

Senior civil servants and managers work at the interface of political and administrative authority, often drawing on vast institutional knowledge and networks built over the course of a broad and varied career. They are responsible not only for a wide variety of outputs and outcomes but also for overseeing the processes, budgets and people that achieve these. Increasingly, civil services of OECD countries use performance management systems to help focus leadership and management efforts and align incentives with desired behaviour and outcomes. When designed and used effectively, performance management systems can ensure accountability for results and develop important professional and leadership competencies. Previous OECD research has suggested, however, that all-encompassing, technocratic performance monitoring systems and contractual arrangements have had mixed results, as have performance-related pay reforms (OECD, 2015).

In two-thirds of OECD countries where there exists a performance management regime for senior managers, senior civil servants are often subject to specific performance agreements with their minister (15 countries) and/or the administrative head of the civil service (7 countries). For example, countries such as the Netherlands and Norway use both. In slightly over half of OECD countries, senior managers can be granted a bonus if they meet certain performance criteria. Whereas just 17% of countries link promotion prospects with good performance, 19 OECD countries allow for dismissal in the case of poor results in performance assessment.

In slightly over three-quarters of OECD countries, senior managers are subject to fixed-term appointments. This may reflect a desire in these countries to facilitate mobility and provide the flexibility to bring in new skills and experience for this important cohort. Slightly more than 60% of OECD countries link appointment renewal for senior managers to performance assessment. However, in about 70% of the countries where this link is established, senior managers are not obliged to meet a certain minimum standard.

Based on available data, central public administrations reported prioritising mechanisms to deal with poor performance over establishing a more strategic use of performance management to identify, retain and promote high achievers (such as the Australian Public Service Commission's emphasis on talent management). More than 60% of OECD countries do not report having policies in place to identify potential senior managers early on in their careers.

Methodology and definitions

Evidence presented here was initially collected through the 2016 OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management and updated in 2019.

Most respondents were senior officials in central government HRM departments, and data refer to HRM practices in central government. The survey was completed by all OECD countries, as well as the OECD accession countries Colombia and Costa Rica.

The definitions of the civil service, as well as the organisations governed at the central level of government, vary significantly. In this survey, civil servants are only those public employees covered under a specific public legal framework or other specific provisions. Senior managers are D1 and D2 managers, alternatively referred to as “senior civil servants” or “top managers”. The word “senior” denotes rank, and is not a reference to age or seniority in terms of length of career or tenure. Senior managers can be younger and have fewer years of experience than middle managers, for example. The D1 and D2 managers for which data is presented here are adapted from the International Standard classification of occupations (ISCO-08) developed by the International Labour Organization. For detailed definitions of each of the levels, see Annex D online. A performance agreement is an agreement between an employee and his/her supervisor concerning objectives against which the employee's performance can be assessed.

Further reading

OECD (2019), *Recommendation of the Council on Public Service Leadership and Capability*, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0445>.

OECD (2017), *Skills for a High Performing Civil Service*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264280724-en>

OECD (2016), *Engaging Public Employees for a High-Performing Civil Service*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://doi.org/10.1787/9789264267190-en>.

Figure notes

Data for Colombia, Iceland, and Turkey refer to 2016. On data for Israel, see <http://doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

6.6. In Austria, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey and Costa Rica, there exists a performance management regime that is the same for all civil servants.

For Germany, the answer “yes” for “Existence of a performance-management regime for senior managers” and “Performance appraisal system which includes Outcome indicators” only applies to those senior managers who are civil servants. The answer “yes” for “Performance-related pay” and “Dismissal for bad performance” only applies to those senior managers who are public employees.

