

1 Fostering Citizen and Stakeholder Participation in the Czech Republic

This chapter assesses policies and practices relating to citizen and stakeholder participation in the Czech Republic against the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government and good practices from OECD Member countries. It focuses on participatory processes in public decision-making at central level and beyond electoral processes. The chapter finds that islands of good practice already exist across the Czech public administration, such as advisory bodies that include different types of non-public stakeholders. Nonetheless, the chapter notes that existing processes often lack impact and that there is currently no overarching vision for participation at the national level.

Introduction

Citizen and stakeholder participation is at the very heart of the concept of open government. The participation of the governed in the ruling exercise is a fundamental value of modern democratic societies (OECD, 2022^[1]). Even though for many people participation in democratic life still starts and ends at the ballot box, increasingly citizens across the OECD are using other forms of participation to express their political preferences and engage in public life (OECD, 2022^[1]). As democracy has evolved and adapted to newly emerging needs and challenges, citizens have started taking a more central and active role in all stages of the public decision-making process.

Citizen and stakeholder participation is a broad field, which can include non-institutionalised practices (such as protest or activism), institutionalised mechanisms for democratic participation (such as elections and referenda), as well as non-electoral participatory practices (such as consultations, participatory budgets, hackathons, deliberative assemblies, etc.) (OECD, 2022^[1]). Non-electoral participation differs from traditional democratic participation, as rather than selecting representatives, citizens' and stakeholders' needs and views are integrated throughout the policy cycle and in the design and delivery of services. Non-electoral participatory and deliberative processes do not aim to replace formal rules and principles of a representative democracy, such as free and fair elections, representative assemblies, accountable executives, a politically neutral public administration, pluralism and respect for human rights (OECD, 2001^[2]). Except for the most advanced forms of participation (such as co-creation or co-production), the ultimate responsibility for decisions usually remains with elected officials, who are accountable to the population. Rather than replacing formal rules and principles, (non-electoral) citizen and stakeholder participation throughout the policy cycle aims to renew and deepen the relationship between governments and the public they serve (Sheedy, 2008^[3]).

Successful citizen¹ and stakeholder² participation requires a change of culture. Moving from an *ad hoc* process to a participation culture (and, more broadly, an open government culture) requires public institutions to make a habit of involving citizens. Ultimately, creating a participation culture involves changes in individual and institutional values, skills, beliefs, norms of conduct, and expectations, which are reflected in new types of policies, services and working methodologies (OECD, 2022^[1]). Besides a change in public decision-making and public officials' mindset, a culture of participation requires democratically fit citizens who are interested, and have the agency and needed skills to participate.

As part of its motivation to conduct this OECD Public Governance Review, the Czech Republic highlighted its ambition to move towards better citizen and stakeholder participation throughout the entire public policy cycle. This ambition is also reflected in the country's numerous policy documents and strategies that include a focus on fostering citizens' and stakeholders' involvement in public decision-making. For example, the Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030 and the Client-Oriented Public Administration strategy outline a vision for more participatory governance in the country. Furthermore, as an Adherent to the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (OECD, 2017^[4]) and a signatory of the Open Government Declaration of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), the Czech Republic is internationally committed to supporting citizen and stakeholder participation in decision-making and service delivery.

This chapter assesses policies and practices relating citizen and stakeholder participation in the Czech Republic against standards promoted by the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government and good practices in other OECD countries. Recognising that participation is a broad concept, this chapter only looks at the inclusion of citizens and stakeholders in non-electoral mechanisms (what in the Czech Republic is usually referred to as "less traditional forms of participation" or "participation in public events"). In particular, it analyses the Czech Republic's frameworks and mechanisms to foster the involvement of citizens and stakeholders in public decision-making. Rather than assessing individual participatory processes implemented by public institutions, the chapter focuses on ways to foster the governance of the participation agenda at the level of the central government.³ It finds that islands of good

practice in terms of citizen and stakeholder participation already exist across the Czech central administration and at the local level. For example, the Czech Republic has a strong culture of creating advisory and working bodies that include different types of non-public stakeholders. At the same time, the chapter notes that existing participatory processes often lack impact and that there is currently no overarching vision for citizen and stakeholder participation across the Czech public administration. Currently, there is little guidance, co-ordination or sharing of good practices and participation is often limited to the “usual suspects”.

The chapter starts by defining participation and discussing the Czech Republic’s current understanding of the concept. It then focuses on the enabling environment for participation, discussing laws, policies and institutions that allow for citizen and stakeholder participation at the level of the central government. It then continues by discussing ways to foster participation literacy in the Czech administration and society and by analysing how public communications and the provision of high-quality information can enable informed participation. The last section identifies newly emerging trends that could support the Czech Republic in unleashing the full potential of citizen and stakeholder participation.

What is citizen and stakeholder participation?

Over the years, the understanding of the concept of open government in OECD countries moved from a transparency-focused agenda to include a more interactive relation between citizens and governments, including other elements such as participation and accountability (OECD, 2016^[5]). Accordingly, the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government defines open government as “a culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and citizen and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth”.

The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government further defines participation as “all the ways in which stakeholders can be involved in the policy cycle and in service design and delivery”. Participation, hence, refers to the efforts by public institutions to hear and integrate citizens’ and stakeholders’ views, perspectives and inputs in public decision-making. In this regard, Provisions 8 and 9 of the Recommendation (OECD, 2017^[4]) invite Adhering countries to:

8. Grant all stakeholders equal and fair opportunities to be informed and consulted and actively engage them in all phases of the policy cycle and service design and delivery. This should be done with adequate time and at minimal cost, while avoiding duplication to minimise consultation fatigue. Further, specific efforts should be dedicated to reaching out to the most relevant, vulnerable, underrepresented or marginalised groups in society, while avoiding undue influence and policy capture.

9. Promote innovative ways to effectively engage with stakeholders to source ideas and co-create solutions and seize the opportunities provided by digital government tools, including through the use of open government data, to support the achievement of the objectives of open government strategies and initiatives. (OECD, 2017^[4])

There is no one-size-fits-all model for citizen and stakeholder participation

Participation is not a linear concept and has different modalities, and degrees of involvement and of impact (OECD, 2021^[6]). One way to understand and analyse participation is by looking at the degree of agency and power given to participants to influence and take part in the process and its outcomes (OECD, 2022^[1]). Arnstein (1969^[7]) coined an eight-level scale to understand participation, from manipulation to citizen control. The IAP2’s Spectrum of Public Participation (2018^[8]) measures participation in relation to the impact it has on the decisions using five stages. The OECD (2001^[2]; 2017^[4]) distinguishes between three levels of citizen and stakeholder participation, which differ according to the level of involvement and impact associated:

1. **Information:** an initial level of participation characterised by a one-way relationship in which the government produces and delivers information to the public. It covers both on-demand provision of information and “proactive” measures by the government to disseminate information. This level of participation can refer, for example, to open data platforms or public communication campaigns.
2. **Consultation:** a more advanced level of participation that entails a two-way relationship in which the public provides feedback to the government and vice versa (comments, perceptions, information, advice, experiences and ideas). It is based on the prior definition of the issue for which views are being sought and requires the provision of relevant information, in addition to feedback on the outcomes of the process. In most cases, there is no obligation to take the audience’s views into consideration when amending plans, taking decisions or setting directions. In most consultation meetings, decision-makers commit only to receiving the testimony of participants and considering their views in their own deliberations (OECD, 2015^[9]). This level of participation can refer, for example, to public consultations on draft legislation or consultative bodies on technical questions such as health policies.
3. **Engagement:** when the public is given the opportunity and the necessary resources (e.g. information, data and digital tools) to collaborate during all phases of the policy cycle and in service design and delivery. Engagement is a relationship based on a partnership between citizens and governments. The public actively engages in defining the process and content of policymaking. Like consultation, engagement is based on a two-way interaction, but it acknowledges equal standing for citizens in setting the agenda, proposing policy options and shaping the decisions – although the responsibility for the final decision or policy formulation in many cases remains the prerogative of public authorities. This level of participation can refer to, for example, representative deliberative processes or participatory budgets at the local level.

Table 1.1. Existing participatory mechanisms in the Czech Republic according to the OECD ladder of participation

Name/type of participatory mechanism	Description	Citizens/stakeholders	Level of participation
Open Data Portal	Digital platform with public information and data in an open data format.	Citizens and stakeholders	Information
Public hearings	Participatory mechanism open to any interested party, to exchange opinions and ideas between participants to inform and discuss government decisions.	Citizens and stakeholders	Consultation
Public consultations	Participatory mechanisms where the organising public authority aims at gathering inputs, opinions and ideas from citizens and stakeholders on a specific question or decision.	Citizens and stakeholders	Consultation
Advisory and working bodies (PPOVs, for the Czech acronym)	Permanent bodies with both governmental and non-public stakeholders mandated to participate in formulating and evaluating public policies.	Stakeholders	Consultation
Open Government Partnership (OGP) Process	Participatory process for the OGP Action Plan, which includes consultation and co-creation steps, with online and in-person mechanisms.	Citizens and stakeholders	Consultation and engagement
Roundtables	Mechanisms for debate and negotiation with the participation of both governmental and non-public stakeholders to prevent, mediate and solve social conflicts.	Citizens and stakeholders	Consultation
Participatory budgeting	Mechanisms that allow citizens and stakeholders to influence public decisions through the direct allocation of public resources to priorities or projects. It is usually organised at the subnational level and can include several stages, such as deliberative assemblies, digital voting platforms and co-creation workshops.	Citizens and stakeholders	Engagement

Citizens and stakeholders, two important but distinct types of participants

The OECD defines the different actors that public institutions can involve in their participatory mechanisms as:

- **Stakeholders:** any interested and/or affected party, including: institutions and organisations, whether governmental or non-public, from civil society, academia, the media or the private sector.
- **Citizens:** individuals, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and political affiliations; and in the larger sense, “an inhabitant of a particular place”, which can be in reference to a village, town, city, region, state or country depending on the context.

The participation of citizens and/or stakeholders are both equally important; however, they should not be treated equally (OECD, 2022^[1]; 2022^[10]). No value or preference is given to citizens or stakeholders in particular, as both types of public can enrich the government’s decisions, policies and services. Nevertheless, each type of participant requires different conditions to participate and will not produce the same type of input (OECD, 2022^[10]). For example, stakeholders can provide expertise and more specific inputs than the broader public, and can represent specific sectors of society through mechanisms such as advisory bodies or expert panels. Stakeholders are often driven by specific interests linked to the group they represent or the values they are supposed to embody. Citizens can provide a general understanding of the needs of the population, support legitimacy and trust in decisions, and enhance representation and inclusion (OECD, 2020^[11]).

Participation can inform decision-making, improve public decisions and promote trust

The decision-making process is as important as the outcomes themselves for reasons both of efficacy and equity. Participation in the process can bring in the views of all stakeholders – from those who will be implementing to the final beneficiaries (OECD, 2011^[12]). OECD countries’ experience indicates that participation can improve policy performance and the quality of public services by helping governments to better understand people’s needs, tapping into collective intelligence for innovation, creating more cost-efficient policies and enhancing policy implementation (OECD, 2009^[13]; OECD, 2020^[11]; OECD, 2016^[5]). The benefits of participation can be understood as (OECD, 2022^[10]; 2016^[5]):

- **Intrinsic benefits (i.e. a better and more democratic process)** refer to the idea that participation can improve and democratise the process of public decision-making. This, in turn, can contribute to increasing the legitimacy of public decisions, supporting policy implementation and evaluation, and tapping into collective intelligence for innovation and creativity.
- **Instrumental benefits (i.e. better results)** refer to the idea that participation can improve the quality of policies, laws and services, as they are elaborated, implemented and evaluated based on better evidence and a more informed choice. Participation can give the “silent majority” a voice in public decision-making, addressing inequalities of voice and access, fighting exclusion and marginalisation, and thus ensuring democracies deliver to all.

Ultimately, giving citizens and stakeholders a voice in taking the decisions that will affect their lives (beyond elections) and ensuring that their voice has an impact on the final decision can impact trust in government and strengthen democratic institutions (Mejia, 2020^[14]).

Defining citizen and stakeholder participation in the Czech context

The national government of the Czech Republic currently does not have a single official definition, typology or classification for citizen participation and/or stakeholder participation. In their answers to the OECD questionnaires and during interviews conducted as part of the OECD fact-finding mission, public officials from different ministries provided diverging definitions of what they considered to be citizen and

stakeholder participation. Public officials often confused the concept of citizen and stakeholder participation with those of transparency/lobbying/influencing.

The Czech Republic's methodology for public involvement in the preparation of government documents from 2009 (see below) refers to "four levels of public involvement" (namely, "informing", "reminding", "consulting" and "partnership") and provides ample explanations of what each of these levels involves in practice. However, the methodology does not seem to be used widely. Some Czech ministries reported rather using the definition of participation promoted by the OECD (which refers to three levels of participation as presented above) or the IAP2 spectrum (which refers to five levels).

The absence of a common definition of what constitutes (non-electoral) participation can represent an obstacle to the harmonious implementation of participatory policies and practices across the public sector. Building on the existing definitions and typologies mentioned above, the Czech Republic could consider adopting a single definition of citizen and stakeholder participation. Such a single definition can inform the public about the extent and limitations of participation and align all stakeholders and policymakers towards the same goals (OECD, 2022^[1]). A common definition can further facilitate a more robust analysis of the impacts of participatory practices across different institutions and levels of government and support international comparisons (*Ibid.*). In order to design its single definition of citizen and stakeholder participation, the Czech Republic could consider organising a participatory process, for example by using existing mechanisms such as the Multi-stakeholder Forum created for the OGP process. Involving the Multi-stakeholder Forum could ensure the creation of stronger links between an eventual participation agenda and the wider open government agenda, as further discussed below.

Once adopted, the single definition should be communicated widely to ensure that all public officials and non-public stakeholders are aware of and use it. The definition should be used and referred to in all newly adopted policy documents and could eventually even be included in a legal document. Moving towards a single definition does not mean that all institutions necessarily have to use exactly the same definition. Instead, it implies that all public and non-public stakeholders share a common understanding of what participation does (and does not) entail and work towards a shared vision.

Protecting and promoting civic space to enable participation in the Czech Republic

It is not enough for governments to decide they want to engage more with citizens. Evidence collected by the OECD shows that they also need to create an environment in which this is possible and in which citizens are willing and able to come forward and engage with public officials. This means that individual rights (particularly freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, association) need to be respected (*de jure* and *de facto*); complaint mechanisms need to function; information and data need to be made available; the rule of law needs to be respected; journalists need to be able to analyse and critique government decisions; protesters need to be able to air their views in safety; and civil society organisation/activists/human rights defenders need to be able to operate without fear of violence, retribution or interference, etc. (OECD, 2021^[15]).

