Role of the centre of government in open government

Open government is defined as a culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth (OECD, 2017). Due to the cross-cutting nature of its strategies and initiatives, they require strong institutional arrangements for co-ordination. In this way, countries can ensure goals are met and an adequate involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, including independent institutions, civil society organisations, academia, the media, and others. The centre of government (CoG) has a strategic position to co-ordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate open government strategies and initiatives, since these require a whole-of-government approach and strong political leverage, commitment, support and leadership.

In the majority of OECD countries, the CoG plays an important role in designing, implementing, communicating, co-ordinating, monitoring and evaluating open government strategies and initiatives. In Australia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico and the United Kingdom, the CoG is involved throughout the life-cycle of these strategies. In Canada, France, Japan and Slovenia, the CoG intervenes only at one stage of the process. In Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, other institutions outside the CoG carry out the open government agenda. For instance, in Spain, this role is played by the Ministry of Territorial Policy and Public Administration and in Finland by the Ministry of Finance.

In 28 OECD countries, the CoG directly consults with stakeholders on policies. Citizens and professional associations (such as trade unions) are the most mentioned by respondents, followed by academic institutions. Australia, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico and the United Kingdom carry out consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society organisations, the media, independent state institutions and representatives from subnational levels of government. Twenty-four countries link such consultations to the policy cycle, and all of them consult at the time of drafting. For instance, in the Czech Republic, consultations took place for the end-of-term self-assessment report of the second Open Government Partnership (OGP) national plan, the development of the third plan, as well as for the lobbying and whistleblowing regulations. The CoGs of Australia, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Latvia and Mexico also consult stakeholders when defining policy priorities and when implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies.

CoGs are using digital platforms to collect suggestions or feedback on proposed policies from citizens. Some countries, like Lithuania, have a single open government platform for such purposes. In other cases, a portal is designed to collect feedback on a specific draft policy. For example, when considering the reform of the federal electoral system in 2016-17, the Privy Council Office of Canada collected feedback on an online platform where citizens were asked their views on democratic practices. After completing the questionnaire, respondents received information on their own perspective compared to the public discussion. By providing a user-friendly interface, the site sought to attract the participation of citizens in general, and the youth in particular. In this way, the CoG was able to raise awareness of the policy and collect data on citizens' opinion.

Methodology and definitions

The data were collected via the 2017 OECD Survey on Organisation and Functions of the Centre of Government, to which 34 OECD countries and 4 other economies. Respondents were senior officials who provide direct support and advice to heads of government and the council of ministers or cabinet and provided information for the year 2016

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 the functions.

Open government strategy is a document that defines the open government agenda of the central government and/or of any sub-national level, or of a single public institution or thematic area. Such a document includes key open government initiatives, together with short, medium and long-term goals and indicators.

Open government initiatives are actions undertaken by the government, or by a single public institution, to achieve specific objectives in this area, ranging from the drafting of laws to the implementation of specific activities such as online consultations.

Further reading

OECD (2017), Recommendation of the Council on Open Government, *https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438*.

OECD (2016), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward,* OECD Publishing, Paris, *https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en*.

Figure notes

Data for Korea and Poland are not available. On data for Israel, see *http://doi.org/10.1787/888932315602*. Data for Italy, when available, refer to 2019.

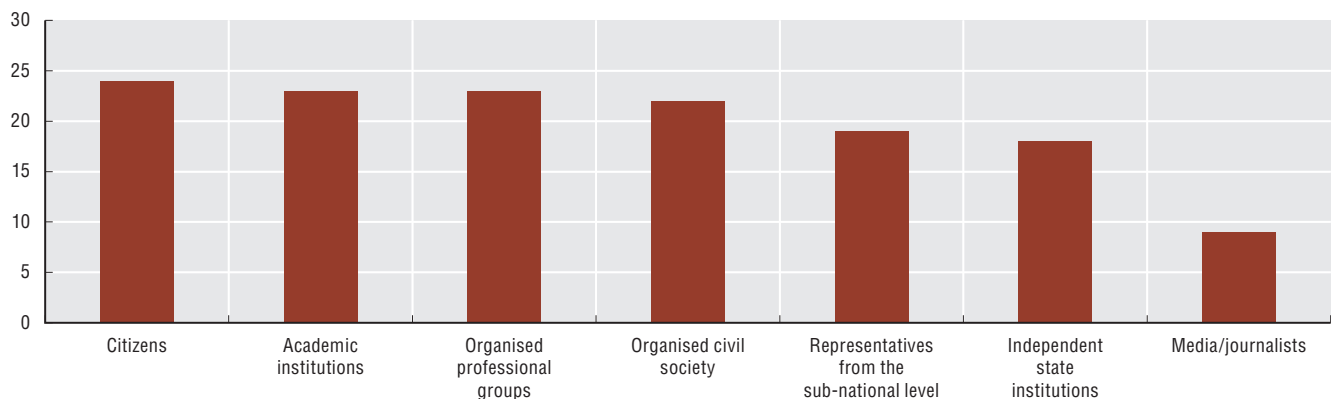4.7 (Stages of the policy-cycle at which CoG consults with stakeholders) is available online in Annex F.

4.5. Role of the centre of government in open government strategies and initiatives, 2016

Country	Design	Implementation	Communication	Co-ordination	Monitoring	Evaluation
Australia	●	●	●	●	●	●
Austria	●	●	○	●	○	●
Belgium	○	○	○	○	○	○
Canada	○	○	○	○	●	○
Chile	●	●	●	●	○	○
Czech Republic	●	●	●	●	●	●
Denmark	○	○	○	○	○	○
Estonia	●	●	●	●	●	●
Finland	○	○	○	○	○	○
France	○	○	○	●	○	○
Germany	●	●	○	○	○	○
Greece	●	○	●	●	●	●
Hungary	●	●	○	○	○	○
Iceland	●	○	●	●	●	○
Ireland	○	○	○	○	○	○
Israel	●	●	●	●	●	●
Italy	●	●	●	●	●	○
Japan	○	●	○	○	○	○
Latvia	●	●	●	●	●	●
Lithuania	●	●	●	●	●	●
Luxembourg	●	●	●	○	○	○
Mexico	●	●	●	●	●	●
Netherlands	●	●	●	○	○	○
New Zealand	●	●	●	●	●	○
Norway	○	○	○	○	○	○
Portugal	○	○	○	○	○	○
Slovak Republic	●	●	●	●	○	●
Slovenia	○	○	●	○	○	○
Spain	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sweden	○	○	○	○	○	○
Switzerland	○	○	○	○	○	○
Turkey	●	●	●	●	○	○
United Kingdom	●	●	●	●	●	●
United States	●	●	●	●	●	○
OECD Total						
● Yes	21	20	19	18	14	11
○ No	13	14	15	16	20	23
Brazil	●	○	○	○	○	○
Costa Rica	●	○	●	●	●	○

OECD (2017), OECD Survey on Organisation and functions of the Centre of Government.
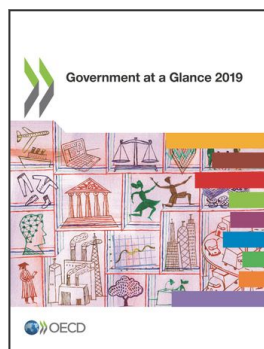
StatLink 🖳 *https://doi.org/10.1787/888934032168*

4.6. Stakeholders involved in consultations carried out by centres of government, 2016

OECD (2017), OECD Survey on Organisation and functions of the Centre of Government.

StatLink 🖳 *https://doi.org/10.1787/888934032187*

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