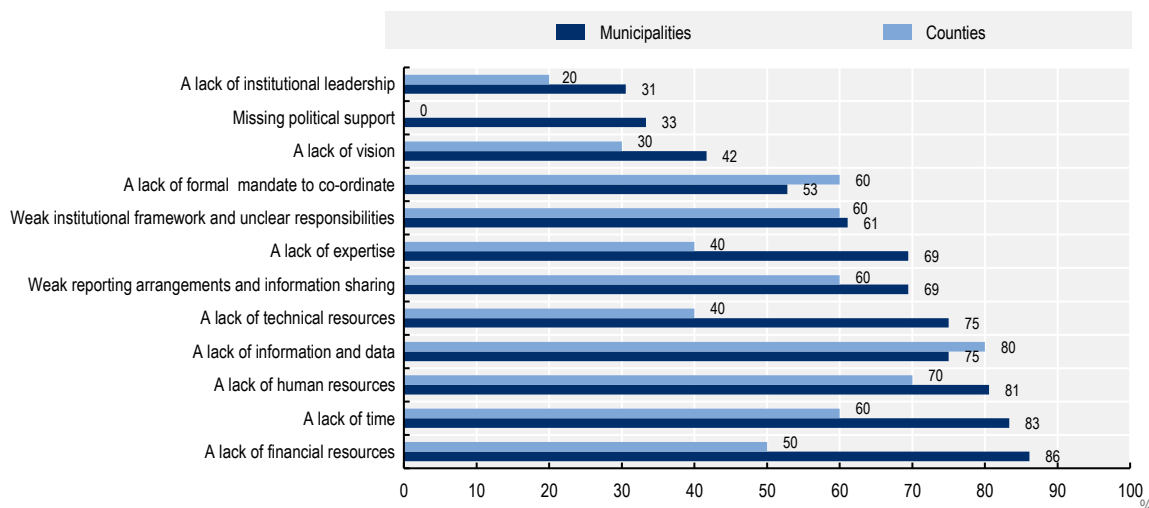
Evidence shows that the institutionalisation of co-ordination remains a concern across Poland. More than two-thirds of the surveyed municipalities (69%) see weak reporting arrangements and information sharing as a major challenge (Figure 2.1). For 80% of the surveyed rural municipalities (low accessibility) located outside functional urban areas (FUAs) (for a detailed explanation of the different types used for the assessment in this chapter, please consult Chapter 1), this seems to be a particular problem. Resulting from weak reporting and information sharing, consequently, 75% of the municipal questionnaire respondents found a lack of information and data to be challenging (Figure 2.1). Similarly, a weak institutional framework with unclear responsibilities is cited by more than half of the municipalities (61%). In particular, in 80% of the rural municipalities outside FUAs, this represents a challenge for effective co-ordination. Moreover, more than half of all municipal respondents (53%) see the lack of formal mandates to co-ordinate as an obstacle. All 4 challenges are also cited by a comparable number of counties as challenges. In particular, a lack of information and data (80%) and a lack of formal mandates (60%) to co-ordinate were listed by counties as challenging in the OECD questionnaire. These challenges highlight the need for clear institutional roles and responsibilities that are assessed in the second section of this chapter.

Whereas ensuring institutional clarity and responsibility represents an important element to foster effective co-ordination, the success of actors involved in co-ordination also depends on the provision of the necessary capacities and resources. As mentioned above, a large majority of municipalities finds a lack of financial (86%) and human resources (81%) to be a main challenge, while 75% of the respondents list a lack of technical resources (Figure 2.1) as challenging. Technical expertise and the lack thereof are seen by more than two-thirds of the municipalities (69%) as a challenge, while even 80% of municipalities list this among the group of rural municipalities outside FUAs. These four reported challenges underline the importance of institutional capacity and resources. In comparison, these challenges seem to be less pressing for counties. Some 50% of them see funding and 40% technical resources as a main challenge. Only human resources are also considered as a major challenge by a majority of 70% of the counties, which makes it the second most reported challenge for this group of LSGUs.

Other prerequisites to ensure effective co-ordination are political support, leadership and commitment at all levels – from the mayor, senior managers and public officials. Almost half the municipalities (42%) and 80% of rural municipalities outside FUAs see a lack of vision for co-ordination as one of the main

challenges they are facing (Figure 2.1). This finding coincides with the above-mentioned lack of awareness of why co-ordination is important and what it can be used for that can be found across all municipalities. In addition, around one-third of the municipal respondents report missing political support (33%) and a lack of institutional leadership (31%) as major challenges. In comparison, a lack of vision (30%), missing political support (0%) and a lack of institutional leadership (20%) seem to be challenges less frequently faced by counties (Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1. Main challenges for effective co-ordination across administrative units and policy sectors in Polish LSGUs**



Note: Based on 46 LSGU responses to the OECD questionnaire (n=46), whereof 36 are municipalities and 10 are counties. While the size of the questionnaire response sample does not allow to draw statistically relevant conclusions, it nevertheless offers sample-specific insights that may be relevant for a larger audience of Polish LSGUs.

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on LSGU responses to the OECD questionnaire (2020).

## Ensuring institutional responsibility for co-ordination across administrative units and policy sectors within Polish LSGUs

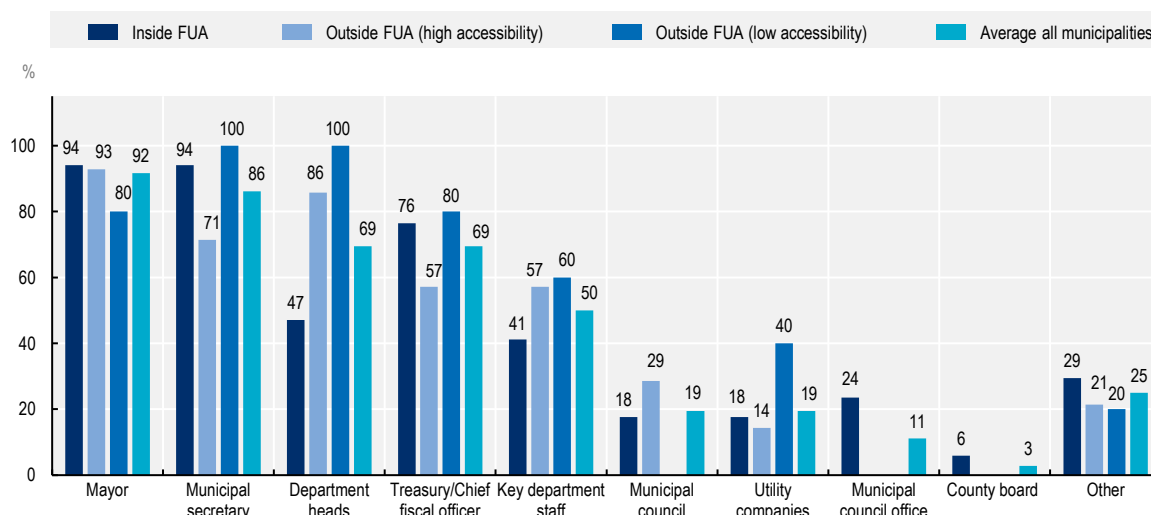
### ***Mayors and municipal secretaries hold key co-ordination functions in a large majority of municipalities***

As part of the OECD questionnaire that was conducted for this report, 61% of the participating municipalities reported a weak institutional framework and unclear responsibilities as a challenge for effective intra-municipal co-ordination (Figure 2.1). Also, during the OECD's fact-finding missions, a lack of defined roles of particular institutions in municipalities was frequently reported. In order to ensure effective co-ordination, it is crucial that institutional roles and responsibilities for co-ordination are clear and widely recognised by LSGU staff and supported by the political leadership.

Figure 2.2 shows that across all municipalities, the mayor (92%), as well as the secretary of the municipality (86%), are reported to be most regularly involved in co-ordination matters and often fulfil crucial co-ordination functions. Irrespective of the category of municipality, mayors play an important role in co-ordination. In almost half of the municipalities surveyed (49%), the mayor holds the primary responsibility of co-ordination across the LSGU, while this function is shared between the mayor and other actors in one-third (29%) of municipal cases (Figure 2.3). Moreover, when municipalities responding to the

OECD questionnaire were asked about what main functions of the mayor, they consider to be the most important ones, “policy co-ordination across the LSGU” was the fourth most commonly cited task.

**Figure 2.2. Institutions/departments that are regularly involved in intra-LSGU co-ordination**



Note: Based on 36 responses from municipalities to the OECD questionnaire (n=36). While the size of the questionnaire response sample does not allow to draw statistically relevant conclusions, it nevertheless offers sample-specific insights that may be relevant for a larger audience of Polish municipalities.