A non-protected civic space can contribute to a polarised atmosphere, which hinders the quality of the interactions between non-public stakeholders (including citizens, non-governmental organisations, the media, etc.) and public authorities. The closing of the civic space can have a direct impact on the level of inclusion of participation. As part of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government, the OECD invites countries to protect their civic spaces (both offline and online) in order to allow for equal, informed, secure and inclusive participation.

While a full analysis of the protection and promotion of civic space goes beyond the scope of this chapter (and could be the subject of an OECD Open Government Review or an OECD Civic Space Scan), available

international indicators in the field can shed some light on the status quo of civic space in the Czech Republic. The Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2021 ranks the Czech Republic 29th out of 167 countries. V-Dem's 2021 Liberal Democracy Index ranks the country 31st out of 179, although it does warn of the decay of democratic qualities, deeming it an “autocratising” country (V-Dem-Institute, 2021^[16]).

Indicators further show that the Czech Republic is notable when it comes to the rule of law and freedom of the press. Freedom House gives it a score of 91/100 in its 2022 Freedom in the World Index (Freedom House, 2022^[17]), and the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index ranks the country 22nd out of 139 countries (World Justice Project, 2022^[18]). Similarly, Article 19's freedom of expression report deems it an “open” country, ranking it 23rd out of 161 ranked countries in 2021 (Article 19, 2021^[19]). Reporters without Borders' World Press Freedom Index 2022 ranks it 20th out of 180, with a score of 80.54 out of 100 (Reporters Without Borders, 2022^[20]). Finally, the CIVICUS monitor, a tool to track civic space around the world, considers the Czech Republic's civic space to be “narrowed” in 2022, in line with many other OECD countries like France and the United Kingdom (CIVICUS, 2022^[21]).

Box 1.1. OECD work on the protection and promotion of civic space as an enabler of open government reforms

The OECD defines civic space as the set of legal, policy, institutional and practical conditions necessary for non-governmental actors to access information, express themselves, associate, organise and participate in public life. The OECD recognises a healthy civic space as a precondition for and facilitator of open government initiatives. Governments must ensure that their civic space is open, protected and promoted through clear policies and legal frameworks that set out the rules of engagement between citizens and the state, framing boundaries, and defending individual freedoms and rights (OECD, 2016^[5]).

In 2019, the OECD and its partners launched the OECD Observatory of Civic Space to promote and protect civic space as a precondition for good governance and inclusive growth. In this regard, the OECD is currently in the process of publishing a *Global Civic Space Report* (forthcoming), which outlines key trends in the field. The OECD also provides Civic Space Scans for selected countries. A Civic Space Scan is a qualitative assessment of the laws, policies, institutions and practices that support civic space in OECD member and partner countries. Designed to protect fundamental freedoms and promote good practice, the scans are accessible studies that include tailored, timely and actionable recommendations to help governments respond to evolving challenges and opportunities in their efforts to protect and promote civic space. The first civic space scan has been published for Finland (OECD, 2021^[15]). Civic space scans are ongoing for Portugal, Romania and Tunisia.

Sources: OECD (2016^[5]; 2021^[15]).

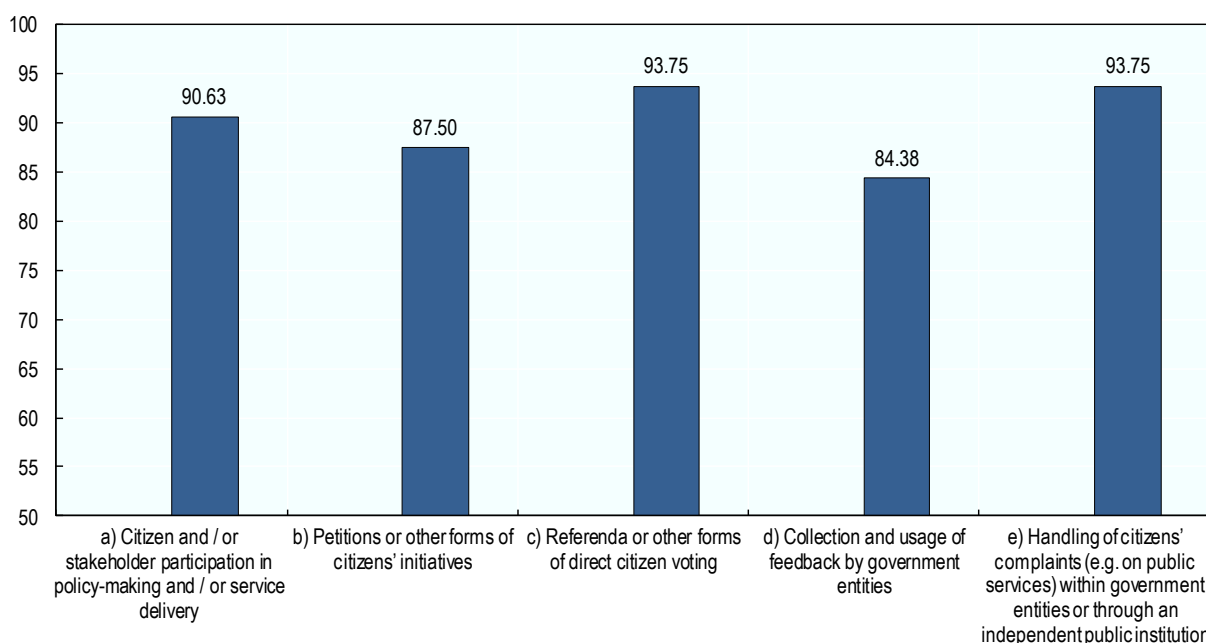
Strengthening the enabling environment for participation in the Czech Republic: Moving from *ad hoc* practices to institutionalised mechanisms

The enabling environment for citizen and stakeholder participation consists of the set of rules, procedures and institutions that enable the organisation and implementation of participatory processes (OECD, 2022^[11]). To ensure that participation goes beyond *ad hoc* and one-off initiatives (that are often dependent on political will or individual people), efforts need to be made to institutionalise participatory practices. Structural changes to make participation an integral part of the democratic architecture can be a way to promote a lasting transformation and take steps towards creating a participation culture (OECD, 2022^[10]).

The Czech Republic has a relatively small body of legal and regulatory provisions foreseeing citizen and stakeholder participation in public decision-making

Across the OECD, forms of democratic participation, i.e. political rights (elections, petitions, referenda, etc.), are usually regulated by law (or in the Constitution). Most OECD countries have also put in place legal requirements to involve citizens and stakeholders in law- and regulation-making and in specific policy processes (e.g. the environment, infrastructure, land use) (OECD, 2020^[22]). Often, provisions relating to citizen and stakeholder involvement can even be found in countries' constitutions or founding documents. Moreover, laws sometimes regulate specific participatory practices (e.g. the Government in the Sunshine Act in the United States from 1976 or the Participatory Budgeting Law in Peru from 2003). As evident from the results of the OECD Survey on Open Government (OECD, 2021^[23]), the Czech Republic's constitutional and legal framework covers the different areas of citizen and stakeholder participation (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1. Availability of legal provisions regarding citizen and stakeholder participation in OECD countries



Note: N=32. Figure in per cent.

Source OECD (2021^[23]).

The Czech Constitution from 1993 stipulates that “all state power emanates from the people and the people exercise it through legislative, executive, and judicial bodies” (Article 2, Paragraph 1) and it, for example, protects the right to vote and the right to be elected under Articles 18-20. Unlike those of many other OECD countries, the Czech Constitution does not explicitly provide for citizen and stakeholder participation in policymaking and/or service delivery. The foundation for this kind of participation is laid in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms from 1992, which is part of the constitutional order of the Czech Republic. The charter states “citizens have the right to participate in the administration of public affairs either directly or through the free election of their representatives” (Article 21). The Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms further contains a chapter devoted to political rights, including the right to information (Article 17); right to petition (Article 18); right to assembly (Article 19); right to association

(Article 20); free competition of political parties (Article 22); and the right to resist, under specific circumstances, anyone who seeks to dismantle the democratic system of human rights and fundamental freedoms (Article 23). Building on the constitutional order, the Czech Republic has adopted a wide body of laws that regulate the right to vote and forms of democratic participation, such as referenda at the local level (a discussion of these laws is beyond the scope of this chapter).

In terms of citizen and stakeholder participation in public decision-making, the Czech Access to Information Law from 1999 (Act No. 106/1999) is an essential pre-condition for informed citizen and stakeholder participation. Moreover, the Government Legislative Rules, which regulate the process of drafting new legislation by ministries and other government institutions, stipulate that the drafting process must include an assessment of the impact of the new legislation. Details of the assessment process are set out in a guidance document entitled *General Principles of Regulatory Impact Assessment*, which highlights that there must be a procedure for stakeholder consultations. Along similar lines, the Access to Environmental Information Law from 1998 (Act No. 123/1998) enables people to gain information about “state and development of environment, about causes and impacts of the state and development”, including international agreement and commitment, programmes, finance, legislation, strategies, background analysis, etc.

A small body of laws also regulates the participation of specific targeted groups in society. For example, Article 6(1) of Law 273 from 2001 on the rights of members of national minorities and amendment of some acts establishes that “Members of a national minority have the right to their active participation in cultural, social and economic life and public affairs, especially those concerning national minorities whose members they are, and this at the level of community, region and state as a whole”. The same article further states that “Members of a national minority exercise their right according to Paragraph 1, especially by means of committees for national minorities established according to special legal regulations and the government’s Council for National Minorities” (see also the discussion on the councils below). Unlike in many other OECD countries, in the Czech Republic, the involvement of citizens and stakeholders in specific policy areas (e.g. health, transport, education, etc.) is rarely regulated. A notable exception to this is Law No. 100/2001 Coll., on Environmental Impact Assessment and on Amendments to Certain Related Acts, which foresees participation in environmental policymaking and the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the “Aarhus Convention”), which the Czech Republic signed in 1998 and ratified in 2004.

Reviewing the legal and regulatory framework to enable more effective participation

While traditional forms of democratic participation are well institutionalised (voting, being elected, referenda, etc.) in the Czech Republic, there is room to deepen and broaden the legal and regulatory framework for citizen and stakeholder participation throughout the policy cycle and in service delivery. Notably, when reviewing and/or amending existing laws, the Czech Republic could consider including additional provisions mandating the consultation and/or engagement of citizens and stakeholders in the policy process. In addition, specific attention should be paid to including participatory elements into any newly designed legislation. A mandatory “participation check” to ensure that all legislative documents are designed in a participatory way and that new legislation includes a provision related to participation (when relevant) could be conducted by a potential new Government Council for Citizen and Stakeholder Participation (see below).

In the medium to long term, to create a uniform framework and clarify public institutions’ and citizens’ rights and obligations, the Czech Republic could also consider adopting a dedicated decree or a law on citizen and stakeholder participation in public decision-making, as done by a small but growing number of other OECD countries (Box 1.2). In particular, a law or decree on citizen and stakeholder participation could be used to expand on existing legal provisions, foster the adoption of a uniform definition of participation, inform about rights and obligations (e.g. mandatory consultations), list the mechanisms for citizens to

exercise their rights to participate (e.g. advisory bodies), and build an institutional architecture to govern the participatory agenda (e.g. inter-institutional co-ordination). OECD countries' experiences show that a unified and coherent legal framework for participation can support awareness of participatory practices, improve levels of engagement and increase trust in their outcomes (OECD, 2022^[1]).

Box 1.2. Legislation on citizen and stakeholder participation in OECD countries

At the national level, **Colombia** has passed two pieces of legislation that frame and harmonise participatory practices.

Law 134 of 1993 on Citizen Participation Mechanisms in Colombia

In 1993, Congress passed [Law 134 on Citizen Participation Mechanisms](#), regulating popular legislative and regulatory initiatives; referenda; public consultations at national, departmental, district, municipal and local levels; the revocation of mandates; plebiscites and citizens' assemblies. Law 134 of 1993 established the fundamental rules governing the democratic participation of civil organisations.

Law 1757 of 2015 on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Democratic Participation in Colombia

The purpose of [Law 1757 of 2015 on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Democratic Participation](#) is to promote, protect and guarantee the right to participate in political, administrative, economic, social and cultural life, and also to control political power. Article 2 stipulates that any development plan must include specific measures to involve people in decisions that affect them and to support different ways of organising society. Similarly, the management plans of public institutions should explicitly state how they will facilitate and promote the participation of citizens in their areas of responsibility. Law 1757 of 2015 created the National Council of Citizen Participation, which advises the national government on the definition, development, design, monitoring and evaluation of public policy on citizen participation in Colombia. The composition of the council ensures the representation of the national government (minister of the interior and the director of the National Planning Department), the subnational level (departments and municipalities) and several representatives from non-public stakeholders.

At the subnational level (federal state), **Mexico** has passed several laws regulating citizen participation. The most updated and ambitious legislation was passed in Mexico City.

Law on Citizen Participation of 2019 in Mexico City

This law establishes the different mechanisms that citizens and stakeholders have to participate in public decisions. The law frames citizen participation and establishes 20 mechanisms and instruments for its implementation organised by type of democracy: 6 mechanisms for direct democracy, 6 mechanisms for participatory democracy and 8 mechanisms for representative democracy. The instruments established by the law are diverse, among which public consultations, participatory budgeting, citizen assemblies and citizen initiatives. It also establishes the governance and institutional mechanisms to ensure the effective participation of citizens, with an open state approach, as it includes representatives from the executive, the legislative, the judicial and independent institutions. Lastly, the law regulates the use of digital tools for citizen and stakeholder participation.

Romania's Law on Decision-making Transparency

Romania's Law on Decision-making Transparency (Law 53/2002) obliges public institutions to consult with citizens and stakeholders across all policy areas. The law demands that central government authorities, such as ministries, but also local administrations, such as municipal governments, notify the public of any draft normative act. There are only a few exceptions when this is not necessary, for

example in the area of defence. Based on the draft act as well as obligatory background documents, all citizens and legal persons can submit their written suggestions and opinions during a period of at least ten calendar days. In addition, following the announcement of the intention to draft a normative act, public authorities are obliged to organise a public debate if requested by a legal person or another public authority. Lastly, public authorities can organise public meetings where issues of public interest are debated. These public meetings can be held on any topic that the public authority wishes to gain citizens' and other interested stakeholders' input on, also in an early stage of the policymaking cycle.

Sources: OECD (2021^[24]); IECM (2019^[25]); Parliament of Romania (2003^[26]).

Objectives and initiatives to foster citizen and stakeholder participation are scattered across multiple policy documents

Policy documents, such as strategies, national policies, institutional plans, memos, action plans, etc., give direction to a country's policy agenda, outline policy objectives, detail initiatives to achieve them, and facilitate monitoring and evaluation of reforms (OECD, 2022^[1]). Policy documents can further be a tool for harmonising practices across government, facilitating communication with internal and external stakeholders, and supporting accountability of public action (OECD, 2022^[1]). In the Czech Republic, a very high number of policy documents include objectives and concrete initiatives to promote more active involvement of citizens and stakeholders. The most important of them are summarised in Table 1.2 and discussed in the following sections.

