

## *Foreword*

Governments operate in an ever more complex and demanding environment. They are facing increasingly “wicked”, interdependent problems and, like the private sector, are having to adjust to both the challenges and opportunities presented by globalisation and rapid technological change. The effects of the financial and economic crisis of 2008 have put further pressure on governments to cut costs and increase value for money. It is clear that the traditional model of the state, with its rigid, vertical hierarchies or “silos”, is no longer adequate. Modern economies and societies require a more strategic, flexible public sector that can adapt quickly to change and draw on a broader range of views, knowledge and expertise in designing and delivering public policies and services.

In working with countries to analyse and improve their public governance systems, the OECD has been exploring the concept of “strategic agility”, first developed in the private sector, and how it can help achieve this vision of the modern state. Strategic agility has three main components: strategic sensitivity, leadership unity and resource fluidity. Applying these to the public sector means ensuring that governments can anticipate and plan for future needs and challenges; align policies across the public administration to shared strategic objectives and the public interest; and redeploy resources quickly as needs change. This will require changing internal structures, processes and organisational cultures, as well as the way government interacts with citizens and businesses.

This report provides guidance on how the public administration can use the budget, human resources, and information and communication technologies (ICT) to effect these changes. It is the result of work carried out by the OECD Public Governance Committee and its policy communities on budgeting practices, public employment and management practices, and information and communication technologies. Findings were also discussed at a high-level policy symposium held at the OECD in November 2012.

This study also builds on pioneering work undertaken in the context of OECD public governance reviews, as well as exploratory discussions

conducted with leading academics and experts in collaboration with SITRA (the Finnish Innovation Fund) and INSEAD (the French international business school). Part of the OECD programme on Public Governance, it also contributes to the OECD Trust Agenda to restore public confidence in institutions.

We are grateful to all of the experts who have taken part in this work to help governments become more strategic, agile and responsive.

## *Acknowledgements*

This project was led by Stéphane Jacobzone under the Direction of Rolf Alter and Mario Marcel in the OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate. The chapter on budgeting as a tool for strategic agility was prepared by Ian Hawkesworth and Knut Klepsvik, Budgeting and Public Expenditure Division, with guidance from Edwin Lau (Reform of the Public Sector Division). The chapter on using human resource management strategies to support strategic agility draws from information provided by OECD member countries in response to the 2010 OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resource Management in Central/Federal Governments, and on the OECD Working Party on Public Employment and Management and its work on strategic workforce planning, and was written by Robert Ball with guidance from Oscar Huerta Melchor. The chapter on achieving public sector agility through information and communication technologies was drafted by Barbara Ubaldi and benefitted from a Case Study on “Linea Amica” supported by the Italian Ministry of Public Administration. The chapter on exploring the concept of “strategic agility” for better government was drafted by Caroline Varley and Andrea Uhrhammer, and is based on discussions at an international workshop on “Strategic Agility for Strong Societies and Economies”, organised in 2011 by Caroline Varley in collaboration with INSEAD in France and SITRA in Finland. This workshop followed on from the findings of the 2010 Public Governance Review of Finland, co-ordinated by Edwin Lau, which drew on the work developed by Professor Yves Doz and Mikko Kosonen in their book *Fast Strategy*, released in 2008 (Pearson Education Limited). Andrea Uhrhammer and Kate Lancaster provided editorial advice and comments. Jennifer Allain and Lia Beyeler prepared the document for publication.



**From:**  
**Achieving Public Sector Agility at Times of Fiscal Consolidation**

**Access the complete publication at:**  
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264206267-en>

**Please cite this chapter as:**

OECD (2015), "Foreword and acknowledgements", in *Achieving Public Sector Agility at Times of Fiscal Consolidation*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264206267-1-en>

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