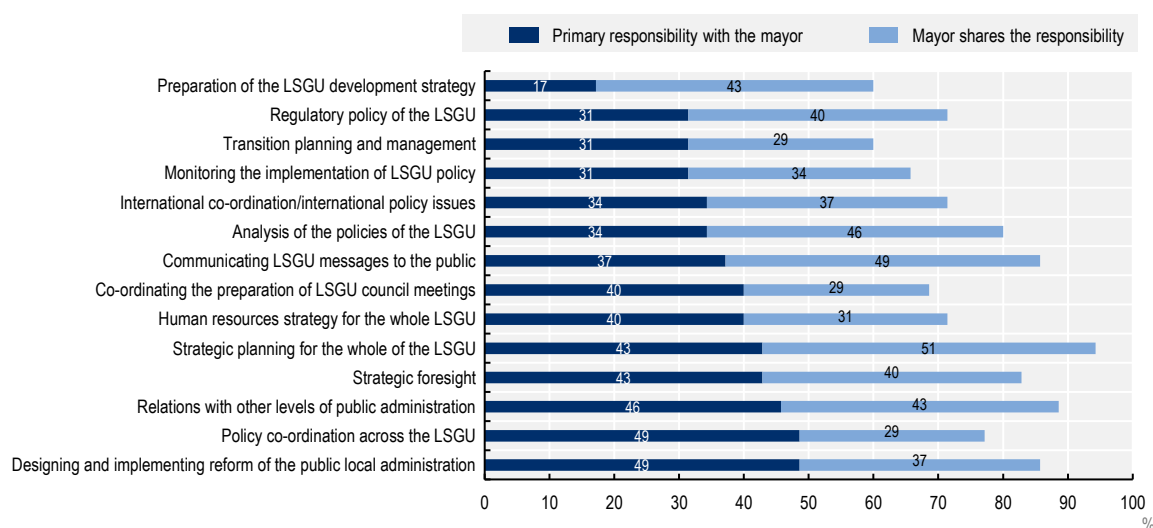
Source: Authors' own elaboration based on LSGU responses to the OECD questionnaire (2020).

Given the mayors' legal status as the highest executive LSGU authority (according to Article 26 of the Act on Local Self-Government) and centre of the LSGU, it does not come as a surprise that they assume important co-ordinating functions in almost all municipalities. Similarly, across the OECD, the centre of government<sup>1</sup> (CoG) in regional and national governments often leads inter-institutional co-ordination among public officials and across administrative silos, with around 70% of CoGs in OECD member countries being responsible for policy co-ordination (OECD, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>). Establishing a high-level co-ordinating authority to improve the coherence of policies across units and institutions corresponds to the guidance enshrined in the OECD Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (OECD, 2019<sup>[13]</sup>). Mayors are important strategic players that can provide vision, leadership and co-ordination. In the context of Poland, their potential role cannot be underestimated and as the highest administrative authority in LSGUs, they are key for fostering the overall co-ordination of policies and services across the municipality. Given the high level of centralisation of the responsibility for policy and service co-ordination in Poland, co-ordination may however also be significantly reduced if mayors do not adequately fulfil this responsibility. This is aggravated as the mayor's political importance may result in attribution of the functions and mandates to the individual and less to the institution. In case the mayor or staff in the office of the mayor do not believe they have a mandate to coordinate, lose political legitimacy or do not have the capacity to perform a co-ordination function effectively (e.g. due to a lack of staff and technical resources), institutional resilience can be reduced and other actors may encounter challenges to assume this (sometimes delegated) role to co-ordinate.

An assessment of the different functions performed by the mayor and their associated office, whose size ranges from short-staffed support secretariats in small municipalities to proper offices in bigger municipalities, reveals the large array of tasks and responsibilities that mayors assume across Poland. As shown in Figure 2.3, in more than 75% of the surveyed municipalities, the mayor is either entirely or partially responsible for strategic planning (94% of municipalities), maintaining relations with other levels

of public administration (89%), designing and implementing public administration reforms (86%), public communication (86%), strategic foresight (83%) and analysing the municipality's policies (80%). All of these responsibilities require a shared vision across sectors and co-ordinated efforts of the LSGUs' different units/departments. Making the mayor and the associated office responsible for intra-LSGU co-ordination and equipping staff with the necessary means to fulfil this function properly can thus positively influence the performance of other important responsibilities. The offices supporting the mayors with the execution of their responsibilities can thereby provide practical assistance. To reflect mayors' responsibility for co-ordination explicitly in law, the Act on Local Self-Government, which defines the responsibilities of mayors, could be amended to include the responsibility for co-ordination and provide mayors with the necessary competence to manage related resources strategically and delegate this responsibility within the LSGU.

**Figure 2.3. Tasks and functions performed by the mayor's office and other LSGU units and departments**



Note: Based on 35 responses from municipalities to the OECD questionnaire (n=35). While the size of the questionnaire response sample does not allow to draw statistically relevant conclusions, it nevertheless offers sample-specific insights that may be relevant for a larger audience of Polish municipalities.

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on LSGU responses to the OECD questionnaire (2020).

In addition to the mayor, in 69% of the surveyed municipalities in Poland, the treasurer or chief financial officer participates in co-ordinating policy-making and service delivery (Figure 2.2). The traditional importance of the budget process for public sector co-ordination and the significant responsibility of the treasurer to maintain a fiscal balance (Alessandro, Lafuente and Santiso, 2013<sup>[7]</sup>) (see Chapter 5 for an overview of the budget cycle) can be seen as factors contributing to its regular involvement in intra-LSGU co-ordination. However, as with all actors who assume delegated co-ordination functions, the potential success of the treasurer depends on the political will of the mayor, the ability to influence other policy-makers as well as the allocation of human and financial resources. If the responsibility for co-ordination is delegated to actors other than the mayor, the workflow of relevant documents as well as information also needs to be adjusted correspondingly in a way to allow them the fulfilment of their functions.

More than two-thirds of municipalities (69%) report the regular involvement of the heads of administrative departments (Figure 2.2) in co-ordination matters. Interestingly, the OECD questionnaire found that in all rural municipalities (low accessibility) located outside FUAs, the department heads and municipal secretaries seem to play a more prominent role in co-ordination, even in relation to the mayor. This differs

from the involvement of department heads in municipalities inside FUAs, where they only regularly engage in 47% of the surveyed municipalities. This trend is similar to the observed role of key departmental staff, who are in most cases experts or senior members of the local public administration. They are regularly involved in intra-LSGU co-ordination in 50% of the surveyed municipalities (Figure 2.2). When disaggregating by category of municipality, it becomes apparent that the involvement of departmental staff is greatest in municipalities located outside FUAs with low accessibility (60%) and lowest in municipalities inside FUAs (41%) (Figure 2.2). A smaller overall size of the municipalities' staff body and the resulting lower levels of centralisation may explain this finding.

Other municipal actors such as the municipal council only play a minor role in co-ordination. Only 19% of the surveyed municipalities report their regular involvement in co-ordination matters (Figure 2.2). Factors influencing the low importance of municipal councils for co-ordination may be their character as political decision-making bodies as well as the fact that council sessions are by law open to the public. Similar to the municipal council, utility companies and municipal council offices – if they exist in the respective LSGU – only get involved in a small number (less than 20% on average) of municipalities (Figure 2.2).

### ***A lack of formal mandate can undermine institutional co-ordination efforts***

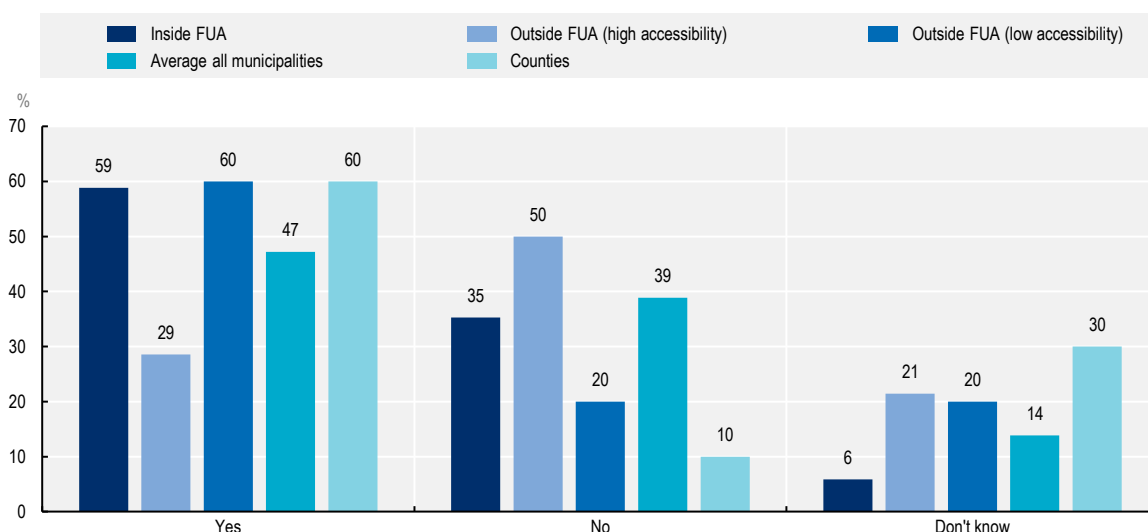
The transversal nature of policy and service co-ordination and the need to involve different stakeholders necessitates strong institutional arrangements. OECD experience shows that an adequate institutional framework can facilitate effective and efficient horizontal and vertical co-ordination. To ensure that the responsibilities of different government institutions for intra-governmental co-ordination are clear, local governments across the OECD have started to establish formal institutional arrangements. Often, the roles, tasks and duties for co-ordination are enshrined in legislative frameworks and legal mandates to provide institutions with the necessary power to focus on co-ordination across administrative units and policy sectors. Having the responsibility for co-ordination codified in a legal document creates legal certainty and legitimacy in relation to other actors and may raise awareness of the importance of co-ordination. Providing public officials with a strong mandate can thus help ensure effective co-ordination. Against this background, the OECD Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development calls for the establishment of clear mandates to ensure whole-of-government co-ordination for sustainable development in order to “identify and mitigate divergences between sectoral priorities and policies, and promote mutually supporting actions across sectors and institutions” (OECD, 2019<sup>[13]</sup>).