Table 1.2. A non-exhaustive overview of relevant policy documents for citizen and stakeholder participation in the Czech Republic

Name of policy document	Date of approval/validity	Relevance	Web link
Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030	Approved on 19 April 2019	Includes a strong commitment to strengthening participative and deliberative elements of democracy	https://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/ud-zitelny-rozvoj/projekt-OPZ/Strategic_Framework_CZ2030.pdf
Policy Statement of the Government	Approved on 6 January 2022	Includes a clear commitment to reinforcing democracy and some specific commitments to increase participation	https://www.vlada.cz/en/jednani-vlady/policy-statement/policy-statement-of-the-government-193762
Client-Oriented Public Administration 2030	Approved on 25 May 2020	Pursues the objective to establish a "public administration creating conditions for the participation of citizens in public affairs" and includes a strategic aim focusing on "Informed and engaged citizens" (Strategic aim 5)	https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/koncepce-klientsky-orientovana-verejna-sprava-2030.aspx
Strategy for Co-operation Between the Public Administration and Non-governmental Non-profit Organizations 2021-2030 and Action Plan 2021-2024	Approved on 12 July 2021	Seeks to ensure suitable conditions for the existence and activities of civil society organisations and to strengthen co-operation between the public administration and civil society organisations	http://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/rmno/dokumenty/strategie-spoluprace-verejne-spravy-s-nestatnimi-neziskovymi-organizacemi-na-leta-2021-az-2030-189753 https://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/rmno/dokumenty/Strategy_NGO_ENG_fin.pdf
Action Plan of the Czech Republic Open Government Partnership for 2020 to 2022	Approved on 15 December 2020	Includes commitments to foster participation, including the development of a methodology for the participation of civil society representatives in participatory processes	https://korupce.cz/partnerstvi-pro-otevrene-vladnuti-ogp/narodni-akcni-plan-nyap/paty-akcni-plan-2020-2022/faze-vytvoreni

Name of policy document	Date of approval/validity	Relevance	Web link
Action Plan of the Czech Republic Open Government Partnership for 2023 to 2024	To be approved soon	Includes a commitment to “pilot the implementation of the Methodology of the Participation of NGOs in working and advisory bodies of the central authorities and in creation of their policy documents”	

The current Policy Statement of the Government and the Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030 outline high-level commitments to increase levels of participation and deliberation

The current Policy Statement of the Government (Government of the Czech Republic, 2022^[27]) includes a clear commitment to reinforcing democracy, stating that “We want a state that is part of the democratic Europe and knows that the values of freedom and democracy must be actively promoted and defended”. Moreover, the Policy Statement includes a number of specific commitments to increase participation. Most notably, it highlights that the government “will introduce modern forms of public consultation on future and existing legislation” and “create an environment that supports a healthy lifestyle and design its implementation with the involvement of all relevant sections of society, especially insurance companies, schools, employers and the non-profit non-governmental sector”.

The Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030 (Government of the Czech Republic, 2017^[28]), the country’s medium- to long-term development strategy, sets six priority areas for the development of the Czech Republic. It identifies good governance (priority axis 6) as a “basic prerequisite for long-term development” and states that it will “be necessary to strengthen all mechanisms by 2030 that (...) improve representative and strengthen participative and deliberative elements of democracy, strengthen data, knowledge and skill capacity of the public administration and develop a system for sharing data and information both inside the public administration as well as with citizens”. The strategic framework further outlines that “policies must be based not only on the results of quality scientific knowledge, but also on participation, i.e. involvement of the public having access to sufficient quality and comprehensible information” and it highlights that the participation of citizens and stakeholders in different policy areas (e.g. education, health) should be promoted.

Including objectives relating to participation in these high-level strategic documents gives the participation agenda a cross-policy perspective and visibility, and connects it with other government objectives. In this connection, the Strategic Framework intends to serve as an overarching framework for sectoral strategies and to inspire similar regional and local strategies.

Box 1.3. Good practice case: Citizen and stakeholder participation in the design of the Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030 and the Open Government Partnership Action Plan 2020-2022

Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030

Public consultations on the initial proposals started in May 2015. Hundreds of experts were involved in drafting the document, which was then consulted with more than 100 civil society, private, and academic organisations and institutions. The participatory process involved six roundtables (world café format), a digital consultation, a presentation of the draft in both chambers of the parliament and a discussion at the Government Council for Sustainable Development. Nine expert committees of the Government Council for Sustainable Development provided significant support in this process. The final version of the Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030 was adopted by the government in April 2017.

The drafting of the Implementation Plan started in February 2017 through a broad participatory process (consisting of eight round tables/world cafés in the regions and a discussion in the Government Council for Sustainable Development committees) to ensure the engagement of all relevant actors on its form. It was adopted in the fall of 2018. A similar approach was applied in 2021, when the second Implementation Plan was drafted, although the structure of the discussions had to be rearranged for the new online environment due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Fifth Action Plan of the Open Government Partnership 2020-2022

The Government Anti-Corruption Council Chair's Working Commission for Open Government and State Administration Transparency, which brings together representatives of both the government and non-governmental sector, actively participated in all steps of the co-creation process of the Czech Republic's Fifth Open Government Partnership Action Plan.

The working commission approved and published the schedule for developing the Fifth Action Plan on korupce.cz in January 2020. The Ministry of Justice published a call for a public consultation which was shared on social media and organised a public workshop for in-person suggestions. This gave citizens and stakeholders one month for public comments. A total of 14 commitment proposals were received during the process, as well as one from the working commission.

The working commission discussed the proposals and consulted with the potential implementing agencies of the individual commitments. It then recommended which commitments to keep. These discussions were all captured in the minutes of its meetings, which were published online.

In September 2020, the draft Action Plan was sent for the interdepartmental comment procedure and to the members of the working commission for comment. At the same time, public consultations were again announced for a duration of ten working days, with a request for comments from the public. The action plan was subsequently adopted with five individual commitments.

Sources: Government of the Czech Republic (2020^[29]; 2017^[28]).

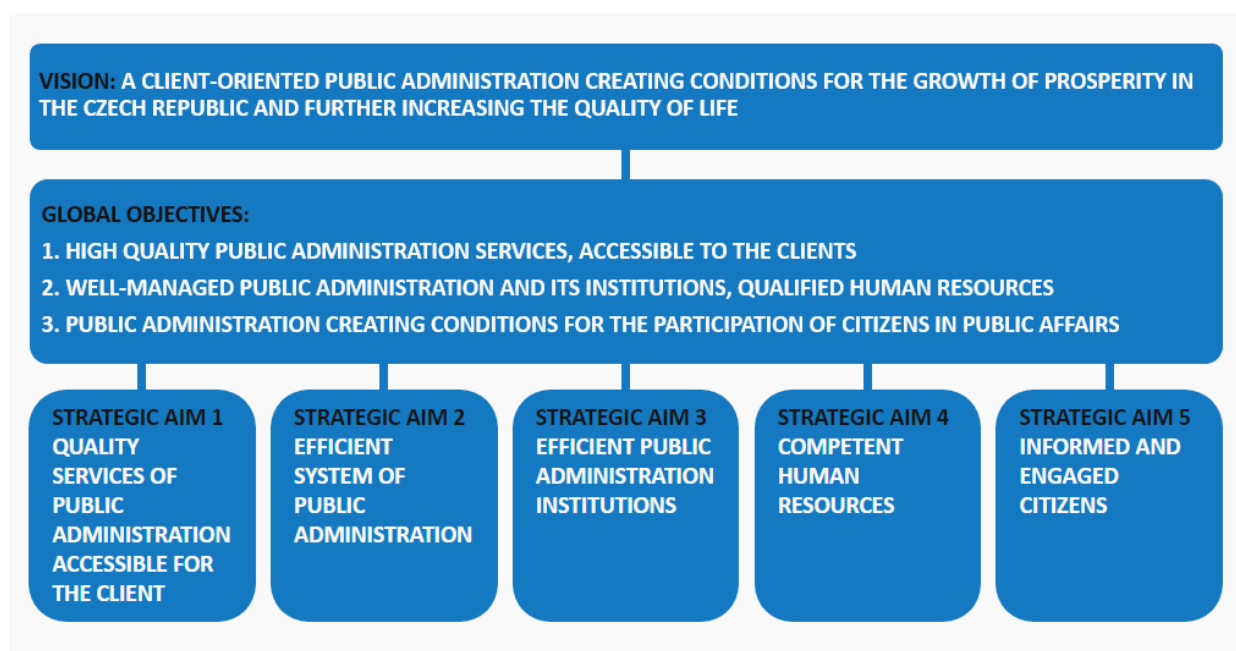
The Client-Oriented Public Administration 2030 strategy outlines a clear vision for more participatory governance

The Czech Republic's public sector reform strategy entitled Client-Oriented Public Administration 2030 (Government of the Czech Republic, 2020^[30]) is another key policy document for citizen and stakeholder participation. The strategy, which follows up on the Strategic Framework for the Development of Public Administration of the Czech Republic for the period 2014-2020, was approved by the government by Resolution No. 562 of 25 May 2020.

The strategy's vision statement highlights that, in 2030, "Citizens will be better informed about how to participate in public affairs, and *new tools for participation will be introduced*" and "citizens will have the possibility to evaluate the quality of public services". One of the strategy's global objectives is to establish a "public administration creating conditions for the participation of citizens in public affairs" and it includes a strategic aim focusing on "Informed and engaged citizens" (Strategic aim 5). The introductory text to Strategic aim 5 highlights:

*In recent years, there has been a long-term decrease of interest in participation through the two dominant instruments of liberal democracy – elections and membership in political parties. This is also associated with a generally declining or stagnant level of trust in political institutions and elected representatives. Therefore, **the public's awareness of the possibilities of participation needs to be continuously increased, as does the public administration's awareness of less traditional tools of participation, whose wider use will be stimulated.** The functioning of local democracy will also be examined.*

Figure 1.2. The vision, objectives and strategic aims of the Client-Oriented Public Administration 2030 strategy



Source: Author's work based on Government of the Czech Republic (2020_[30]).

The Czech Republic should be commended for making fostering citizen participation a key objective of its Client-Oriented Public Administration 2030 strategy. As the strategy remains relatively abstract, the government plans to adopt recurrent action plans to implement it. In this regard, the concept paper on the strategy and its first Action Plan for 2021-2023 outline some concrete initiatives under Objective 5 "Informed and engaged citizens" and more specifically under Objective 5.2 "Raise awareness of the possibilities of citizens' participation in public events, facilitate these opportunities", including following high-impact initiatives under the leadership of the Ministry of the Interior:

- **Dissemination of knowledge about forms of possible participation of the population in public events.** The concept paper foresees a brochure, which will present to citizens possible forms of their participation in public events, both traditional and less traditional. The brochure will be accompanied by an awareness-raising campaign. It will be available at all public offices and will be distributed to relevant non-profit organisations and disseminated at thematic events, etc.

- **Methodical guidance of the application of less traditional tools of participation in the public administration.** The concept paper foresees a methodology to introduce “non-traditional participatory tools” into policy processes, recommend appropriate forms for specific situations differentiated into state and local government bodies, and provide guidance on how best to implement these tools, including identified best practices at both levels of the public administration.

The Strategy for Co-operation Between the Public Administration and Non-governmental Non-profit Organisations 2021-2030

In 2020/21, the Secretariat of the Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations prepared a strategy focusing on the public administration’s co-operation with non-public stakeholders, and most notably, with the non-profit sector. The **Strategy for Co-operation Between the Public Administration and Non-governmental Non-profit Organisations 2021-2030** (Government of the Czech Republic, 2021^[31]) is a medium- term policy document that follows up on the State Policy towards non-governmental non-profit organisations for the years 2015-2020 and seeks to ensure suitable conditions for the existence and activities of civil society organisations and to strengthen co-operation between the public administration and civil society organisations.

The strategy has the vision of establishing non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as stable and key partners of the public administration in meeting the needs of Czech society. It has three strategic goals:

1. improving the social climate for NGO activities
2. promoting effective partnership and co-operation between the public administration and the non-profit sector
3. ensuring and maintaining suitable conditions for the existence and activities of NGOs.

The strategy is aligned with the objectives formulated in key high-level policy documents, such as the Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030. Its formulation was based on two background studies, expert individual and group meetings, and public consultations. It is being implemented through periodic implementation documents. The current action plan covers the period 2021-24 and the main implementation responsibilities lie with the Department of Human Rights and Protection of Minorities and the Secretariat of the Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations within the Office of the Government. Overall, the action plan includes 37 measures, ranging from creating and implementing a methodology for the participation of civil society representatives in participatory processes (Measures B1.1 and B1.2) to raising awareness of the benefits of NGO projects and activities that are funded by the state budget (Measure A.2).

While the design of this strategy can be considered a good practice, interviews conducted during the OECD fact-finding mission revealed that its use is currently limited. Some interviewed civil society stakeholders were even unaware of its existence. Moving forward, it will be important to fully embed the strategy in a wider participation agenda.

The OGP action plans have been underused as a platform to promote participatory approaches

As a member of the OGP, the Czech Republic has to develop biannual national OGP action plans. In line with OGP rules and guidelines, these action plans must be the product of a co-creation process in which government institutions and civil society work together to design commitments to foster open government principles. Across the OECD, OGP action plans have become the most common form of action-oriented policy framework for promoting openness (OECD, 2020^[22]). At the time of writing, 29 out of 38 OECD countries were members of the OGP. The Czech Republic has been a member since 2011 (through Government Resolution No. 691 of 14 September 2011). Under the leadership of the Ministry of Justice,

between 2011 and 2022, the country adopted and implemented five OGP action plans, producing some notable outputs.

Like in many other OECD countries, in the Czech Republic, only a small number of commitments of the action plans have focused specifically on fostering citizen and stakeholder participation (past action plans often had a focus on open government data and/or issues relating to integrity and the fight against corruption). Notably, the **current OGP action plan of the Czech Republic for 2020 to 2022** includes the following two relevant commitments:

1. development of a methodology for the participation of civil society representatives in participatory processes
2. consultations on the possibility of creating a comprehensive, publicly accessible open data aggregated database of providers and recipients of public funds from grant titles.

Moving forward, OGP action plans could be used more strategically to put the topic of citizen and stakeholder participation on the agenda of public institutions. In this regard, it could consider using the OGP action plans as a platform to promote high-impact initiatives that are linked to citizen and stakeholder participation and to implement the high-level policy objectives of the strategies described above (e.g. Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030). For example, as done by countries such as Tunisia, the Czech Republic could consider including a commitment to design an integrated open government strategy (with a strong participation component) or a dedicated participation agenda (as recommended below) in one of its next OGP action plans.