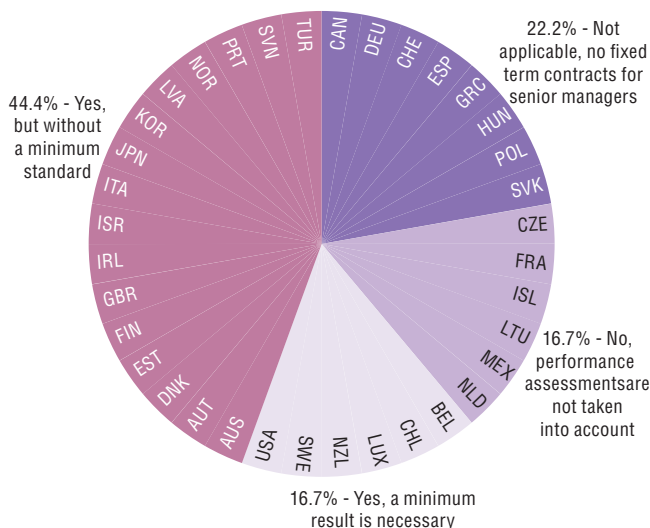
6.6. Features of the performance regime for senior managers, 2019

| | Existence of a performance-management regime for senior managers | Performance-related pay | Performance agreement with the Minister (at D1 level) | Performance agreement with the Administrative head of the Civil Service (at D1 level) | Performance appraisal system which includes: | | | | Promotion for good performance | Dismissal for bad performance |
|-------------------|--|-------------------------|---|---|--|-------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | | | | Outcome indicators | Output indicators | Organizational management indicators | 360 degree appraisal | | |
| Australia | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ |
| Austria | □ | □ | □ | □ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | ■ |
| Belgium | ■ | □ | ■ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | ■ |
| Canada | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | ■ |
| Chile | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | ■ |
| Czech Republic | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | ■ |
| Denmark | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| Estonia | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | ■ | □ | □ | □ |
| Finland | ■ | □ | □ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | ■ |
| France | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | □ | □ | ■ | □ | □ |
| Germany | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | ■ |
| Greece | ■ | □ | ■ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Hungary | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| Iceland | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| Ireland | ■ | □ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ |
| Israel | ■ | □ | □ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Italy | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | ■ | □ | □ | ■ |
| Japan | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| Korea | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Latvia | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | □ | □ | ■ | □ | ■ |
| Lithuania | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| Luxembourg | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| Mexico | □ | □ | □ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | ■ |
| Netherlands | □ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| New Zealand | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| Norway | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| Poland | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| Portugal | ■ | □ | ■ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | ■ |
| Slovak Republic | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | ■ |
| Slovenia | □ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| Spain | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | ■ |
| Sweden | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| Switzerland | □ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| Turkey | □ | □ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ |
| United Kingdom | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | ■ |
| United States | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| OECD Total | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes ■ | 25 | 20 | 15 | 7 | 16 | 15 | 16 | 9 | 6 | 19 |
| No □ | 11 | 16 | 21 | 29 | 20 | 21 | 20 | 27 | 30 | 17 |
| Colombia | ■ | □ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| Costa Rica | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | ■ |

Source: OECD (2019), OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM).

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934032624>

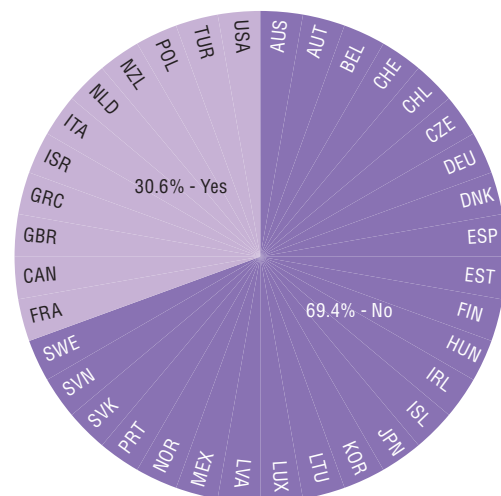
6.7. Existence of a relationship between contract renewal for SCS and results of formal performance assessment, 2019



Source: OECD (2019), OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM).

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934032643>

6.8. Existence of policies to identify potential senior managers early on in their career, 2019



Source: OECD (2019), OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM).

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934032662>



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