The responses to the OECD questionnaire show that in less than half of municipalities (47%), the units and departments regularly involved in co-ordination are equipped with a formal mandate (Figure 2.4). This is the case for 60% of the surveyed counties as well. While 39% of the surveyed municipalities (10% of counties) do not provide them with a formal mandate, some 14% of municipalities (30% of counties) responded that they are not sure about the existence of mandates. This shows that even though a co-ordination mandate might exist, it is not communicated and recognised across the staff of the LSGU and may therefore not provide the co-ordinating entity with the legitimacy needed to perform its task. Municipalities located outside FUAs with low accessibility are twice as likely to make use of formal mandates than municipalities outside FUAs with high accessibility (Figure 2.4).

If a formal mandate exists, it is included in the general organisational regulations of most LSGUs or takes the form of a separate regulation. In the majority of cases, these regulations enshrine the responsibility of the mayor for co-ordination matters or determine that the secretary of the municipality or the treasurer assume this responsibility by way of delegation of powers from the mayor. The resolutions can therefore give one or more institutions within a LSGU a clear mandate to lead the LSGU's co-ordination efforts.



**Figure 2.4. Do LSGU units/departments regularly involved in co-ordination have a formal mandate to co-ordinate?**



Note: Based on 46 LSGU responses to the OECD questionnaire (n=46), whereof 36 are municipalities and 10 are counties. While the size of the questionnaire response sample does not allow to draw statistically relevant conclusions, it nevertheless offers sample-specific insights that may be relevant for a larger audience of Polish LSGUs.

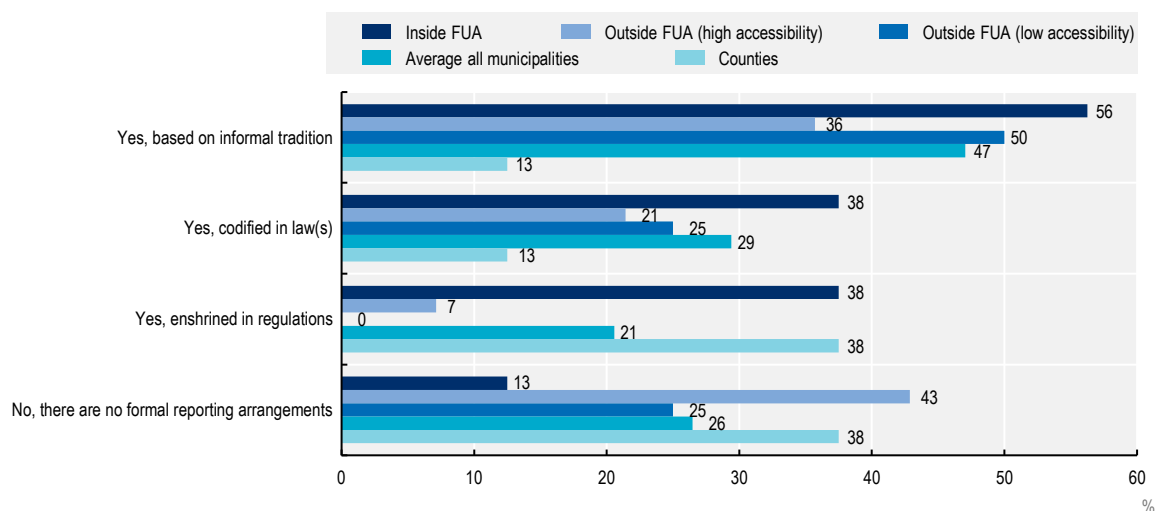
Source: Authors' own elaboration based on LSGU responses to the OECD questionnaire (2020).

Formal mandates included in internal LSGU regulations may help to locate the institutional responsibility for co-ordination in one or more units or departments, the regulations do however not establish a legal obligation for the other LSGU units to co-ordinate. While units and departments in all LSGUs across Poland are legally obliged to follow instructions from the mayor, who represents the highest administrative authority in LSGUs, they do not have an automatic legal obligation to co-operate with other persons or units/departments tasked with co-ordination. Depending on the co-ordinators' mandate, creating a legal obligation may also require the inclusion of respective provisions outlining reporting arrangements in the charters/statutes of all departments and units.

### **Formal reporting arrangements**

Through the establishment of an obligation to co-operate, formal reporting arrangements can help the mayor or respective unit/department(s) responsible for co-ordination within municipalities to work towards higher levels of co-ordination. For instance, for the case of the implementation of LSGU action plans and local development strategies, almost one-third of the surveyed municipalities have created formal reporting arrangements that are codified in law (29% of municipalities) and enshrined in regulations (21% of municipalities) (Figure 2.5). In comparison, 38% of the surveyed counties report to have formal reporting arrangements enshrined in regulations. By differentiating between categories of municipalities, Figure 2.5 shows that municipalities located inside FUAs are most likely to have formal reporting arrangements originating in laws (38%) and regulations (38%). The picture changes a bit when we look at the answers provided by municipalities located outside FUAs. For them, it is less common to have formal reporting arrangements established by laws and regulation. Only around one-fourth of them codify their reporting arrangements in law and only 7% of highly accessible municipalities outside FUAs make use of regulations. None of the rural municipalities outside FUAs reports the use of regulations to establish reporting arrangements.

**Figure 2.5. Existence of formal reporting arrangements between the mayor and the different sectoral units/LSGU agencies for the implementation of action plans and local development strategies**



Note: Based on 42 LSGU responses to the OECD questionnaire (n=42), whereof 34 are municipalities and 8 are counties. While the size of the questionnaire response sample does not allow to draw statistically relevant conclusions, it nevertheless offers sample-specific insights that may be relevant for a larger audience of Polish LSGUs.

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on LSGU responses to the OECD questionnaire (2020).

In many LSGUs, formal reporting arrangements are not created by means of specific laws or regulations but are derived from non-regulated informal tradition that may be a by-product of formal processes created to achieve other objectives. LSGU responses to the OECD questionnaire show that this is the most common form of reporting with regard to the implementation of action plans and local development strategies. Nearly half of all municipalities (47%) report having such reporting arrangements with relatively high occurrences in all 3 categories of municipalities (see Figure 2.5). Half of the municipalities located outside FUAs with low accessibility base their reporting arrangements on informal tradition. Reporting arrangements based on informal tradition represent a flexible approach that involves low transaction costs. Particularly in smaller municipalities, with less staff and often more direct interactions, they can effectively enable the mayor to co-ordinate the implementation of action plans and the local development strategy. As they are not institutionalised, informal traditions, however, depend largely on personal relations and trust. Changing mayors and inconstant staff composition can therefore bring significant problems for reporting arrangements based on informal tradition.

The OECD questionnaire found that only 26% of municipalities (38% of counties) do not have any formal reporting arrangements that help to co-ordinate when implementing action plans and local development strategies. While only 13% of the municipalities located inside FUAs stated not having any formal reporting arrangements, nearly half of the municipalities outside FUAs with high accessibility (43%) answered that they have no formal reporting arrangements. They are thus the type of municipality that has the least formal obligations to report progress in implementing action plans and local development strategies (Figure 2.5).