The Czech Republic has a panoply of policy documents targeting the participation of specific groups of society

The Czech Republic has designed a wide range of strategies targeting particular groups of society, many of which include at least a political commitment and, sometimes, concrete initiatives to foster participation in public policy making. For example, the Czech Republic's Gender Equality Strategy (2021-2030) includes the objective to "Increase the participation of civil society in creating policies in the field of gender equality" (Objective 4.4), while the country's Social Inclusion Strategy (2021-2030) has the objective to "strengthen the participation of people who are socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion in decisions to address social exclusion". Similar objectives can also be found in the National Plan for Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities (2021-2025).

Designing a dedicated open government strategy

The existing multiplicity of policy documents that include a political commitment (and/or concrete objectives) to foster the involvement of citizens and stakeholders in public affairs and strengthen participatory approaches to policymaking is, as such, very positive and testimony of a general interest in fostering relationships with citizens and stakeholders throughout the policy cycle by the Czech government. However, evidence collected during the OECD fact-finding missions highlights that the existing policy framework faces numerous implementation challenges. Notably, the policy documents and their associated action plans are often not fully implemented and lack visibility/remain unknown across the administration and the wider society.

Furthermore, while some degree of fragmentation is normal (and even desirable, as it can be seen as proof of mainstreaming participatory practices), the degree of fragmentation in the Czech Republic is very high. Over time, and as is done in other policy fields such as anti-corruption, the Czech Republic could consider moving towards the creation of a dedicated citizen and stakeholder participation agenda that provides an umbrella for all the existing policies under implementation. The agenda could, for example, be coupled with the design of a broader open government strategy, like in numerous OECD countries, including Colombia, Costa Rica and Finland, in the recent past (Government of Finland, n.d.^[32]; Presidency of Costa

Rica, 2015, as amended^[33]; OECD, 2021^[34]). The design of such an open government strategy with a strong participation axis would anchor the participation agenda in a broader context and ensure that synergies with initiatives that aim to promote transparency and accountability are fully exploited. In particular, a holistic and integrated open government strategy could include:

- a common definition and vision for citizen and stakeholder participation in the Czech Republic
- guidance for public institutions to include participation in their Institutional plans and policies
- concrete actions and commitments to involve citizens and stakeholders in policymaking and service delivery
- mechanisms and tools to support the implementation of participatory practices and their impact (i.e. guidelines on public communications, toolkits for participatory practices, etc.)
- clear milestones and objectives (i.e. number of public consultations, increase in number and diversity of participants, etc.)
- set standards for monitoring and evaluating participatory practices, allowing for a more evidence-based evaluation and supporting an informed reform of the participatory system in the Czech Republic.

Box 1.4. The benefits on a whole-of-government open government strategy

An open government strategy ensures whole-of-government policy coherence

An open government strategy (OGS) can provide the umbrella for all open government initiatives implemented in a country and ensure that they follow similar methodological guidelines and contribute to a shared vision of openness. As such, a whole-of-government OGS, besides putting new initiatives in place, makes those policies and initiatives that public institutions are already implementing more coherent and stronger by working together under the same coherent (and powerful) narrative and methodological setting.

An open government strategy ensures efficiency and intra-institutional knowledge sharing

An OGS is a tool to save resources and reduce costs. Government institutions spend time and public resources trying to develop solutions that might already be in place or build on lessons learnt by other administrations that have already successfully implemented certain reforms. An OGS helps to intensify efforts to create collaborative solutions to shared problems. A concerted OGS can help public institutions elaborate a common understanding and shared standards relating to open government, thereby harmonising practices. As such, an OGS can enable the government to achieve outcomes – at a lower cost – that would not be possible to achieve if institutions work in isolation.

An open government strategy enables collaboration and co-ordination

The main purpose of whole-of-government frameworks is to enable different government entities to pursue joint objectives in a co-ordinated manner. The Australian government defines whole-of-government as “public service agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to particular issues”. An OGS that includes clearly assigned responsibilities to the identified goals and objectives can be a valuable co-ordination and collaboration instrument.

An open government strategy acts as a tool for mainstreaming

The design and implementation of an OGS give visibility to the concept of open government and put open government reforms on the agenda of all public institutions. An OGS, hence, mainstreams an openness culture by spreading and implementing the values and principles of open government across

the entire administration and all policy areas. In addition, it communicates to civil servants, citizens and stakeholders that the government embraces a new understanding of how the state is run. As such, an OGS creates a powerful, compelling, coherent narrative that inspires policymakers to champion open government reforms in their own areas of work. Lastly, an OGS can help civil servants and citizens better understand the added value and concrete output of open government by applying it to the policy area of their interest and expertise.

An open government strategy is a formidable governance tool

An OGS allows for effectively managing a country's open government agenda. The development of an OGS is usually led by a high-level official (e.g. minister, secretary general, senior appointee, inter-ministerial delegate, etc.) and accompanied by concrete efforts to create institutional and governance mechanisms (e.g. inter-ministerial committees; monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, training modules, human resources performance evaluations; budget allocations, etc.). The high-level commitment of a politician can also foster the impact of the strategy (as per the resources, mobilisation power and symbolism). In addition, adopting an OGS empowers a person or office that will present the open government agenda to the wider public, monitor the follow-up, and be the point of contact for the press and the broader public.

An open government strategy functions as a tool for public accountability

An OGS commits the government to certain key reforms and creates pressure for institutions to deliver. At the same time, a strategy that commits the government to concrete, ambitious but feasible outcomes can be a message to citizens emphasising that this is a serious endeavour. Identifying milestones and indicators allows stakeholders to monitor the government's implementation efforts and analyse its compliance with the strategy's objective. Hence, the strategy and its commitments are a tool for stakeholders to hold the government accountable and avoid "open washing". In addition, civil society can channel its demands through the strategy.

An open government strategy can give long-term sustainability to the open government agenda

The lack of a coherent national strategy can undermine the long-term sustainability of open government reforms and lead to government instability. If designed for the long term, an OGS can give open government a non-political value and anchor the implementation of open government principles in internal action plans that can continue without high-level political support.

Source: OECD (2020^[22]).

Institutional responsibilities for citizen and stakeholder participation need to be clarified

Institutional responsibilities for citizen and stakeholder participation differ widely across OECD member and partner countries (OECD, 2022^[1]). They usually depend on the administrative and institutional architecture and the historical development of the participation agenda (*Ibid*). In most cases, responsibilities for citizen and stakeholder participation are decentralised, with several offices sharing parts of the mandate. Evidence from the 2020 OECD Survey on Open Government (OECD, 2021^[23]) shows that all of the 30 OECD countries that responded to this part of the survey had a different office(s) or institution(s) with responsibilities for citizen and stakeholder participation. For example, all governments surveyed provide support to public institutions on how to consult and engage with citizens and stakeholders, 27 countries (90%) have an office in charge of strengthening relationships between government and civil society, and 25 (83%) provide technical support to public institutions on the use of digital technologies.

Creating central co-ordination for citizen and stakeholder participation

In the Czech Republic, responsibilities for citizen and stakeholder participation are distributed, to a certain extent, among different ministries. Notably, the Ministry of the Interior plays a key role in setting up and overseeing legal frameworks for citizen participation, in particular at the local level, and has been leading the implementation of the Strategy Client-oriented Public Administration 2030, which has an important participation component. The Regulatory Impact Assessment Unit (“RIA Unit”) at the Office of the Government is responsible for methodological guidance on stakeholder participation for the central administration. For example, the RIA Unit updates and maintains the voluntary online database of stakeholders called DataKO, where NGOs and other stakeholders that wish to be consulted by central government institutions can sign up. In turn, the Office of the Government provides the Secretariat for the Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations.

In addition, the Ministry of Justice co-ordinates citizen participation processes with regard to the Czech Republic’s membership in the OGP, most notably by overseeing the co-creation and implementation of OGP national action plans. The Ministry of Justice also ensures the Czech membership in the OECD Working Party on Open Government. Ministries with important responsibilities (and experience) regarding participation in their respective policy fields include the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Regional Development.

Public authorities and non-public stakeholders interviewed for this review raised concerns about the lack of clarity and consistency on the institutions leading the participation agenda. Individual public officials that wish to organise a participatory process face difficulties identifying who to turn to for support. To raise levels of implementation, harmonise practices across public institutions, and provide public institutions and officials with additional practical support, the Czech Republic could move towards the creation of a centre of expertise on citizen and stakeholder participation. In addition to providing guidance and technical tools to public institutions (e.g. through handbooks, manuals, toolboxes, etc.), the centre of expertise could foster monitoring and evaluation of participatory practices. It could, for example, be located in the Office of the Government (taking advantage of being part of a key centre of government institution) or in the Ministry of the Interior. Box 1.5 details the example of the Centre of Citizen Participation in France, an inter-ministerial centre of expertise that provides technical support as well as a platform for participation and a community of practice to share good practices among public servants.

Box 1.5. Centre of Citizen Participation in France

The Inter-Ministerial Directorate for Public Transformation (DITP) is the public institution in charge of the open government and participation agendas in France. In 2019, it created the Centre of Citizen Participation (Centre de la Participation Citoyenne) as a centre of expertise, a physical space and a community of practice for all public servants.

- **A centre of expertise:** The DITP provides public officials and civil society technical support and guidance to implement participatory processes. Public officials have access to knowledge resources, examples and templates to organise participatory mechanisms, as well as ready-to-use digital tools. As part of this centre, the DITP has dedicated teams to support the organisation of participatory processes by other public institutions as well as to train public officials and interested stakeholders.
- **A digital platform for participation:** The DITP has established a centralised platform for participatory opportunities at the national level. The platform allows citizens to easily find opportunities and monitor the impact of their participation. It also allows public authorities to provide feedback and communicate about their participatory opportunities on a simple and harmonised platform.

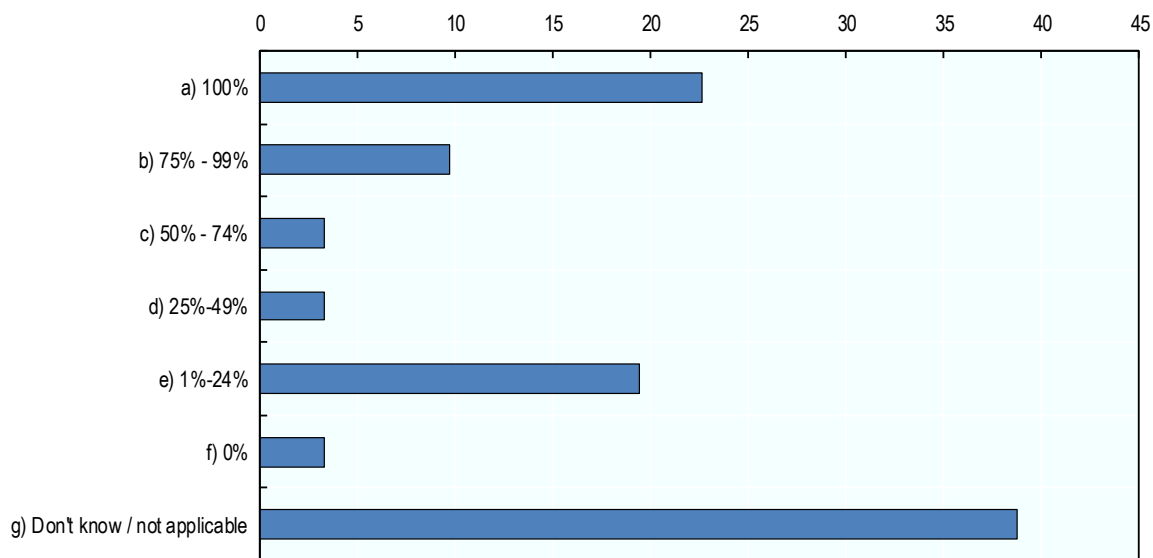
- **A physical space:** The Centre of Citizen Participation is a physical space open to public institutions, civil society and citizens. Public authorities can use this space to organise meetings or any other activity with citizens and stakeholders.
- **A community of practice:** The DITP has put in place a digital hub to group the communities of practice related to open government and state modernisation. With more than 50 communities, the hub allows all public officials to discover and join the communities that interest them, according to topics of interest (participation, digital services, collective intelligence, design thinking, etc.) or a geographical area.

Source: Based on interviews with the French Inter-Ministerial Directorate for Public Transformation.

Clarifying responsibilities for participation at the level of each individual public institution

According to data collected through the 2020 OECD Survey on Open Government, there is an ambivalence in OECD countries regarding the percentage of ministries with a dedicated person/office in charge of overseeing and co-ordinating their institutions' participatory processes. While just over one-fifth of countries (22.5%) indicate that all ministries have such staff in place, an equal share states that this is the case for none or only up to one-quarter of ministries. Like most other OECD countries, the Czech Republic answered that it did not know the percentage of government ministries at the central/federal level with dedicated staff in charge of citizen and stakeholder participation (Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3. Percentage of ministries in OECD countries with dedicated staff for citizen and stakeholder participation



Note: N=31. Preliminary data. In per cent.

Source: OECD (2021^[23]).

Evidence collected during the OECD fact-finding mission confirmed that, indeed, most Czech public institutions do not have such a person or office. Participatory practices are currently mostly carried out on an *ad hoc* basis by interested/committed public officials and the organisation of participatory processes is usually added to the existing duties of public officials.

In line with the recommended creation of a centre of expertise on citizen and stakeholder participation, the Czech government could mandate the establishment of a unit or person dedicated to citizen and stakeholder participation in every public institution (e.g. through a citizen and stakeholder participation law or decree, as suggested above), as done by OECD member and partner countries. Box 1.7 gives an example from Romania. This unit or person would be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the existing legal and policy framework relating to participation; harmonising practices across their institution; and providing support across the organisation. The unit or person could further participate in the recommended community of practice on participation and be delegated to the Government Council on Citizen and Stakeholder Participation.

Box 1.6. Citizen and stakeholder participation in the German Federal Ministry of the Environment

In Germany, citizen and stakeholder participation processes have traditionally taken place at subnational levels of government. Having joined the Aarhus Convention in 2007, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) – Germany’s ministry for environmental issues – has become a pioneer of the country’s efforts to involve citizens and stakeholders in the development of environmental policy programmes and strategies at the national level.

In 2012, the ministry created a specialised unit on citizen participation. Typically, the processes organised by this unit are a mixture of in-person deliberation and online consultation. During the deliberative process, citizens come together in small groups and are introduced to the topic by experts on the subject matter. On this basis, they discuss the problem and try to develop suggestions and recommendations. To increase outreach, the BMUV organises these events multiple times and at several locations throughout Germany. Alternatively, citizens can provide input through online consultations on the ministry’s website.

The BMUV ensures the inclusion of diverse interests and preferences in its participatory processes by reaching out to randomly dialled telephone numbers and contacts from resident registration offices, thus aiming for a representative group of citizens. Besides selection processes that aim for a representative sample of participating citizens, there are also certain selection processes for which citizens can apply to bring in their expertise. The results of these participation processes are condensed in so-called “citizen counsel” (“Bürgerratschläge”) addressed to the BMUV. Participants stay informed about how their input is being integrated as recommendations into policy papers and strategies through feedback papers. They are also notified in case their recommendations lead to political follow-up processes.

A special form of citizen consultation can occur in the framework of environmental impact studies (“[Umweltverträglichkeitsprüfung](#)”) that have to be implemented for qualified cases, e.g. when it is known that a rare species of animals is living nearby a proposed infrastructure project. While information is provided for the general public, only directly affected stakeholders are invited to provide their opinion on the drafting of this impact study. The impact study then feeds into the remainder of the political decision-making process and must be integrated into the final decision in the form of a reasoned evaluation of that report.

To date, participatory processes at the BMUV have been successfully implemented in many initiatives, among them the “Integrated Environmental Programme 2030” and the “Climate Protection Plan 2050” – policy documents that will mark Germany’s environmental actions for years to come.

The ministry publishes its own evaluation reports and produces guidance for its civil servants, for example in the form of the [Guidelines for Citizen Participation](#) (in German). So far, the BMUV has

qualitative criteria to [evaluate its participation processes](#). It is, however, working on a mid-term strategy that also includes quantitative indicators for measuring the success of participatory processes. Beyond its own institution, the BMUV also promotes successful citizen and stakeholder participation at other levels of government. The yearly competition “Excellent! – Competition for exemplary citizen participation” ([Ausgezeichnet! – Wettbewerb für vorbildliche Bürgerbeteiligung](#)) awards solutions to specific problems related to citizen and stakeholder participation and gives them visibility.

Box 1.7. Creating dedicated institutional responsibilities for citizen and stakeholder participation in Romania

In Romania, there are broadly three types of regular participation channels that are widespread across the public administration. These three forms of participation, in turn, require public institutions to nominate responsible public officials or offices in charge of them:

1. **Consultation on draft normative acts:** This type of participation concerns all central and local public administrations. Each of these institutions has an obligation to nominate at least one person in charge of relations with civil society (Art. 7). This person is in charge of the public institution’s activities concerning decision-making transparency, including:
 - organising written consultations on draft laws
 - organising public debates on these draft acts, if they are requested
 - co-ordinating internally with the respective units that work on a draft law regarding the inputs received from citizens and stakeholders.
2. **Resolving citizens’ petitions:** The Romanian Constitution provides for a right for Romanian citizens and associations to directly address any public institution with any proposal or complaint they may have. To manage these inputs, each public authority must set up an office in charge of public relations that receives, records, takes care of solving petitions and sends answers to the petitioners. The heads of public authorities are directly responsible for the proper organisation and solving of petitions directed to their public authority.
3. **Consultation with social partners:** This type of participation concerns most ministries at the central level as well as the level of the counties and the municipality of Bucharest. These institutions must draw up consultative social dialogue commissions made up of representatives of the central or local public administration, representatives of employers’ organisations, and nationally representative trade union organisations. From the public institution’s side, the appointed representative from the level of Secretary of state fulfils the role of president of the commission. As such, they lead meetings, send invitations to meetings and ensure the presence of relevant colleagues. The presidencies of these commissions are, in turn, co-ordinated by a secretary of state in the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

Sources: Parliament of Romania (2003^[26]; 2011^[35]); Government of Romania (2022^[36]; 2002^[37]).

The Czech Republic has established a wide range of consultative bodies that include stakeholders

In support of its activities, the Czech government has established numerous advisory and working bodies (PPOVs, for the Czech acronym, hereinafter “consultative bodies”). The consultative bodies in themselves are instances of stakeholder participation, as they are usually composed of members of the government

and experts, including civil society stakeholders. Consultative bodies may be established as permanent or temporary bodies depending on the character of the issue they address. The activities of each consultative body are run by its statutes, rules of procedure, and, in some cases, other binding documents, such as laws and decrees. Table 1.3 provides a non-exhaustive overview of relevant consultative bodies in the Czech Republic.

Each consultative body is an independent entity with its own internal dynamics, processes and working methods (e.g. selection of members). One of the main functions of all existing advisory and working bodies is to comment on new laws, regulations and strategies that have an impact on their field of expertise. At the same time, consultative bodies can also initiate their own policy documents. The creation of these advisory and working bodies can be considered a good practice, as they facilitate institutionalised dialogue between the government and non-public stakeholders (mostly experts). While they do not involve common citizens, many of the existing councils, such as the Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations (see below), frequently organise consultations and other outreach activities that are open to input from citizens.

Nevertheless, evidence collected for this review suggests that the functioning of the consultative bodies depends very much on the political will of the administration in power and on the profile of their members. Moreover, the fact-finding mission revealed that there are opportunities to harmonise and streamline compositions and working methods across the existing landscape of consultative bodies. The appointment of persons to working groups, advisory bodies or expert panels is not homogenous across the Czech administration. According to interviewees, in some cases the consultative bodies have become a platform that gives a voice to the “usual suspects”, rather than a forum for wider participation. Interviewees noted that the whole system of having such consultative bodies meant that some stakeholders had more access to decision-making processes than others. In this regard, interviews with government representatives during the fact-finding mission revealed that their ministries tended to co-operate mostly with the same organisations and often did not actively seek to involve other stakeholders. Moreover, organisations representing vulnerable, discriminated or other excluded groups, notably Roma, but also certain religions or LGBTI⁴ groups, do not appear to have the same level of access to all consultative bodies.

Table 1.3. Overview of relevant consultative bodies in the Czech Republic

Name of the body	Year of creation	Relevant responsibilities	Public and non-public stakeholders involved
Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations	1992, renamed 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiates and assesses materials for government decisions relating to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) Monitors the Czech Republic's regulations of NGOs, as well as its relation to the integration of the Czech Republic into the European Union Co-ordinates co-operation among ministries and other bodies in support of NGOs Monitors the use of EU funds available in the Czech Republic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime minister Various ministries NGOs Commissioner for Human Rights Association of Czech Republic's Regions Union of Towns and Municipalities
Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs	1997, renamed 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports co-operation of ministries responsible for implementing measures arising from government resolutions and international treaties Collects, considers and submits information, groundwork documents and proposals for the creation and application of policy in the area of the integration of Roma communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various ministries Commissioner for Human Rights Roma community Academia
Government Council for National Minorities	1968, renamed 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitors compliance with the Constitution and international treaties to which the Czech Republic is bound Proposes the amount of funds for subsidies of activities of minorities in the yearly draft budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various ministries Office of the Presidency Commissioner for Human Rights Up to two representatives from each of the following 14 national

Name of the body	Year of creation	Relevant responsibilities	Public and non-public stakeholders involved
			<p>minorities: Belarusian, Bulgarian, Croatian, German, Greek, Hungarian, Polish, Roma, Ruthenian, Russian, Slovak, Serbian, Ukrainian and Vietnamese</p>
Government Board for Persons with Disabilities	1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings attention to the serious problems of the disabled that are the competence of several ministries • Formulates opinions and delivers recommendations on materials presented to the Czech government as regards the disabled • Monitors and helps to implement the National Plan for People with Disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime minister • Various ministries • Union of Bohemian and Moravian Production Cooperatives
Government Council for Human Rights	1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors compliance with the Constitution and international treaties to which the Czech Republic is bound • Prepares proposals concerning policy concepts in different areas of human rights protection • Adopts opinions on the proposals of the government concerning the protection and respect for human rights • Co-operates with non-governmental non-profit organisations involved in human rights and with local government bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner for Human Rights • Office of the Government • Various ministries • Human rights civil society organisations (CSOs) and NGOs • Academia
Government Council for Gender Equality	2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses and recommends basic policies for conceptual directions in the procedure of promoting equality of women and men • Co-ordinates main directions of ministerial policies in the area of gender equality • Sets a range of priorities for ministerial projects supporting equal opportunities for women and men • Identifies current problems in society related to gender equality • Evaluates the effectiveness of measures taken towards equality between women and men 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various ministries • Commissioner for Human Rights • Gender equality NGOs
Government Council for Sustainable Development	2003, current statute from 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and reviews the Sustainable Development Strategy • Triennial reporting on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy in the Czech Republic • Monitors sustainable development indicators • Co-ordinates the methods and development of conceptual documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All ministries • Office of the Government (but not necessary directly the prime minister) • Chamber of deputies • CSOs and NGOs specialised in the field • Trade unions • Academia • Municipalities
Research, Development, and Innovation Council	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes regular annual analyses and assessments of the research and development situation in the country • Develops a mid-term draft forecast for research and development support and estimates their total costs • Issues opinions concerning research and development documents • Conducts negotiations with the advisory bodies of the European Communities on research and development and with the research and development councils of other countries • Acts as administrator and operator and approves the rules for the operation of the Research and Development Information System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Minister's Office • Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic • Public universities and colleges • Other research institutes

Name of the body	Year of creation	Relevant responsibilities	Public and non-public stakeholders involved
Government Anti-Corruption Council	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinates and evaluates government anti-corruption policy • Submits its recommendation to the government with regards to reducing corruption risks in public administration practices and enhancing transparency • Submits its recommendation with regard to chosen legislative materials on mitigating their corruption risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime minister • Various ministries • Law enforcement agencies • Associations of municipalities and regions • Chamber of Commerce • Professional chambers stipulated by law • CSOs and NGOs specialised in the field • Academia

Source: Based on information from the Government of the Czech Republic; <https://www.vlada.cz/en/pracovni-a-poradni-organy-vlady>; <https://korupce.cz/rada-vlady>.

Establishing a dedicated institutional co-ordination mechanism for the citizen and stakeholder participation agenda

The **Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations** (hereafter “Council for NGOs”) is a permanent consultative and co-ordination body of the government of the Czech Republic in the area of non-governmental non-profit organisations. It was established by Government Resolution of 10 June 1992 No. 428 as the Council for Foundations and subsequently transformed by Government Resolution of 30 March 1998 No. 223 into the Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations. The council collates, discusses and, through its chair, submits to the government materials relating to NGOs and the creation of a suitable environment for their existence and activities. The council has, for example, been the driver behind the Strategy for Co-operation Between the Public Administration and Non-governmental Non-profit Organisations 2021-2030 that was discussed above.

According to its revised statute approved in May 2022, the council is made up of a maximum of 36 members (including “experts from NGOs, who specialise in one of the areas of the non-profit sector” [Article 3(3) of the statute]). The secretariat of the council is provided by the Office of the Government. The council’s mandate is quite broad when it comes to the participation of CSOs in public life (see Box 1.8 for an overview of the council’s tasks) and it is a widely appreciated forum for discussion and deliberation.

To foster the move towards a dedicated citizen and stakeholder participation agenda, as suggested above, the Czech Republic could **consider extending the mandate of the existing Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations and transforming it into the Government Council for Citizen and Stakeholder Participation**. In addition to including the tasks of the existing Council for NGOs, the new council could have an explicit mandate to foster the participation of individual citizens (as opposed to stakeholders) in policy processes. In terms of composition, the new council could include (selected) members of the current Council for NGOs, as well as the recommended institutional participation co-ordinators and randomly selected citizens (see also the section on “Experimenting with emerging tools and practices” below). The suggested centre of expertise for citizen and stakeholder participation could take over the secretariat of the new entity.

Box 1.8. Functions of the Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations in the Czech Republic

According to its mandate, the Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations performs the following tasks:

- initiates and assesses conceptual and implementation materials for government decisions relating to support for non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and legislative and political measures relating to the conditions for their activities
- monitors, initiates and issues statements on legal regulations regulating the standing and activities of NGOs; through its chair – a member of the government – the council comments on draft legislation related to NGOs
- initiates and co-ordinates co-operation between ministries, other administration authorities and bodies of territorial self-governing units in the area of support for NGOs, including the subsidy policy from public budgets
- monitors, analyses and publishes information about the standing of NGOs within the framework of the European Union (EU), on the integration of the Czech Republic into the EU with respect to NGOs and on the financial resources connected to this; co-operates with ministries and other administration authorities responsible for administering EU funds in the Czech Republic, if their use is related to NGOs
- in co-operation with ministries and other administration authorities, NGOs and other bodies and institutions, ensures the availability and publication of information about NGOs and about state policy measures that affect NGOs; in particular, it makes available and analyses information about subsidies from public budgets for NGOs and about the process of releasing and using them
- participates in measures by ministries and their administration authorities that relate to NGOs, in particular in relation to the standardisation of activities, allocation of accreditation and categorisation of NGO types.

Source: (Government of the Czech Republic, 2022^[38]).