### ***A more strategic use of policy documents can help improve co-ordination***

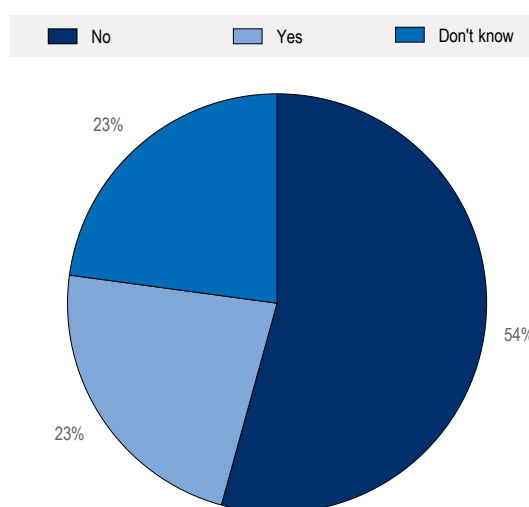
While a formal mandate based on laws or regulations can help to establish responsibilities for co-ordination, policy documents can raise awareness of the importance of intra-LSGU co-ordination and may offer advice to public servants that are tasked with co-ordination. They can provide guidance and clarity, highlight good practices and objectives that a particular LSGU seeks to meet. Examples of such

policy documents include LSGU reform plans and development strategies. Reference to co-ordination in LSGU development strategies can help to raise LSGU staff and citizen awareness of the benefits of co-ordination as a catalyst to implement the LSGU's strategic policy objectives.

The OECD questionnaire and interviews conducted during fact-finding missions have demonstrated that most Polish municipalities have not yet enacted a policy document that contains references to co-ordination across administrative units and policy sectors. Figure 2.6 shows that only 23% of the surveyed municipalities report having policy documents that focus on co-ordination in planning, service design and delivery across different policy sectors, while more than half of the municipalities (54%) do not have such policy documents. Most of the municipalities that reported having policy documents focusing on co-ordination are located inside FUAs (41%). A large number of 23% of the respondents to the OECD questionnaire report that they are not sure about the existence of policy documents focusing on co-ordination.

Interestingly, development strategies in many LSGUs do often contain references to horizontal co-ordination with neighbouring LSGUs and vertical co-ordination with other levels of government. For a detailed overview of horizontal co-ordination and multi-level governance, please consult Chapter 6.

**Figure 2.6. Existence of policy documents that focus on co-ordination in planning, service design and delivery across different policy sectors**



Note: Based on 35 responses from municipalities to the OECD questionnaire (n=35). While the size of the questionnaire response sample does not allow to draw statistically relevant conclusions, it nevertheless offers sample-specific insights that may be relevant for a larger audience of Polish local self-governments units.

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on municipalities' responses to the OECD questionnaire (2020).

Two examples of how references to co-ordination can be included in already existing policy documents are the development strategies of the cities of Białystok and Poznań. In the case of Poznań, the strategy explicitly states that it is based on co-ordination and lists the “development of a co-ordination network for the provision of public services” as one of its objectives (City of Poznań, 2017<sup>[14]</sup>). Also, Białystok's development strategy emphasises the importance of “improving co-ordination of various institutions (including public and non-governmental organisations)” for the achievement of various policy goals such as addressing the needs of disadvantaged families (City of Białystok, 2010<sup>[15]</sup>). Box 2.1 provides a more detailed overview of how the two cities' development strategies refer to intra-LSGU co-ordination. Even though most municipalities do not yet have any policy document that includes co-ordination, the

incorporation of co-ordination in some municipalities' strategic documents is a testimony that they have started acknowledging the benefits and added-value of co-ordination.

### **Box 2.1. LSGU development strategies containing references to co-ordination in planning, service design and delivery across different policy sectors**

#### **Poznań City Development Strategy 2020+**

Part III of the document lists the underlying principles and assumptions for the successful implementation of the development strategy. Among these key assumptions, Poznań's City Development Strategy 2020+ lists effective leadership that ensures "that individual departments co-operate with each other in [the strategy's] implementation" as an element for successful implementation.

The strategy further stresses the importance of "co-ordination and communication within interdisciplinary teams that allows combining knowledge from different backgrounds [...] and areas of the city's functioning to put together many – often different – points of view". It stresses that "a holistic and open view of the tasks that make their implementation part of more than one priority" can benefit the city.

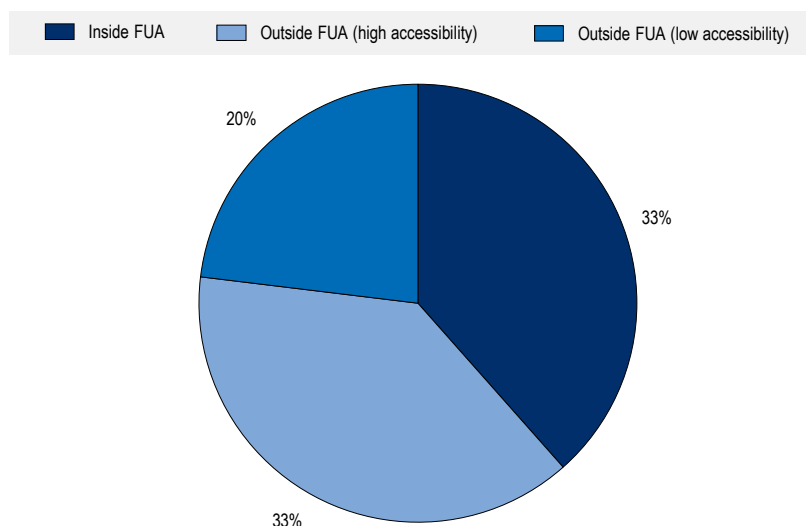
#### **Białystok City Development Strategy 2020+**

The local development strategy lists co-ordination of the "functioning of various institutions and organisations" as a fundamental importance, in particular in areas of activity towards people and families who need support and help.

Source: City of Poznań (2017<sup>[14]</sup>), *Development Strategy: The City of Poznań 2020+*, <https://bip.poznan.pl/bip/strategia-rozwoju-miasta-poznania-2020.doc.42/strategia-rozwoju-miasta-poznania-2020.80837.html> (accessed on 10 September 2020); City of Białystok (2010<sup>[15]</sup>), *Development Strategy: The City of Białystok 2011-2020+*, [https://www.bialystok.pl/pl/dla\\_biznesu/rozwoj\\_miasta/strategia-rozwoju-miasta-bialego.html](https://www.bialystok.pl/pl/dla_biznesu/rozwoj_miasta/strategia-rozwoju-miasta-bialego.html) (accessed on 10 September 2020).

Besides the inclusion of references to co-ordination in development strategies, governments at different levels in other OECD countries have developed a variety of supporting policy documents such as guides, toolkits and handbooks focusing on policy coherence and effective co-ordination for policy-makers. While such documents are bringing the most added-value to LSGUs with comparatively large administrations and staff bodies, also smaller sized LSGUs could develop simpler versions of these documents for internal usage only. As Figure 2.7 shows, few municipalities in Poland have already developed specific policy documents that can concretely assist policy-makers in co-ordinating with different units. Overall, one-third of municipalities declare that they make use of written guidance for staff in the form of rules documents, manuals or guidelines. Only 33% of the respondents located inside FUAs and located outside FUAs with high accessibility indicated that they use them. The presence of these instruments becomes even less frequent (20%) in the case of municipalities located outside FUAs with low accessibility. This lack of written guidance on co-ordination reflects the findings collected during the OECD fact-finding missions to Poland and the questionnaire results presented in Figure 2.6 where the majority of municipalities participating in the questionnaire reported that they do not have policy documents that focus on co-ordination in planning, service design and delivery across different policy sectors.

**Figure 2.7. Use of written guidance (rules, manuals, guidelines, etc.) by municipalities to ensure policy co-ordination across administrative units and policy sectors**



Note: Based on 35 responses from municipalities to the OECD questionnaire (n=35). While the size of the questionnaire response sample does not allow to draw statistically relevant conclusions, it nevertheless offers sample-specific insights that may be relevant for a larger audience of Polish municipalities.

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on municipalities' responses to the OECD questionnaire (2020).