Fostering participation literacy in the Czech administration and society

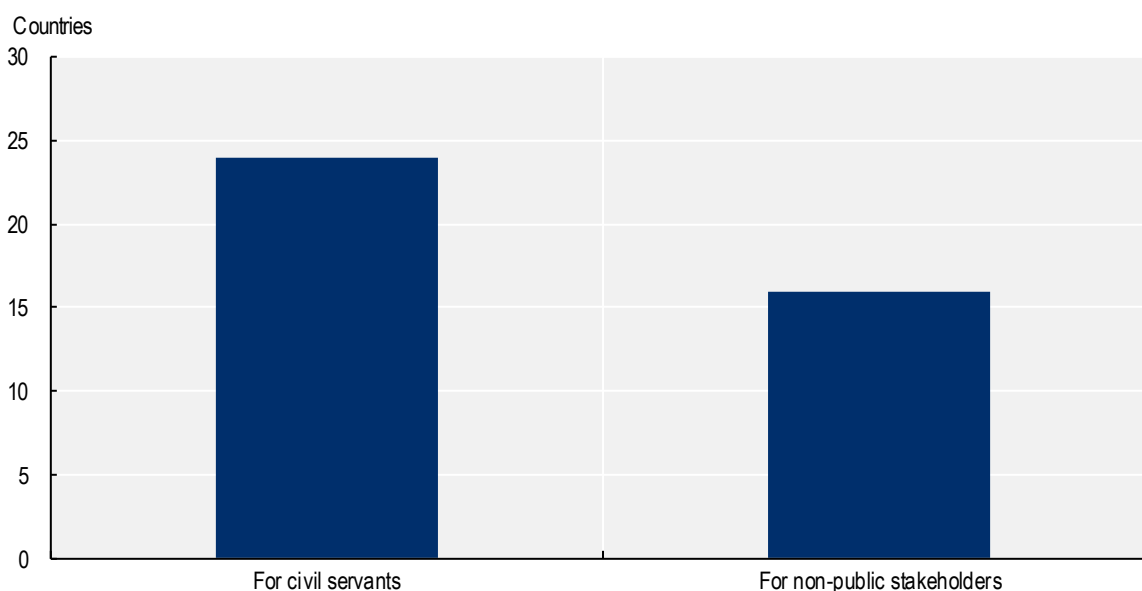
Creating awareness, knowledge and skills among public officials is important in fostering a change towards a participation culture. In this regard, the OECD report *Skills for a High Performing Civil Service* (2017^[39]) introduces a framework for skills needed by today's public officials. One of the four pillars of this framework highlights that "new skills are required for public officials to effectively engage citizens, crowdsource ideas and co-create better services" (OECD, 2017, p. 9^[39]). However, a culture of participation not only requires well-trained public officials and high-quality opportunities for citizens to participate (OECD, 2022^[10]); it also requires citizens and CSOs that are ready to take on this active role in collaborating, co-creating and taking informed decisions together with public institutions (*Ibid.*). A citizenry that is democratically fit has the mandate, skills and competences needed to play an active part in a democratic system (OECD, 2022^[10]). In the background report prepared for the present review, the Czech government recognised the uneven distribution of participation literacy in the administration and in society as one of the main obstacles to implementing participatory policies and practices. In this connection, the good governance axis of the Strategic Framework (see above) mentions that:

...participation and particularly deliberation are “soft” skills. We can learn to master them and become aware of their inclusion in the education system, including adult education. However, they are improved mainly by use. The more citizens are involved in the debate, the more meaningful their next debate will be. (Government of the Czech Republic, 2017^[28])

Providing guidance on citizen and stakeholder participation

To raise awareness, create buy-in, and build their staff’s and civil society’s literacy, most governments across the OECD have elaborated guidelines, toolkits and manuals on different open government policies and practices. According to the results of the 2020 OECD Survey on Open Government (OECD, 2021^[40]), 24 out of 32 OECD countries (75%) have guidelines specifically on citizen and stakeholder participation. This practice is less established when it comes to guidelines for non-public stakeholders, with only 16 out of 32 OECD countries (50%) with such guidelines in place (Figure 1.4).

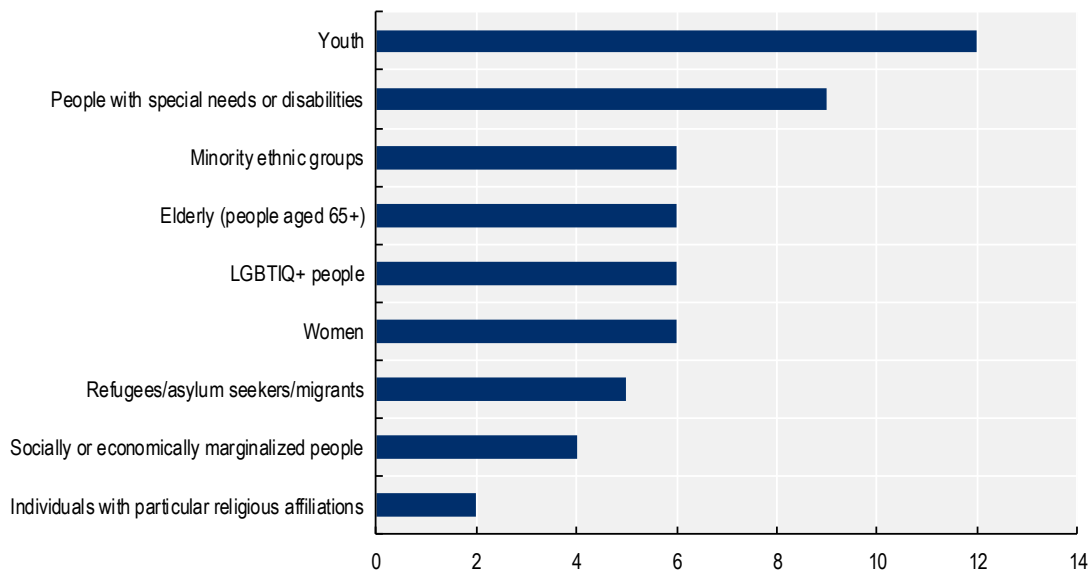
Figure 1.4. Availability of guidelines for civil servants and non-public stakeholders on citizen and stakeholder participation at the central/federal level



Note: Multiple responses possible. N=32. Data for Greece and the United States are preliminary.
Source: OECD (2021^[23]).

In particular, several countries have guidelines on fostering the participation of specific groups of the population: 12 out of 17 responding OECD countries (71%) focus on youth and another 9 (53%) focus on people with disabilities. Some countries, such as Lithuania and the United Kingdom, also have guidelines that raise awareness of the need to target specific groups and stakeholders when relevant. While the Czech Republic has general guidelines on citizen and stakeholder participation for civil servants in place, these guidelines do not focus on any specific societal group.

Figure 1.5. Participation guidelines targeting specific groups in OECD countries



Note: Multiple responses possible. N=17.

Source: OECD (2021^[40]).

In 2009, the Czech government published a **Methodology for Public Involvement in the Preparation of Government Documents** (“the methodology”) (Government of the Czech Republic, 2009^[41]). The methodology aims “to unify the procedure of employees in central administrative offices and establish general principles for involving the public”. It targets “central administrative authorities and other entities that prepare materials of a legislative and non-legislative nature, as supplementary material to the General Principles for the Assessment of Regulatory Impacts”. While it contains a lot of relevant general introductory material (e.g. on what citizen participation is, what its benefits are, etc.), the practical part of the methodology, in fact, focuses on citizen and stakeholder participation in regulatory impact assessments rather than the broader public decision-making process. Subsequently, and as a follow-up to the methodology, in 2010, the government created a **Manual for Public Involvement in the Preparation of Government Documents** (Government of the Czech Republic, 2010^[42]). It includes a detailed overview of available methods and techniques for citizen and stakeholder participation elaborating on their advantages and limits and providing practical advice on how to use them.

In addition, the Czech Republic adopted a **Methodology of the Participation of NGOs in Working and Advisory Bodies of the Central Authorities and in the Creation of their Policy Documents** on 28 June 2022 (Government of the Czech Republic, 2022^[43]). The development of the methodology was based on a commitment included in the OGP Action Plan of the Czech Republic for 2020-2022 (Government of the Czech Republic, 2020^[29]) and the Strategy for the Co-operation of the Public Administration with NGOs (2021-2030) (Government of the Czech Republic, 2021^[31]). It seeks “to contribute to the effective use of participatory processes with regard to NGOs representatives within the functioning of advisory and working bodies of ministries and other central administrative authorities and in the creation of public policies, strategic materials, legislative and other non-legislative materials by individual ministries and other central administrative authorities” (Government of the Czech Republic, 2022^[43]). The methodology provides a minimum recommended framework for setting the basic parameters of participatory processes and primarily targets officials in ministries and other central public institutions (Government of the Czech Republic, 2022^[43]). According to information received from the Czech government, the methodology will

soon be piloted, in line with a commitment that will be made in the Czech Republic's most recent 2023-2024 OGP Action Plan.

The content of the different guidelines and methodologies is generally aligned with practice in other OECD countries. To include more recent trends and practices (e.g. representative deliberative processes) and provide more concrete advice on (non-electoral) citizen participation beyond regulatory impact assessments, the Czech Republic could **consider updating the existing Methodology and Manual for Public Involvement in the Preparation of Government Documents**. In that regard, the new OECD Citizen Participation Guidelines could provide inspiration (Box 1.9). The guidelines include a ten-step path of planning and implementing a citizen participation process (Figure 1.6).

Evidence collected during the OECD fact-finding mission further revealed that the existing guidelines, while of high quality, are not widely known or used across the Czech administration. To address this challenge, the **recommended centre of expertise for citizen and stakeholder participation could conduct awareness-raising and promotion campaigns about the materials targeting both public officials and non-public stakeholders**. The centre could further have a mission to centralise and collect all available guidelines, methodologies and manuals and, in the medium term, based on a systematic referencing process, could create a compendium to be included on a potential new participation portal (see below).

Figure 1.6. Ten-step path for planning and implementing a citizen participation process



Sources: OECD (2022^[10]) based on Faulkner and Bynner (2020^[44]), How to Design and Plan Public Engagement Processes: A Handbook, Glasgow. What Works Scotland; Involve (2005^[45]) People & Participation: How to put citizens at the heart of decision-making, London: Beacon Press, and New Zealand Government, Community Engagement Policy Tool, The Policy Project.

Box 1.9. The OECD Citizen Participation Guidelines

The OECD Citizen Participation Guidelines (2022^[10]) are intended to support the implementation of Provisions 8 and 9 of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government. They are aimed at any individual or organisation interested in designing, planning and implementing a citizen participation process. The guidelines walk the reader through ten steps to design, plan and implement a citizen participation process, and detail eight different methods that can be used to involve citizens in policymaking, illustrated with good practice examples.

The eight participation methods described are:

- open meeting and town hall meeting
- public consultation
- open innovation methods: crowdsourcing, hackathons and public challenges
- civic monitoring
- participatory budgeting
- representative deliberative process.

Their content is based on evidence collected by the OECD over the years, various OECD publications, and existing resources from academia and other organisations regarding the intrinsic and instrumental benefits of citizen participation in policymaking.

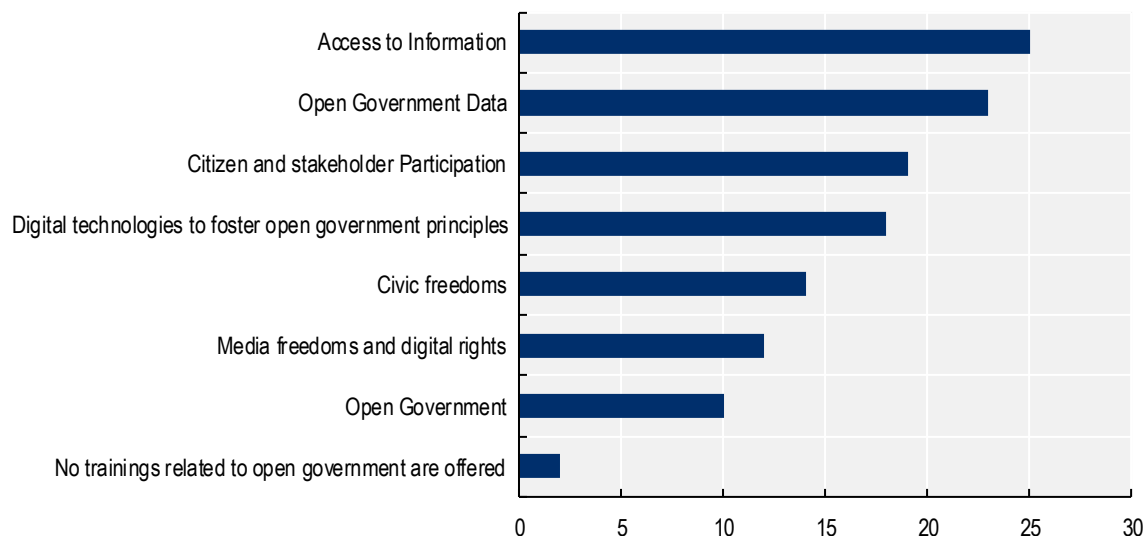
As part of the document, the OECD suggests eight guiding principles to help ensure the quality of these participatory processes: purpose, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and accessibility, integrity, privacy, information, and evaluation.

Source: OECD (2022^[10]).

Offering trainings, seminars and capacity building on participation

The organisation of trainings, information sessions and capacity-building events is another common way of ensuring that public officials and non-public stakeholders embody participatory policies and practices principles and increase their levels of participation and open government literacy. According to results of the 2020 OECD Survey on Open Government, out of 31 responding OECD countries, 19 (61%) currently have specific trainings on citizen and stakeholder participation for civil servants, including the Czech Republic (Figure 1.7).

Figure 1.7. Available trainings for civil servants at the central/federal government level in OECD countries



Note: Multiple responses possible. N=30.

Source: OECD (2021_[40]).

Moving forward, the Czech Republic could **consider including a dedicated course on participation in mandatory training requirements for senior public officials and for all newly hired public officials to introduce them to the concept and its practices**. The suggested centre of expertise for citizen and stakeholder participation could further consider creating a single training catalogue that lists all trainings on participation (and open government policies and practices more broadly) that are offered by the national government and international actors. This training catalogue could be added to a potential new participation portal (see below).

Creating a community of practice on citizen participation

Some countries across the OECD have created communities of practice on participation (and open government policies and practices more broadly) to exchange good practices and facilitate the sharing of resources and experiences (Box 1.10). A community of practice can be defined as a group of people that “share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Lave and Wenger, 1991_[46]).

In line with the objective to move towards a culture of participation, the government of the Czech Republic could **consider setting up a community of practice dedicated to citizen and stakeholder participation**. This community of practice could bring together public officials and non-public stakeholders interested in citizen and stakeholder participation and/or who have participated in trainings on participatory policies and practices. The community could be animated by the newly created centre of expertise for participation and involve the participation offices/people in all public institutions; public officials from subnational governments; non-public stakeholders such as civil society leaders; as well as representatives from academia, the private sector and trade unions. The community could be animated through a dedicated online space. In addition to being a platform for dialogue, learning and sharing of good practices, the community of practice would provide the centre of expertise with an effective informal co-ordination tool. The community of practice on citizen participation in Spain, as well as the communities of practice on open government created by the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the US federal government provide interesting examples in this regard (Box 1.10).

Box 1.10. Communities of practice on open government policies and practices

Spain's Community of Practice on Participation

At the meeting of the Participation Working Group of Spain's Open Government Forum on 2 March 2021, it was decided to create a community of practice that would take advantage of the experience of all the actors, and of the promoters of the numerous initiatives that are being developed in the country's fourth Open Government Plan regarding citizen participation in public affairs. The community includes representatives of the three levels of public administration, civil society (with the presence of organisations with solvency in terms of participation) and some international ones (specifically from Colombia, Italy, Mexico and the participation of the OECD).

The primary objective of this community lies in the design and exchange of practical elements and, when possible, the co-creation of experiences that help implement, within the sphere of responsibility of each sector or agency, specific issues to facilitate citizen participation in the scope of its powers. The community is energised by a professional with extensive experience and solvency in the matter and supported by the General Directorate of Public Governance.

US OpenGov Community of Practice

The US government established a series of communities of practices across the federal government to collaborate and share resources on different policy areas. The Open Government Community of Practice is a digital space and a network where civil servants across the government can discuss open government-related initiatives and practices. The Open Government Community consists of government employees and civil society members working in the field of open government to share best practices to promote transparency, participation and collaboration, and advocate for opening government information. This type of community allows for a continuous exchange of information and peer learning, and supports co-ordination and collaboration across government.