## **Fostering effective co-ordination through institutional mechanisms, partnerships and human resource management**

### ***Establishing institutional mechanisms to improve co-ordination***

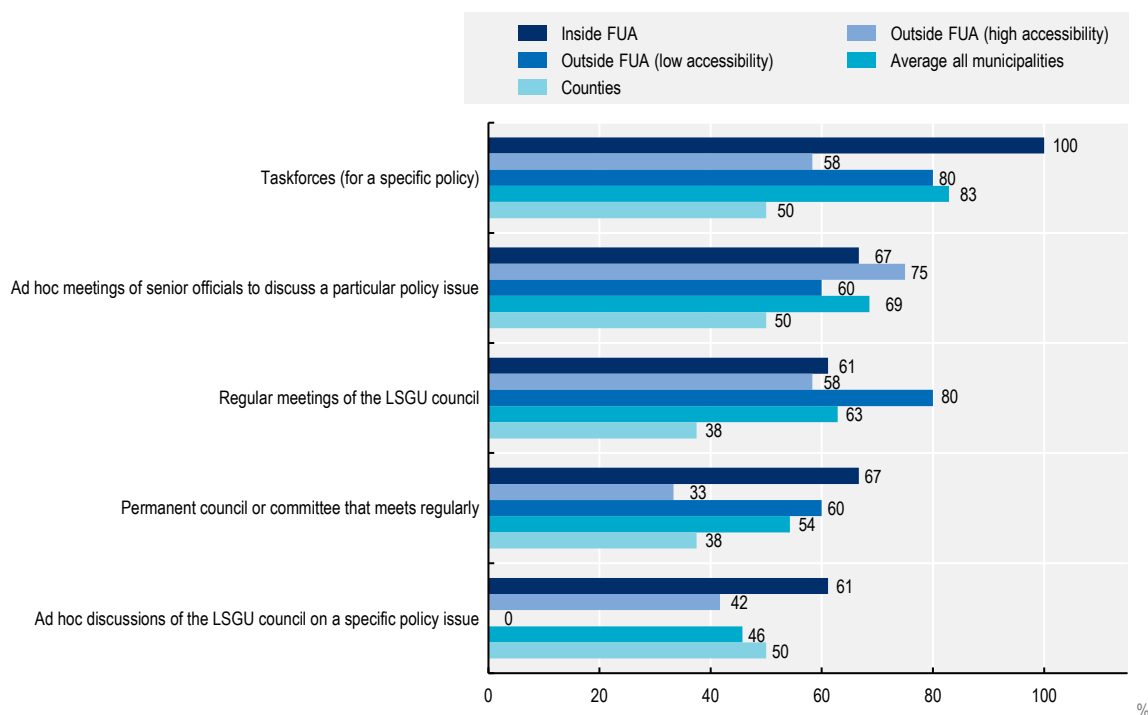
Local governments across OECD member countries have developed different co-ordination approaches to ensure integrated strategic planning, to effectively deliver services and safeguard that policies are funded properly. They have a range of mechanisms at their disposal for improving intra-LSGU co-ordination. They include permanent or temporary taskforces/working groups and councils/committees that meet on an ad hoc or regular basis. Each of these mechanisms may involve bilateral exchanges between two persons/units or a greater number of actors within the municipality. In general, the degree of institutionalisation and complexity of the co-ordination mechanisms used should always be determined by the size of LSGUs' staff. Size matters here and smaller LSGUs with fewer employees may consider less institutionalised mechanisms as more suitable.

Figure 2.8 presents the various institutional mechanisms used by LSGUs in Poland to ensure policy co-ordination across administrative units and policy sectors. Taskforces formed to deal with specific policy issues are the most common institutional mechanism used by LSGUs. A large majority of 83% of the municipality questionnaire respondents reported the existence of taskforces in their LSGU. All municipalities (100%) located in FUAs and 80% of the rural municipalities that are located outside FUAs indicated their usage (Figure 2.8). They are appointed by the mayor and can work on crosscutting issues and deal with complex policy challenges such as multi-annual budget planning, unemployment, housing or disabilities. In comparison, only 50% of the surveyed counties reported the use of taskforces.

Responses to the OECD questionnaire and interviews during the fact-finding missions showed that taskforces (sometimes called project teams or working groups) are most commonly established for the development and implementation of the local development strategy. Examples of such taskforces can be

found in the cities of Białystok, Częstochowa, Katowice and Poznań (see Box 2.2). They are usually comprised of several different institutions and units such as the deputy mayor, the secretary, the treasurer and heads/managers/directors of key departments/organisational units. In some cases, even representatives of utility companies participate. To facilitate their work, taskforces often establish protocols and procedures to exchange information and documents. Often, a lead person or institution (e.g. in many cases the deputy mayor), who is responsible for oversight and facilitating operations, chairs the taskforce or working group (Box 2.2). The chair regularly prepares the agenda, ensures cohesion among the different participating units/institutions and is in charge of implementing the taskforce's decisions. The appointed chair should also be involved in the planning and implementation of the budget and multiannual financial plan within the scope of the taskforce's entrusted tasks. Despite its composition and mandate, the success of the chairperson and the taskforce is in practice also subject to the political support of the mayor. It is thus crucial that they have political backing and enjoy respective decision-making authority within their respective scope of tasks. Moreover, taskforces need to be provided with adequate (autonomous) financial resources, personnel, expertise and technical support to co-ordinate policy-making. It is therefore important that the head or chair of the taskforce is involved in the planning and implementation of the budget and multiannual financial plan within the scope of the entrusted tasks.

**Figure 2.8. Institutional mechanisms used by LSGUs to ensure policy and service co-ordination across administrative units and policy sectors**



Note: Based on 43 LSGU responses to the OECD questionnaire (n=43), whereof 35 are municipalities and 8 are counties. While the size of the questionnaire response sample does not allow to draw statistically relevant conclusions, it nevertheless offers sample-specific insights that may be relevant for a larger audience of Polish LSGUs.

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on LSGU responses to the OECD questionnaire (2020).

The second most commonly used co-ordination mechanism in Polish municipalities are ad hoc meetings of senior officials on specific policy issues. As Figure 2.8 shows, relatively high levels of municipalities in all categories report use of this mechanism. Interviews held during the OECD fact-finding missions demonstrated that all municipalities predominantly rely on this mechanism for daily co-ordination. While

most co-ordination mechanisms depend upon a certain degree of formality and regularity, the ad hoc interaction of senior officials is often not directly perceived as a co-ordination mechanism due to its informal character and the minimal transaction costs that it generates. However, in particular in LSGUs with smaller staff bodies with more direct interactions, the adoption of such informal arrangements can also positively affect co-ordination. Nevertheless, the prospects for forging co-ordination through informal ad hoc meetings can be expected to vary according to the involved individuals and might consequently depend on participants' personality, knowledge and interpersonal relations.

The third most reported institutional mechanism are the regular meetings of the LSGU council that may discuss the co-ordination of matters of political importance. A majority of the surveyed municipalities (63%) use these regular council sessions that are usually convened once or twice a month to co-ordinate policies and service delivery (Figure 2.8). The differentiation by category shows that these meetings are most often used for co-ordination purposes in municipalities outside FUAs with low accessibility (80%). Following interviews during the OECD fact-finding missions and pursuant to Figure 2.2, it can be assumed that regular municipal council meetings are generally not used as a mechanism for regular co-ordination but rather for ensuring policy coherence of important matters on a case-by-case basis. In this regard, Figure 2.8 shows that the municipal council can also be convened on an ad hoc basis to discuss specific policy issues. This is a practice that is reported by 46% of the municipalities.

A permanent council or committee that meets regularly was established by more than half (54%) of all questionnaire respondents. Municipalities in FUAs with high accessibility are the category that most often uses such councils or committees as co-ordination mechanisms. Compared to other types of municipalities, LSGUs outside FUAs with high accessibility are only half as likely to use such an institutional mechanism. The work of permanent councils and committees can be sector-based in areas such as housing, infrastructure, energy and public safety or they can focus on particular policy issues. Across Poland, permanent councils or committees for instance often take the form of a youth and senior council (for a more detailed analysis of these councils, please consult Chapter 8 on open government). Although municipalities are not obliged to create such councils, they may appoint permanent committees and auxiliary units, including youth and senior councils following the law on municipal self-government (1990, latest amendments 2019). About 200 municipal youth councils are currently registered in Poland, which means that they operate within every 12<sup>th</sup> LSGU (8%) (EC, 2019<sup>[16]</sup>). While these councils have an advisory role and represent an effective way to engage with citizens to unlock their expertise, they also allow for more co-ordinated policy-making and service delivery in the areas they are representing. As with other institutional mechanisms, permanent councils and committees require political support to fulfil their functions.

## Box 2.2. LSGU taskforces for the development and implementation of local development strategies

### Częstochowa

The co-ordination and implementation of the strategy and the linked sectoral programmes are dealt with by a permanent team appointed by the mayor. The team is comprised of the deputy mayor, the city treasurer and secretary, heads/managers/directors of key departments/organisational units and representatives of utility companies. It is chaired by the deputy mayor of the city, who is appointed by the mayor. The head of the department for the city development strategy is responsible for providing administrative support and preparing the team's work.

### Białystok

In Białystok, a co-ordination team consisting of the secretary of the city, the mayor's advisors, directors of departments and relevant LSGU staff was established to co-ordinate the implementation of the LSGU's development strategy for 2011-20.

### Katowice

In Katowice, the implementation of the local development strategy Katowice 2030 and the implementation of sectoral local strategies and functional programmes are co-ordinated and supervised by a steering committee. The committee is composed of the deputy mayor of the city (who acts as the chairperson), a representative of Katowice City Council (acting as the vice-chairperson), the heads of the departments of development, culture, European Union funds, investment, environment, transport, housing and roads, social policy, education, sports and tourism. In addition, a co-ordinator is responsible for preparing and implementing the committee's decisions.

### Poznań

The comprehensive implementation of the development strategy in Poznań is co-ordinated by an interdisciplinary steering committee. Its tasks include substantive supervision of the strategy implementation process and performing a consultative function for other city authorities in this regard. It is comprised of people responsible for the implementation of related tasks (including the deputy mayors and heads/directors of departments). For special advice, the steering committee will draw on the work of subordinated working groups that organise the resources and competencies needed, ensure the team's interdisciplinarity and take care of co-operation between departments and units.

Since 2010, another steering committee is responsible for the integration of the strategic management process and multi-annual budget planning. It is also an interdisciplinary team that co-ordinates the work on the preparation of the city's budget and long-term financial forecast.

Source: City of Częstochowa (2016<sup>[17]</sup>), *Development Strategy: The City of Częstochowa 2030+*, <https://bip.czestochowa.pl/artykul/26231/1153997/strategia-rozwoju-miasta-czestochowa-2030> (accessed on 10 September 2020); City of Białystok (2010<sup>[15]</sup>), *Development Strategy: The City of Białystok 2011-2020+*, [https://www.bialystok.pl/pl/dla\\_biznesu/rozwoj\\_miasta/strategia-rozwoju-miasta-bialego.html](https://www.bialystok.pl/pl/dla_biznesu/rozwoj_miasta/strategia-rozwoju-miasta-bialego.html) (accessed on 10 September 2020); Katowice City Council (2015<sup>[18]</sup>), *City Development Strategy "Katowice 2030"*, <https://bip.katowice.eu/RadaMiasta/Uchwaly/dokument.aspx?idr=95384&menu=660> (accessed on 10 September 2020); City of Poznań (2017<sup>[14]</sup>), *Development Strategy: The City of Poznań 2020+*, <https://bip.poznan.pl/bip/strategia-rozwoju-miasta-poznania-2020.doc.42/strategia-rozwoju-miasta-poznania-2020.80837.html> (accessed on 10 September 2020).



### ***Creating partnership practices for co-ordination***

In addition to the institutional mechanisms outlined in the previous section, LSGUs have a number of partnership practices at their disposal that can help improve co-ordination. Figure 2.9 presents an overview of the different forms of partnerships used by LSGUs as tools to improve co-ordination across different policy sectors for better planning and improved local development strategies.

The most commonly used partnership practice across Polish municipalities is the joint planning of activities and interventions. Almost all municipalities surveyed (91%) indicated that their institutional units jointly plan activities and interventions for better planning and improved local development strategies. The OECD questionnaire found only smaller differences in usage between the three different categories of municipalities. However, only 56% of the surveyed counties report making use of this practice. The joint planning of activities constitutes a form of positive co-ordination, where units not only seek to avoid overlaps and conflicts but also aim to find ways to co-operate on the delivery of services and policies. Through joint activities and interventions, two or several independent units can create synergies for the delivery of their own work, while contributing to the achievement of overall shared goals.

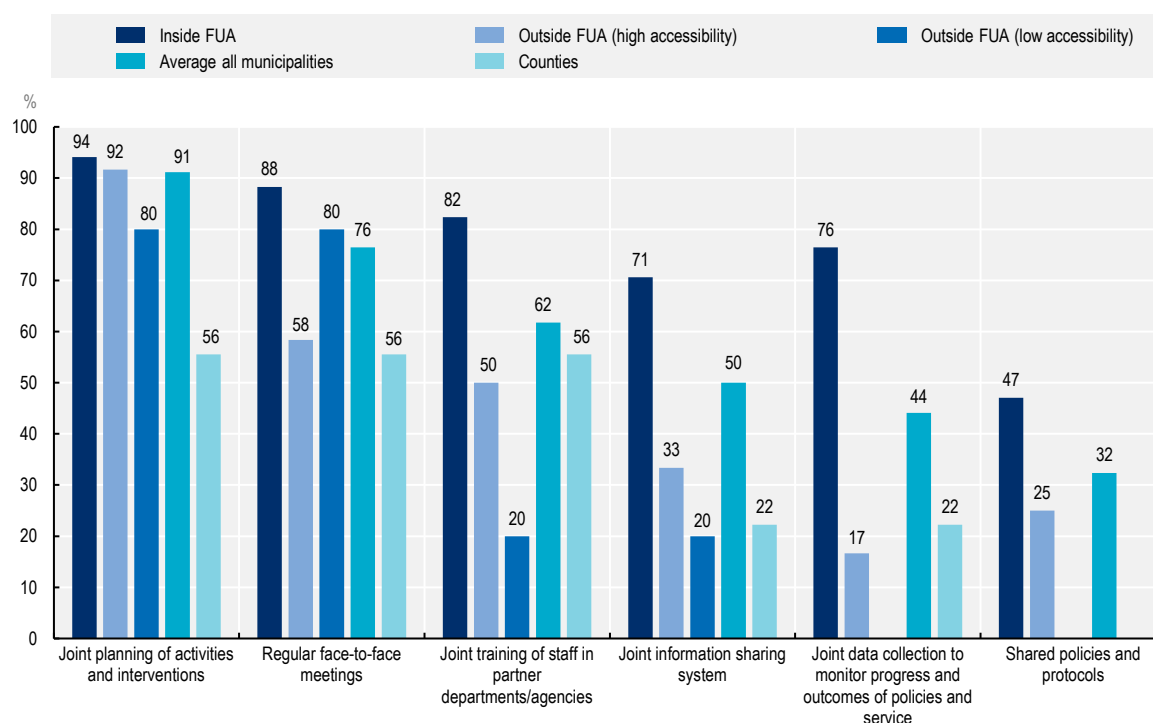
The second most reported practice to improve co-ordination for better planning and improved local development strategies is regular face-to-face meetings. A total of 76% of the surveyed municipalities (56% of the counties) indicated that they hold regular face-to-face meetings. While over 88% of municipalities located inside FUAs and 80% of municipalities outside FUAs (with low accessibility) report regular use of in-person meetings, only 58% of municipalities in highly accessible areas outside FUAs seem to deploy this practice for more effective co-ordination. Due to their informal character and low transaction costs, face-to-face meetings are an efficient and effective way to co-ordinate work between units. Their success may however vary according to the existing level of trust, the participants' personality and knowledge. When they take place on a more formal regular basis, it is also important that all relevant actors are informed of or invited to these meetings, as they otherwise create an element of exclusion and a hierarchy of information that may have negative repercussions.

In particular, at the local level, co-ordination is often based on trust and mutual understanding. Interpersonal relations are therefore an important element that determines the quality of interaction of different team units. Staff training can offer an opportunity to lower institutional barriers and foster interactions and exchange. Some 62% of municipal respondents to the OECD questionnaire (56% of the surveyed counties) report making use of joint staff training (Figure 2.9). This training may take place in one of the participating institutions, a partner unit or a training facility. A differentiation by category of municipality, however, shows that this is not equally practised everywhere and varies a lot depending on the typology of municipality that we look at. While a large majority of 82% of the municipalities in FUAs organise joint training, only half or less of the municipalities outside FUAs have made use of this partnership (Figure 2.9). This large difference between the three categories of municipalities may to some extent be caused by the smaller resources that municipalities located outside FUAs and smaller municipalities have to train staff (for more information on human resource management, please consult Chapter 7).

Large disparities between the different categories of municipalities are also observable for the usage of joint information sharing systems. While 71% of municipalities in FUAs use a system to make information available across administrative units, only 33% (high accessibility) and 20% (low accessibility) of municipalities outside FUAs follow this practice (Figure 2.9). Similarly, only 22% of the surveyed counties make use of joint information sharing. Such low levels can potentially undermine effective co-ordination. For different units and institutions to work together, they need to exchange information informally or formally. Even though information flows are traditionally rigid, vertical and hierarchical, information sharing systems can empower LSGU employees as it allows them to acquire a more comprehensive and accurate picture of policy issues through the complementation of their own knowledge with additional information (Dawes, 1996<sup>[19]</sup>) and enables the identification of potential synergies. Without a sufficient amount of

shared information, municipalities run the risk that their public servants are simply incapable of considering decisions made in other units (Cejudo and Michel, 2017<sup>[20]</sup>). With a lack of minimal ad hoc exchange of information between units, different units will not be able to avoid conflict and negative impact such as increased costs, lack of consistency between policies, redundancies in implementation, duplication of effort and burden for citizens. Furthermore, without adequate information, LSGU employees are in no situation to address complex problems that require joint efforts (Landsbergen and Wolken, 2001<sup>[21]</sup>). Even the lowest level of co-ordination requires information sharing to enable units to achieve their goals more efficiently. The importance of information sharing has been further highlighted by the current COVID-19 pandemic when the possibility of using physical meetings became restricted and teams had to increasingly rely on exchanging information digitally. In this context, the pandemic has also shown the need for functioning information technology (IT) systems and software (e.g. city/municipality intranet, communication or project management platform, etc.) that enable and promote information sharing and communication between administrative units within the LSGU. In addition, an online document management system (e.g. with joint document storage, inter-unit tracking system, etc.) can support effective, transparent, accountable document workflow processes and facilitate digital co-creation processes of joint policy and planning documents across units.