UCLG Community of Practice on Transparency and Open Government

The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Community of Practice on Transparency and Open Government was created with the objectives of supporting peer-to-peer learning, networking, raising awareness and capacity building on open government and public integrity at the local level and promoting the role of local and regional governments in the development and promotion of practices of transparency, participation and accountability for the achievement of sustainable cities and territories. The community of practice comprises a group of local and regional governments, as well as experts, academics and public institutions, and representatives of international city networks interested in discussing and advancing joint solutions, learning opportunities and exchanging public policies on issues of open government. It is co-ordinated by the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces with the support of the Open Government Partnership and the United Nations Human Settlement Program.

Notes: [Comunidad de Práctica Participación - Gobierno Abierto - Portal de la Transparencia de la Administración del Estado. España - Inicio](#).

Sources: US General Services Administration (2021^[47]); UCLG (n.d.^[48]); French Interministerial Directorate of Public Sector Transformation (n.d.^[49]).

Enhancing transparency and providing high-quality information as a basis for citizen and stakeholder participation

In line with the OECD ladder of citizen and stakeholder participation, the first level of participation is information. The OECD Citizen Participation Guidelines recognise that information and data are prerequisites for informed participation and enablers for more impactful participation. In this connection, the guidelines highlight that public information and data can empower citizens to understand and act upon the decisions that affect their lives, enable citizens to co-create solutions and support the effective monitoring of government actions. The provision of high-quality information is strongly linked to effective public communication around participatory processes. As the OECD (OECD, 2021^[50]) highlights, the use of communications to inform the public about participatory opportunities and their results can increase the number of participants, strengthen the legitimacy of the results and widen the audience of these practices.

According to evidence gathered by the OECD, limited information about and lack of communications around participatory processes are among the key challenges the Czech Republic faces in fostering better citizen and stakeholder participation. This section, therefore, provides a short overview of the provision of information related to citizen and stakeholder participation. An extended discussion of the Czech Republic's wider transparency and public communications agendas goes beyond the scope of this chapter but could be the subject of an OECD Open Government Review.

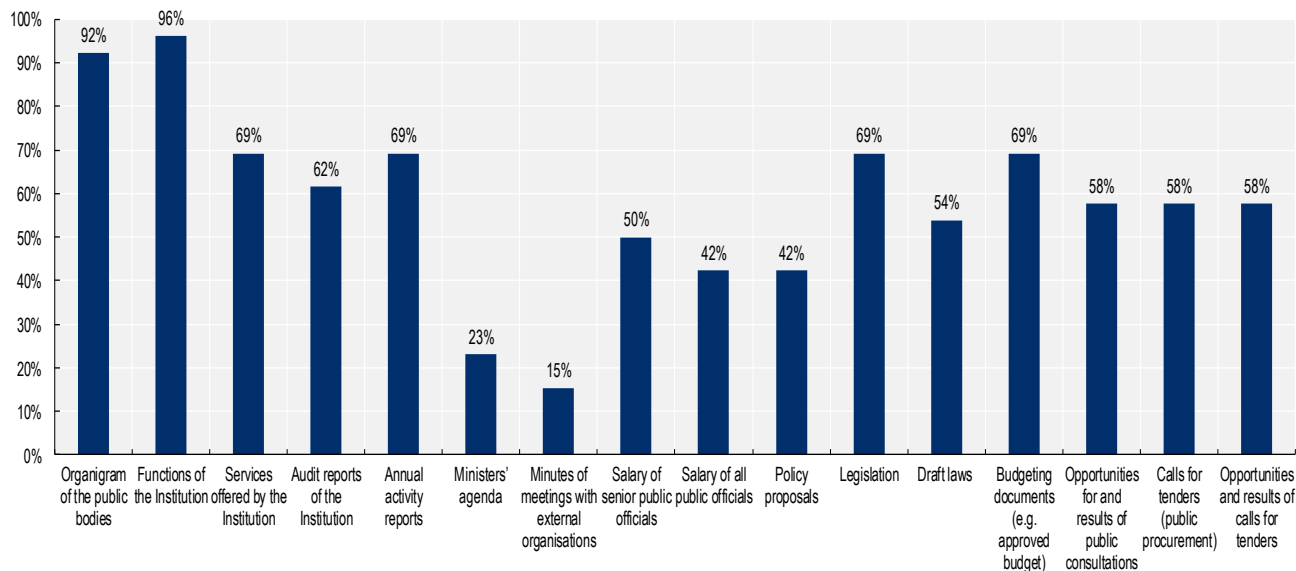
Publishing more and better information to enhance participatory processes

Transparency and access to information are core elements of an open government and an enabler of informed citizen and stakeholder participation. Government transparency refers “to stakeholder access to, and use of, public information and data concerning the entire public decision-making process, including policies, initiatives, salaries, meeting agendas and minutes, budget allocations and spending” (OECD, 2021^[51]). Transparency is underpinned by the right to access to information (ATI), which is understood as the ability of an individual to seek, receive, impart and use information effectively (UNESCO, n.d.^[52]). Beyond information disclosure, transparency mechanisms can include policies that enable a two-way relationship with stakeholders encouraging more accountability and participation by opening the decision-making process and the actions taken by public officials at every stage of the policy cycle (Cucciniello et al., 2014^[53]).

At a country level, the enforcement of the ATI right is mostly made operational through ATI laws, which are present in 134 countries, including 37 OECD countries (RTI Rating, n.d.^[54]). The Czech Republic adopted its Law on Free Access to Information in 1999 (Act 106/1999 Coll.). The Czech ATI Law regulates the right to access to information and stipulates fundamental conditions under which information should be provided. According to the Global Right to Information Rating, which measures the quality of the legal provisions of ATI laws, the Czech Republic scores (72) slightly above the OECD average (81) (RTI Rating, 2019^[55]).

In terms of proactive disclosure of information, the Czech legal framework is mostly aligned with OECD standards according to the results of the 2020 OECD Survey on Open Government. In particular, as in 15 out of 26 responding OECD countries (58%), the Czech legislation requires that opportunities for and results of public consultations be proactively disclosed. However, it does not require the proactive disclosure of “draft laws” or of “policy proposals”, as is practised in 54% and 42% of responding OECD countries, respectively. According to information provided by the Czech government, “opportunities for and results of public consultations” are to be disclosed on ministries' websites and all ministries do so.

Figure 1.8. Information to be proactively disclosed by the central/federal government in OECD countries



Notes: N=26. Preliminary results.

Source: OECD (2021^[23]).

Box 1.11. OECD work on transparency and access to information

The work of the OECD Open Government Unit on transparency, access to information and social accountability focuses on analysing access to information laws, their provisions, their implementation and the institutional arrangements in place. Special detail is paid to the bottlenecks that can affect their implementation. These can be internal to the public administration or external. Over the last two decades, more than 120 countries, including most OECD countries, have adopted access to information laws. While these laws have reached great maturity levels, they have not yet resulted in a true culture of transparency, especially because it has proven difficult to measure their implementation. It remains unclear what overall impact these laws have had on increasing governments' transparency and accountability, or on citizens' compliance with policies and their level of trust in institutions.

In terms of social accountability, the work focuses specifically on the direct involvement of citizens, civil society organisations and other civil society stakeholders such as the media in ensuring accountability in public institutions. Mechanisms for social accountability are any ways to involve civil society actors from civil society organisations and activists to journalists and trade unions in all stages of the policymaking cycle (e.g. citizen oversight committees, feedback portals, etc.). The work also looks at the particular role of the ombudsman in promoting social accountability and acting both as the main interface between the government and citizens and as a mediator in the case of a dispute or a violation of civil liberties.

Creating a single government-wide participation portal

Digital tools can enable citizens and stakeholders to take part in decision-making and increase the reach of participation opportunities, especially for those who are unable to attend meetings in person due to time

or distance constraints (OECD, 2022_[11]). In particular, participation portals (websites), where government institutions publish consultation and engagement opportunities, can facilitate exchanges and collaboration with citizens and stakeholders when designing public policies, and increase the opportunities for collaboration (OECD, 2022_[11]). Government-wide participation portals have the advantage of providing a “one-stop shop” for citizens to learn about past, current and future opportunities for participation. However, governments can also set up institution-specific portals (where a single institution publishes its participation opportunities) or individual portals for specific policy documents (e.g. open government partnership action plans). These institution- or policy-specific portals are easier to adapt to the specifics of each participation process.

Box 1.12. Decide_Madrid (Spain): A holistic online platform for citizen participation in decision-making

The platform Decide_Madrid was launched by the **Madrid City Council (Spain)** in 2015. Decide_Madrid allows citizens to voice their concerns and participate by developing proposals, debating and providing feedback during consultations, voting on draft laws, and participating in the city’s budgeting. Citizen participation on the platform can occur before, during the design and development of the initiatives, as well as during implementation.

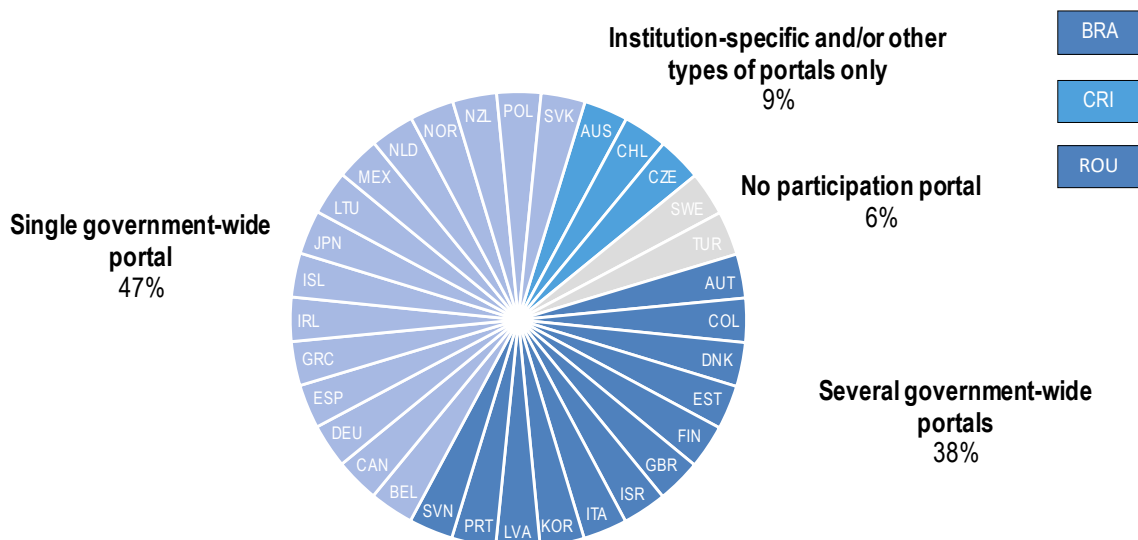
The platform is well received by the citizens of Madrid, with more than 400 000 people registered. For example, in a project to remodel the city’s Plaza de España, 26 961 citizens voted and commented on the proposals. The highest attraction is the website’s area on participatory budgeting. From 2016 to 2018, the amount allocated to participatory budgeting rose from EUR 60 million to EUR 100 million and the total number of participants increased by 100%, from 45 531 to 91 032 people.

The platform benefits from its open source code of the software CONSUL, making it free for any government or civil society organisation, to make use of it and propose improvements. Accordingly, it has been subsequently adopted by over 100 governments in 35 countries all over the world.

Source: City of Madrid (n.d._[56]).

According to the results of the OECD Survey on Open Government (OECD, 2021_[40]), some governments rely solely on one type of portal while others use a mixed approach combining two or more. In 2020, 27 out of 32 OECD countries (85%) had government-wide participation portals used by all ministries at the central/federal level of government to publish consultation and engagement opportunities. In total, 12 of 32 OECD countries (38%) had several government-wide portals and 15 (47%) a single government-wide portal. Only two of the surveyed OECD countries (6%) had no participation portals of any kind at the central/federal government level. Currently, the Czech Republic does not have a central website gathering information on ongoing (or past) consultations/opportunities for public participation in policymaking at the national level. In addition, OECD desk research showed that few ministries have dedicated sections on participation on their own websites.

Figure 1.9. Availability of government-wide portals to facilitate citizen and stakeholder participation, 2020



Source: OECD (2021^[23]).

To enhance the provision of information and have a single channel of communication about citizen and stakeholder participation at the national level (and potentially even at the subnational level), the Czech Republic could **consider creating an integrated government-wide participation portal**. This portal could have the following functionalities:

- provide information about past consultation or engagement opportunities – 25 of the 27 OECD countries (93%) which have such portals offer this functionality
- carry out online consultations or engagement processes (e.g. allowing people to submit their inputs on line) – 22 of the 27 OECD countries (81%) which have such portals offer this functionality
- provide background documents for specific consultation or engagement opportunities – 19 of the 27 OECD countries (70%) which have such portals offer this functionality
- provide feedback to citizens and stakeholders about their inputs and recommendations (e.g. how they were considered when taking the final decision) – 11 of the 27 OECD countries (41%) which have such portals offer this functionality
- inform about upcoming consultations and engagement opportunities
- provide information about citizens' and stakeholders' right to participate.

Box 1.13. Examples of whole-of-government participation portals in OECD and partner countries

Participa Mais in Brazil

The Participa Mais portal is a one-stop shop portal integrating all the public institutions of Brazil's federal government as well as subnational governments (states and municipalities) under the responsibility of the Special Secretariat for Social Coordination in the Secretary of Government. The platform allows the

public to directly provide inputs to online participatory processes and access information regarding in-person opportunities, such as public hearings and councils. Since its creation, ministries and agencies have published 172 consultations and 44 opinion polls, gathering 34 063 contributions from 25 154 registered users.

A good practice integrated into the Participa Mais Brasil portal is the possibility for public authorities to provide feedback for each consultation published on the platform. Once the consultation is closed, the platform allows public authorities to respond to each contribution, and publicly approve or reject the input received. In addition, the platform provides data and information on participants (type of stakeholder, geographical area, age group, etc.), which is useful for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the participatory process and enhancing representation in future processes.

Besides this central platform, all public institutions have a “social participation” section on their institutional website where they publish opportunities for citizens and stakeholders to participate.

Canada’s Open Government Portal

The Government of Canada’s website on open government provides content about a wide range of open government topics in an easily accessible manner. The home page is divided into three sections. The first allows users to directly search for data and information that has been disclosed either proactively or as a result of an access to information request. Alternatively, resources on how to request information and background material on this topic can be consulted. The second section contains four themes which structure open government content:

1. About open government: Canada’s involvement in the Open Government Partnership process, open government initiatives across Canada, FAQs on open government, the Open Government Licence and other background material.
2. Open data: Open government data in the open data portal, instructions on their use, helpful tools and inspirational use cases.
3. Open information: Information from digital government records in the open information portal, request summaries of access to information requests, grouped information on government expenditure, public procurement, regulatory plans, government service performance and others.
4. Open dialogue: Participation in government decision-making, principles and guidelines for engagement, consultation data, space to interact with other actors from the open government community in the Public Engagement Community of Practice.