**Figure 2.9. Forms of partnership used by LSGUs as tools to improve co-ordination across different policy sectors for better planning and improved local development strategies**



Note: Based on 43 LSGU responses to the OECD questionnaire (n=43), whereof 34 are municipalities and 9 are counties. While the size of the questionnaire response sample does not allow to draw statistically relevant conclusions, it nevertheless offers sample-specific insights that may be relevant for a larger audience of Polish LSGUs.

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on LSGU responses to the OECD questionnaire (2020).

The use of joint data collection to monitor progress and outcomes of policies and services also confirms the large disparities between municipalities inside and outside FUAs. While only a small percentage of 17% of municipalities with high accessibility outside FUAs confirm the use of joint data collection, in contrast, 76% of the municipalities inside FUAs report that different units collect data jointly (Figure 2.9).

Only 22% of the surveyed counties make use of this practice. The partnership of different units to team up for data collection can not only add to monitoring efforts as it integrates resources into an organisational infrastructure (for more information, please consult Chapter 4 on the use of evidence in strategic decision-making) but it can also be conducive to the overall co-ordination of policies. The differences between the categories of municipalities may in part be explained by diverging resources, as data collection and monitoring efforts presuppose skilled staff and do thus require training.

The form of partnership least commonly used across municipalities in Poland are shared policies and protocols. Overall, 32% of the surveyed municipalities (0% of the counties) indicate that different units and institutions work together in such a co-ordinated way that they integrate their policies. This share is higher for municipalities located inside FUAs (47%). Only a fourth of the municipalities with high accessibility outside FUAs reports their usage as well. For integrated policies, individual units co-ordinate not only for the delivery of their individual work but pursue integrated objectives to ensure interlinked, coherent policies. They thus require the systematic strategic integration of units/departments' work around joint goals; they represent the third and most complex level of co-ordination that municipalities can seek to achieve. As objectives need to be integrated, this level of co-ordination may require substantial political prioritisation and leadership.

### ***Providing capacity and resources for co-ordination through human resource management***

Experience in OECD countries shows that the process of increasing co-ordination across government is a long-term endeavour that is met with many challenges (OECD, 2016<sup>[22]</sup>). Particular challenges often include a degree of resistance of different department/units in aligning their work and promoting an organisational culture aiming at co-ordination as well as adequate human, financial and technical resources. A lack of human and technical resources (see Figure 2.1) was reported by a majority of LSGUs within the framework of the OECD questionnaire and underlines the importance of institutional capacity and resources.

Public administration and civil service at all levels and in most countries were not created considering ways to best ensure effective co-ordination across individual institutions. In most cases, civil services were established in a way that benefits from the efficiency of hierarchy that allows information and accountability to flow vertically. However, evidence from the OECD questionnaire and fact-finding missions shows that for 81% of the municipalities (70% for counties) human resources and LSGU employee capacities are among the most pressing challenges for co-ordination that LSGUs face (Figure 2.1). To allow for effective co-ordination, it is thus important to increase the awareness, understanding and capacity of politicians and LSGU staff.

Training can help to create the skills and competencies needed for effective co-ordination. Courses could focus on internal communication, document management, information sharing as well as on the necessary IT skills. Specific skills and competencies in the field of project management and team leadership may further be helpful to increase the capacity of appointed persons in charge of co-ordination or the management personnel (e.g. chairperson) of institutional co-ordination structures (e.g. taskforces). Moreover, training can raise awareness of the importance and scope of co-ordination within the LSGU and can contribute to a changing organisational culture, where co-operation across administrative boundaries is a more natural reflex than the work in institutional silos. In this regard, the OECD Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development highlights the need for training strategies and programmes to build capacity in the public administration to ensure whole-of-government co-ordination (OECD, 2019<sup>[13]</sup>). Some 62% of the respondents to the OECD questionnaire report making use of joint staff training (Figure 2.9). Also, training programmes provided by the regional self-government or non-governmental actors (e.g. the School for City Leaders Foundation, see Chapter 7 on human resource management) should raise awareness of the importance of co-ordination and contribute to capacity building. Training

could be incorporated into the core curricula of all new municipal staff members. Existing public officials could be required to undertake some level of training to increase their awareness and competencies.

Moreover, government employees should understand their role as co-ordinative. To initiate a real change of organisational culture to improve the quality of policies and services for citizens that goes beyond creating awareness, co-ordination needs to be promoted at every possible opportunity. Not only need co-ordination references be included in policy documents but LSGUs could use co-ordination in terms of references, incorporate it in their civil service's value or competency frameworks and use it for performance agreements. The ability to maintain effective and efficient co-ordination within the municipality could be one of the employees' performance evaluation criteria, notably on the part of senior public officials. Moreover, specific performance-linked incentives could be introduced to further motivate municipal staff to work across administrative units. However, the OECD questionnaire found that, currently, only 6% of municipalities use this human resource management tool and include co-ordination in performance management. Moreover, the need to work across different sectors and organisational units could already be highlighted in job descriptions and the related boundary-spanning skills may be included in recruitment criteria (Christensen and Lægreid, 2008<sup>[23]</sup>).

## Recommendations

### ***Ensuring institutional responsibility for co-ordination***

#### *Define and communicate LSGU units and departments' responsibilities*

To ensure effective co-ordination, the institutional roles and responsibilities of LSGU units/departments must be clear and well defined. Moreover, institutional responsibilities should be widely communicated, recognised by LSGU staff and supported by the political leadership. LSGUs could therefore:

- Share internally an organigram depicting the LSGU's organisational structure with all unit/departments roles, responsibilities and clear reporting lines with all LSGU staff. This organigram should include the contact details of key staff and be regularly updated and adjusted to account for all changes in mandates.
- Publish and make available to other LSGUs a user-friendly version of the organigram depicting the LSGU's organisational structure with all unit/departments roles and responsibilities, on the LSGU website for example. This organigram could include the contact details of key staff. Alternatively, a service telephone number and/or email address could be set up as the first point of contact that can forward calls/emails to the respective LSGU units/employees.

#### *Establish clear institutional responsibility for co-ordination*

A clear assignment of the responsibility for co-ordination to one or more institutions can help ensure effective co-ordination and improve the coherence of policies across LSGU units and policy sectors. Due to their role as the highest administrative authority in LSGUs, mayors assume key co-ordination functions in a large majority of LSGUs across Poland. To explicitly recognise mayors' responsibility for co-ordination in law and provide them with the necessary competence to strategically manage resources, the Government of Poland could consider the following:

- Amend the definition of tasks of mayors in the Act on Local Self-Government (notably in Article 30) to include and define the mayor's responsibility for intra-LSGU co-ordination.

In addition to the mayor, co-ordination responsibility is often delegated to and shared with other LSGU units such as the secretary or the treasurer, who play an important role for the co-ordination of policy-making and service delivery in many Polish LSGUs. It should thus be considered to:

- Assign the responsibility for general co-ordination functions to one or more LSGU units (mayor, secretary of the municipality, office manager or administrative unit) in the LSGU.
- Ensure that the co-ordination responsibility of the LSGU unit/s is widely known within the LSGU and politically supported by the mayor.
- Adjust the workflow of relevant documents and information sharing in order to allow the co-ordinating LSGU unit/s to fulfil their functions.
- Provide the LSGU unit/s in charge of co-ordination with the necessary human resources and financial means to properly fulfil this function.

#### *Consider establishing formal mandates for co-ordinating units/departments*

In order to facilitate the work of the unit/s in charge of co-ordinating policies and services, LSGUs can provide them with a formal mandate that outlines their specific role, task and duty. Having the responsibility for co-ordination codified in a legal document creates legal certainty and legitimacy in relation to other actors and may raise awareness of the importance of co-ordination. Providing the co-ordinating unit/s with a strong mandate to lead the LSGU's co-ordination efforts can thus help foster effective co-ordination. In many Polish LSGUs, such mandates enshrine the responsibility of the mayor for co-ordination matters or determine that the secretary or the treasurer of the municipality assume this responsibility by way of delegation of powers from the mayor. It could thus be considered to:

- Establish a clear formal mandate for unit/s in charge of co-ordination included in the LSGU's general organisational regulations or a separate regulation to facilitate the work on co-ordination across administrative units and policy sectors. In addition, job descriptions for specific posts may also include co-ordination functions.
- Share already existing mandates and post descriptions with LSGU employees and communicate the specific roles, tasks and duties they assign to different administrative units/departments.

#### *Consider the use of formal reporting arrangements for co-ordination*

Through the establishment of an obligation to co-operate, formal reporting arrangements can help the mayor or respective unit/department responsible for co-ordination within the LSGU to work with several units/departments towards higher levels of co-ordination. While formal reporting arrangements can be established by laws or regulations, many LSGUs base their arrangements on non-regulated informal tradition. Such an approach requires personal relations and trust, but offers flexibility and low transaction costs, particularly for smaller municipalities. However, changing mayors and inconstant staff composition can result in challenges for reporting arrangements based on informal tradition. LSGUs could thus consider to:

- Formalise reporting arrangements between the mayor or the institution in charge of co-ordination and other units/departments based on non-regulated informal tradition in case of frequent LSGU transitions and inconsistent staff composition.

#### *Make more strategic use of policy documents to foster co-ordination*

Policy documents can help raise awareness of the importance of intra-LSGU co-ordination and may offer advice to public servants that are tasked with co-ordination. They can provide guidance and clarity, highlight good practices and objectives that a particular LSGU seeks to meet. References to co-ordination in LSGUs' development strategies can help to raise LSGU staff and citizen awareness of the benefits of co-ordination as a catalyst to implement the LSGU's strategic policy objectives.

- Include references to intra-LSGU co-ordination in reform plans and development strategies to help raise awareness of the importance of co-ordination across administrative units and policy sectors.

In addition to the inclusion of references to co-ordination in reform plans and development strategies, supporting policy documents such as guides, toolkits and handbooks can focus on policy coherence and effective co-ordination for policy-makers. While such documents are bringing the most added value to LSGUs with comparatively large administrations and staff bodies, smaller sized LSGUs could also develop simpler versions of these documents for internal usage only.

- Develop specific policy documents that can concretely assist policy-makers and LSGU employees in co-ordinating with different units/departments.

### ***Effective co-ordination through institutional mechanisms and partnerships***

In general, the degree of institutionalisation and complexity of the co-ordination mechanisms used should always be determined by the size of the LSGU's staff. Smaller LSGUs with fewer employees may consider less institutionalised mechanisms to be more suitable.

#### *Create fit-for-purpose taskforces for the work on crosscutting policy issues and complex challenges*

Co-ordination mechanisms such as temporary or permanent fit-for-purpose taskforces (sometimes called project teams or working groups) can be appointed by the mayor to help work on crosscutting policy issues (e.g. the development and implementation of the local development strategy) and to deal with complex challenges (e.g. multi-annual budget planning, unemployment, housing or disabilities). At the same time, it would be prudent to avoid creating a multiplicity of taskforces in order to limit the atomisation of co-ordination tools.

- Establish a taskforce comprised of different LSGU units/departments (and external stakeholders) to work on crosscutting policy issues and to deal with complex challenges (see the recommendations regarding the establishment of taskforces to elaborate or supervise the development of socio-economic diagnostics in Chapter 4).
- Ensure political support for the taskforce by the mayor and senior LSGU management.
- Appoint a head or chair person with decision-making authority within the respective scope of tasks, to lead the work of the taskforce and be responsible for oversight and facilitating operations. It is important that the person is involved in the planning and implementation of the budget and multiannual financial plan within the scope of the entrusted tasks.
- Provide taskforces with adequate (autonomous) financial resources, personnel, expertise and technical support to co-ordinate policy-making and service delivery.
- Grant taskforces access to all relevant information and provide them with key information necessary for the fulfilment of their mandate.
- Consult with external stakeholders to obtain additional information and tap into their experience.

#### *Use existing permanent councils/committees to improve co-ordination*

Across Poland, many LSGUs have established permanent councils or committees. They often take the form of a youth and senior council but LSGUs can also appoint sector-based councils/committees in areas such as housing, infrastructure, energy and public safety or can create them on particular policy issues. While these councils play an advisory role in a given area of work, they can constitute an effective way to engage with citizens to unlock their expertise and they can also help improve the co-ordination of intra-LSGU policy-making and service delivery in their areas of focus by playing their advisory function effectively.

- Utilise existing permanent councils/committees to co-ordinate LSGU work in their area of focus as an advisory body.

- Ensure that permanent councils and committees are equipped with the necessary political support to fulfil their functions.

### *Promote joint planning of activities and shared policies*

In addition to institutional mechanisms, LSGUs have a number of partnership practices at their disposal that can help improve co-ordination. Through the planning of joint activities and interventions, two or more independent units can not only avoid overlaps and conflicts but can create synergies for the delivery of their own work, while contributing to the achievement of overall shared goals.

- Promote the joint planning of activities and interventions between two or more independent administrative units for better planning and improved local development strategies.

In the same vein, LSGUs should encourage different units to work together in such a co-ordinated way that they integrate their policies. For integrated policies, individual units co-ordinate not only for the delivery of their individual work but pursue integrated objectives to ensure interlinked, coherent policies.

- Encourage units/departments to integrate their work around joint goals and strategic objectives to ensure interlinked, coherent policies and services.
- Consider assigning the responsibility of the co-ordination of joint goals and strategic objectives by delegation from the mayor to an individual coordinator or administrative unit and ensure accountability for the execution of this mandate.
- Ensure political support for the development of joint goals and strategic objectives.

### *Ensure information and document sharing across administrative units*

Information sharing systems can empower LSGU employees as it allows them to acquire a more comprehensive and accurate picture of policy issues through the complementation of their own knowledge with additional information and enables the identification of potential synergies. An appropriate IT system and software (e.g. city/municipality intranet, communication or project management platform, etc.) can promote communication and exchange of information between different administrative units and lead to better co-ordination.

- Promote the open and regular exchange of relevant information and key documents across the LSGU administrative units.
- Set up an online information and document management system (e.g. with joint document storage, inter-unit tracking system, etc.) that supports effective, transparent, accountable document workflow processes (e.g. through easy and secure access and sharing of documents) and facilitates the digital co-creation of joint policy and planning documents across units.

## **Capacity and resources for co-ordination**

### *Focus on the development of skills and competencies for co-ordination*

Many LSGUs reported challenges with regard to human resources and employee capacities. To allow for effective intra-LSGU co-ordination, it is thus important to increase the awareness, understanding and capacity of politicians and employees. Training strategies and programmes can help to build capacity in the LSGU to ensure co-ordination. Moreover, training can raise awareness of the importance and scope of co-ordination within the LSGU and can contribute to a changing organisational culture, where co-operation across administrative boundaries is a more natural reflex than work in institutional silos. Joint training of staff from different units can also offer an opportunity to lower institutional barriers and foster interactions and exchange.



- Provide training to create the skills and competencies needed for effective co-ordination. Courses could focus on internal communication, document management, information sharing as well as on the necessary IT skills. Specific skills and competencies in the field of project management and team leadership may further be helpful to increase the capacity of appointed persons in charge of co-ordination or the management personnel (e.g. chairperson) of institutional co-ordination structures (e.g. taskforces).
- Pool resources between LSGUs and make use of joint staff training. This training may take place in the participating LSGUs or a training facility.
- Incorporate training in the core curricula of all new municipal staff members. Existing public officials could be required to undertake some level of training to increase their awareness and competencies with regard to co-ordination.

*Include co-ordination references in human resource management tools*

LSGU staff should understand their role as co-ordinative. To initiate a real change of organisational culture to improve the quality of policies and services for citizens, co-ordination could be incorporated in LSGU value or competency frameworks and be used in employees' job descriptions/terms of references. The ability to maintain effective and efficient co-ordination within the LSGU could also be one of the employees' performance evaluation criteria, notably on the part of senior employees.

- Incorporate references to co-ordination in LSGU staff competency and values frameworks.
- Highlight the need to work across different sectors and organisational units in job descriptions/terms of references and recruitment criteria.
- Introduce co-ordination in performance management and include specific performance-linked incentives to further motivate senior staff to work across administrative units and policy sectors.

***Recommendations for the national and/or regional levels of government***

*Explore the creation of training and policy documents to build capacity for co-ordination*

In light of the challenges, LSGUs face with regard to employees' capacities for co-ordination, the regional and national levels of government could consider including co-ordination in their existing training curricula. Moreover, the development of policy documents such as guides, toolkits and handbooks can provide policy-makers with guidance regarding policy coherence and effective co-ordination.

- Amend existing training programmes for LSGUs to raise awareness of the importance of co-ordination and contribute to capacity building.
- Develop policy documents such as guides, toolkits and handbooks to provide LSGU leaders (i.e. mayors and heads of county management boards) and staff with guidance for effective co-ordination.



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## Note

<sup>1</sup> The CoG is “the body or group of bodies that provide direct support and advice to Heads of Government and the Council of Minister, or Cabinet” (OECD, 2020<sup>[1]</sup>).



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