The third section at the bottom of the page features the latest news on everything related to open government.

Note: [Governo Federal - Participa + Brasil - Página Inicial \(www.gov.br\)](http://www.gov.br).

Sources: OECD (2022^[11]); Government of Canada (n.d.^[57]).

Experimenting with emerging tools and practices in the Czech Republic

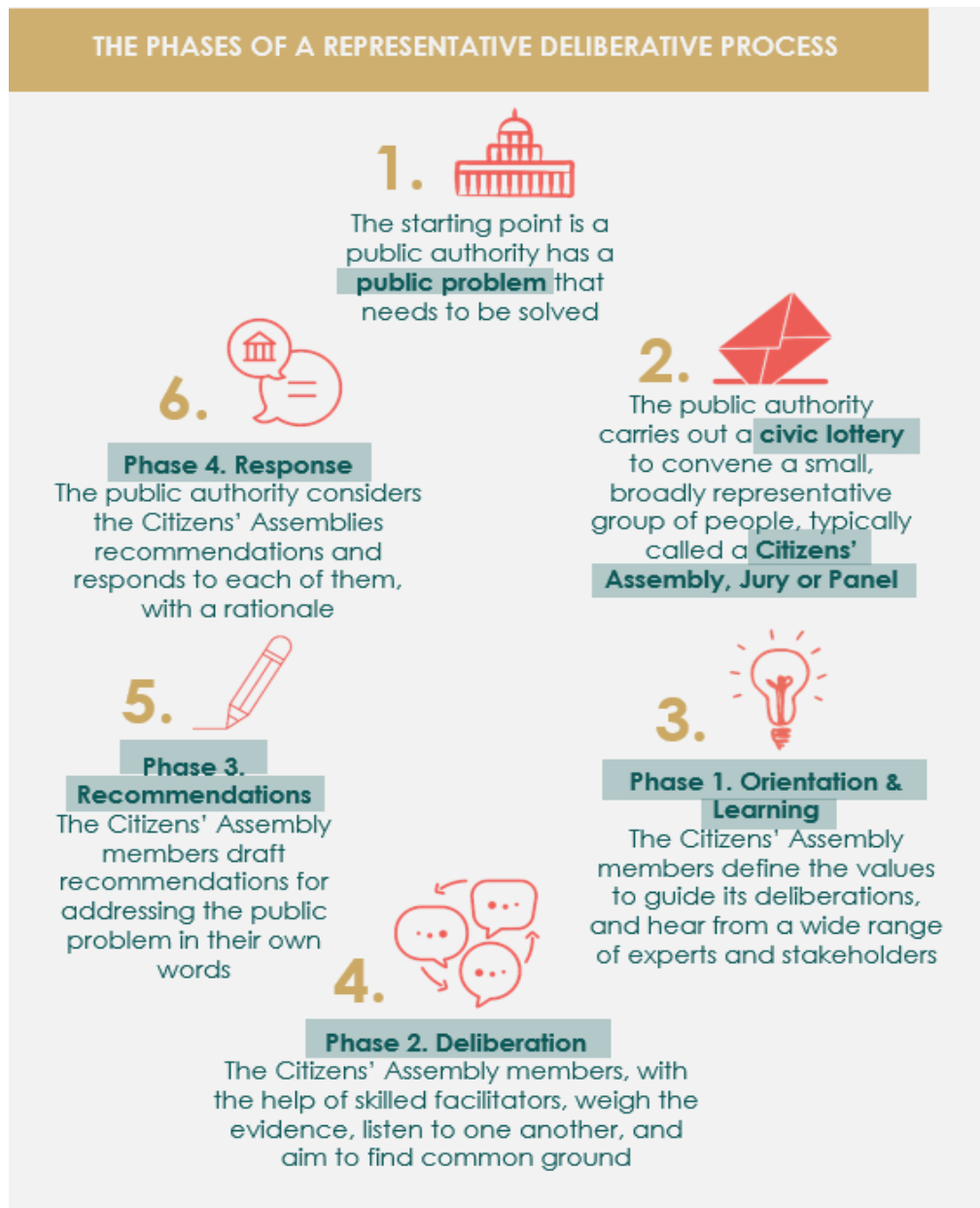
The increasing complexity of policymaking and the failure to find solutions to some of the most pressing policy problems have prompted politicians, policymakers, civil society organisations and citizens to reflect on how collective public decisions should be taken in the 21st century (OECD, 2020^[11]). Evidence from almost 300 cases gathered in the OECD’s *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave* report (OECD, 2020^[11]) shows that the use of representative deliberative processes can support policymakers in complex policy problems such as values-driven

dilemmas (e.g. ethical questions) and long-term issues that go beyond one electoral cycle (e.g. climate change). In addition, the use of public deliberation can strengthen integrity and prevent corruption by ensuring that groups and individuals with money and power cannot have undue influence on a public decision and can help counteract polarisation and disinformation (OECD, 2020^[11]).

The OECD defines a representative deliberative process as:

When randomly selected citizens, making up a microcosm of a community, spend significant time learning and collaborating through facilitated deliberation to develop informed collective recommendations for public authorities. (OECD, 2020^[11])

Figure 1.10. Main stages of a representative deliberative process



Notes: This figure represents the main stages of a representative deliberative process. The OECD has identified 12 models of representative deliberative processes which have distinct properties and characteristics.

Source: Based on OECD (2020^[11]).

Public authorities at all levels of government in countries such as Canada, Japan, Poland, Spain and the United States have been using citizens' assemblies, juries, panels and other representative deliberative processes (see Box 1.14 for more examples).

Box 1.14. Representative deliberative processes: Case studies from across the OECD

The OECD's *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave* report (OECD, 2020^[11]) includes almost 300 cases of the use of representative deliberative processes in public decision-making. In addition, the OECD has put together an updated version of the database used for the report, which also includes examples that have taken place since the publication of the report, bringing the total up to almost 600.

The Irish Citizens' Assembly (2016-18)

The Irish Citizens' Assembly involved 100 randomly selected citizen members who considered 5 important legal and policy issues: the 8th amendment of the Constitution on abortion, the ageing population, referendum processes, fixed-term parliaments, and climate change. The assembly's recommendations were submitted to parliament for further debate. Based on its recommendations, the government called a referendum on amending the 8th amendment and declared a climate emergency.

The Ostbelgien Model (Belgium): A permanent deliberative institution (2019)

On 25 February 2019, in Ostbelgien, the German-speaking Community of Belgium, the parliament unanimously voted in favour of a piece of legislation that establishes a permanent Citizens' Council. It comprises 24 randomly selected citizens with a mandate to represent fellow citizens for 1.5 years. One-third of the members rotate every six months. Its mandate is twofold. First, it has an agenda-setting role. It initiates up to three *ad hoc* citizens' panels during its term and decides the issues the panels should address. Second, the council has an oversight role, ensuring that the recommendations from the citizens' panels are presented and debated in parliament and receive a response from the relevant parliamentary committee and minister. The Citizens' Council met for the first time on 16 September 2019. Building on the experience from Ostbelgien, in October 2021, the Paris City Council announced the creation of the first permanent representative deliberative process (Paris Citizen Council) which will gather 100 randomly selected citizens.

Deliberative committees in the Francophone Brussels Parliament (Belgium)

Deliberative committees are the first mixed committees, comprised of 45 randomly selected citizens and 15 elected members of parliament – from the relevant parliamentary committee to the topic to be discussed. A committee can be called in two ways: either members of parliament decide that a citizen contribution to a certain public issue could be valuable or the initiative comes from citizens, as a citizen suggestion through a digital platform. The recommendations of the deliberative committees are then voted on by both the citizens and members of parliament and those that are accepted have to be discussed in the plenary with the rest of the elected members.

Note: The OECD's database of Representative Deliberative Processes and Institutions is available at: <https://airtable.com/shrHEM12ogzPs0nQG/tbl1eKbt37N7hVFHF/viwxQgJNyONVHkmS6?blocks=hide>.
Sources: OECD (2020^[11]); Cesnulaityte (2021^[58]).

Unlike many other OECD countries, the Czech Republic currently does not have any experience with deliberation⁵ at the national level. Building on the objectives outlined in high-level policy documents such as the Client-Oriented Public Administration Strategy, the Czech Republic could consider supporting the use of representative deliberative processes for public decision-making. Different scenarios are possible for including public deliberation and civic lottery in public decision-making in the country:

- Deliberation could be embedded in existing participatory spaces. For example, the existing consultative bodies (e.g. councils) could become a laboratory to experiment with these methodologies. Random selection of citizens with stratification methods and facilitated deliberation could improve inclusion and representation in the councils and bring citizens (as individuals) into these processes.
- Deliberative processes could be piloted at the local level. For example, subnational participatory budgeting could be used to experiment with deliberation. Evidence gathered by the OECD (OECD, 2020^[111]) shows that the use of representative deliberative processes could improve budget decisions. They help to justify action and spending on long-term issues that go beyond the short-term incentives of electoral cycle issues, as they are designed in a way that removes the motivated interests of political parties and elections, incentivising participants to act for the public good (*Ibid.*).

Box 1.15. Participatory budgeting at the local level in the Czech Republic

Participatory budgeting practices originated in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre in 1989. Since then, this practice has spread across the globe, especially at the local level, with some regional and national experiences also present.

There have been at least 50 experiences of participatory budgeting across the Czech Republic, all of them having taken place at the local level, including in Prague. Currently, participatory budgeting is not inscribed into law. Participatory budgeting practices in the Czech Republic are often (and) growingly accompanied by digital practices, such as online platforms.

There are notable aspects of participatory budgeting in the Czech Republic, namely:

- School participatory budgeting – where students carry out a participatory budgeting process in which they come up with and vote on initiatives to improve their school using the available budget. This takes place in 40 municipal schools across the country and helps build a participatory and democratic culture from a young age.
- An innovative voting method is often employed. This is known as the “Janeček Method”, developed by Czech mathematician Karel Janeček. Its main feature is the possibility of having multiple votes, allowing voters to support more than one initiative. In addition, they are also allowed to cast a “negative” vote for projects they absolutely do not want to see happen. This is theorised to help the community reach a consensus more easily and for the outcome of the process to reflect the community’s preferences more faithfully.

Source: Cheerakathil (2019^[59]).

Recommendations

Strengthening the enabling environment for participation in the Czech Republic: Moving from ad hoc practices to institutionalised mechanisms

- Consider **adopting a single definition of citizen and stakeholder participation** to inform the public about the extent and limitations of participation and align all stakeholders and policymakers towards the same goals.
 - Communicate the definition widely to ensure that all public officials and non-public stakeholders are aware of and use it.

- Consider creating a **centre of expertise on citizen and stakeholder participation** to raise levels of implementation, harmonise practices across public institutions, and provide public institutions and officials with practical support (guidance and technical tools).
 - Consider locating the centre of expertise in the Office of the Government (taking advantage of being part of a key centre of government institution) or in the Ministry of the Interior.
- Consider mandating the establishment of a **unit or person dedicated to citizen and stakeholder participation in every public institution**.
- Consider designing an **integrated open government strategy that includes a strong participation component** to anchor the participation agenda in a broader context and fully exploit synergies with initiatives to promote transparency and accountability.
- Consider extending the mandate and composition of the existing Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations and transform it into **the Government Council for Citizen and Stakeholder Participation**.
 - Consider mandating the council to co-ordinate the wider participation agenda, including the involvement of individual citizens (as opposed to organised stakeholders) in public decision-making.
 - Consider including (selected) institutional participation co-ordinators, as well as randomly selected citizens in the new council.
 - Consider making the suggested centre of expertise for citizen and stakeholder participation the secretariat of the new entity.
- Consider **reviewing the legal and regulatory framework for citizen and stakeholder participation**.
 - Consider introducing a mandatory “participation check” to ensure that all legislative documents are designed in a participatory way and that new legislation includes a provision related to participation (when relevant).

Fostering participation literacy in the Czech administration and in the wider society

- Consider **updating the existing Methodology and Manual for Public Involvement in the Preparation of Government Documents** to include more recent trends and practices (e.g. representative deliberative processes) and provide more concrete advice on (non-electoral) participatory practices and processes beyond RIA.
 - Conduct awareness-raising and promotion campaigns about existing materials both for public officials and non-public stakeholders.
 - Create a compendium of all the available guidelines, methodologies and manuals and include them in a possible new participation portal (see below).
- Consider including a **dedicated course on participation in mandatory training requirements for senior public officials** and for all newly hired public officials to introduce them to the concept and its practices.
 - Consider creating a single training catalogue that lists all trainings on participation (and open government policies and practices more broadly) that are offered by the national government and international actors and add it to the new participation portal (see below).
- Consider setting up a **community of practice dedicated to citizen and stakeholder participation**.
 - Include both public officials and non-public stakeholders interested in citizen and stakeholder participation and/or who have participated in trainings on participatory policies and practices.

- Consider mandating the newly created centre of expertise for participation to animate the community and involve the participation offices/people in all public institutions; public officials from subnational governments; non-public stakeholders such as civil society leaders; as well as representatives from academia, the private sector and trade unions.
- Create a dedicated online space for the community.

Enhancing transparency and providing high-quality information as a basis for citizen and stakeholder participation

- **Proactively disclose all relevant information regarding participatory processes**, including draft laws, policy proposals, and opportunities for and results of public consultations.
- Consider creating an **integrated government-wide participation portal**.

Experimenting with emerging tools and practices in the Czech Republic

- **Embed deliberation in existing participatory spaces**, for example in existing consultative bodies (e.g. councils) to improve inclusion and representation in the councils and bring citizens (as individuals) into these processes.
- **Pilot representative deliberative processes at the local level**, for example, in subnational participatory budgeting.

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Notes

¹ For the purpose of this chapter, the term “citizen” is meant in the larger sense of “an inhabitant of a particular place”, which can be in reference to a village, town, city, region, state or country depending on the context. It is not meant in the more restrictive sense of “a legally recognised national of a state”. In this broader sense, it is equivalent to people.

² For the purpose of this chapter, “stakeholders” are defined as institutions and organisations, whether governmental or non-public, from civil society, academia, the media or the private sector.

³ A more in-depth discussion on the wider participation agenda, including of initiatives taken by public institutions, could be the subject of an eventual OECD Open Government Review of the Czech Republic.

⁴ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual and intersex.

⁵ The OECD understands deliberation as public deliberation (as opposed to internal deliberation) and to group deliberation (as opposed to individual deliberation), which emphasises the need to find a common ground (OECD, 2020_[11]). The fundamental distinction between deliberation and debate is in relation to the objective, whether it is consensus-seeking as in the former, or zero-sum as in the latter.



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