

3.2 Strategic management and monitoring in the centre of government

In many Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries, the centre of government (CoG) serves as a vital support mechanism for the head of government (i.e., the president) and their respective cabinets of ministers. Traditionally, one of the CoG's primary roles is to ensure that the policies proposed and implemented by line ministries are aligned with overarching strategic priorities (e.g. high-level outcomes that a government aims to achieve) and national strategies (e.g. comprehensive plans formulated by a government to achieve strategic priorities), typically outlined in the government agenda or programme. Strategic planning and prioritisation tend to involve actors from several areas of the administration as well as external stakeholders, requiring the CoG to take a co-ordinated approach across government. To achieve this, many CoGs collaborate with line ministries to establish targets and define action plans, aligning budgetary resources with these plans. Some CoGs also monitor progress towards defined targets during the implementation of strategies and policies, and provide assistance to line ministries to improve their performance.

A central role of CoGs is to define and design whole-of-government national strategies to ensure that government resources and actions are aligned with existing strategic priorities. In 2022, CoGs in all nine surveyed LAC countries were responsible for identifying and defining whole-of-government strategic priorities, an increase from six in 2018. However, it is less common for CoGs in the region to lead or co-ordinate the definition of a whole-of-government approach with line ministries. Only four of the nine CoGs in the region (44%) co-ordinate efforts with line departments to ensure a coherent approach in the design of long-term strategic plans, or require line ministries to develop long-term strategic plans in cross-cutting areas. Once these whole-of-government strategic priorities have been designed, CoGs play a prominent role in implementing them. All nine LAC CoGs monitor the implementation of strategic priorities, and seven (78%) collect reports on the implementation of strategic priorities. Similarly, the CoGs in six out of nine countries (67%) are responsible for ensuring that line ministers' proposals align with the government's priorities (Table 3.2).

A key aspect of the structure of CoGs is whether they have a dedicated unit (e.g. a delivery unit) responsible for monitoring the implementation of policy priorities. Notably, CoGs in eight of the nine (89%) surveyed LAC countries have a dedicated unit in place. In six of these, the unit has periodic data-driven follow-up meetings. Furthermore, five units use monitoring dashboards

and five provide support to line ministries to improve the implementation of national strategies. The monitoring units of Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Peru stand out for using all three tools to monitor the implementation of policy priorities (Figure 3.3).

Strategic planning requires anticipating risks and defining how current or future governments should manage any potential crises they may face. To enhance their preparedness, all nine surveyed CoGs in the region have established mechanisms to co-ordinate with local governments during crises, including those stemming from natural disasters. Well over half the CoGs in the region (seven out of nine) have responsibilities related to either national risk assessments or scenario planning exercises or both: five conduct national risk assessments and five strategic forecasting exercises (Figure 3.4). Even when foresight activities are carried out, it is crucial to link these to actionable response plans and provide training and awareness for the leaders and officials responsible for their implementation, as demonstrated by the COVID-19 experience (Shostak et al., 2023).

Methodology and definitions

Data are from the OECD-IDB Centres of Government Survey 2022, conducted during May-July 2022 in nine LAC countries. Respondents were senior officials who provide direct support and advice to heads of government and the council of ministers or cabinet.

Strategic planning is a tool for identifying short-, medium- and long-term priorities and goals (e.g. "improve education" or "achieve energy security") and laying out a set of present and future (collective) actions for achieving them.

Risk management refers to the design and implementation of actions and remedies to address risks.

Further reading

OECD (forthcoming), *Compendium of Practices: Steering from the Centre of Government in Times of Complexity*.

OECD (2020), "Building resilience to the Covid-19 pandemic: The role of centres of government", *OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19)*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/883d2961-en>.

Shostak, R. et al. (2023), *The Center of Government, Revisited: A Decade of Global Reforms*, Inter-American Development Bank, <https://doi.org/10.18235/0004994>.

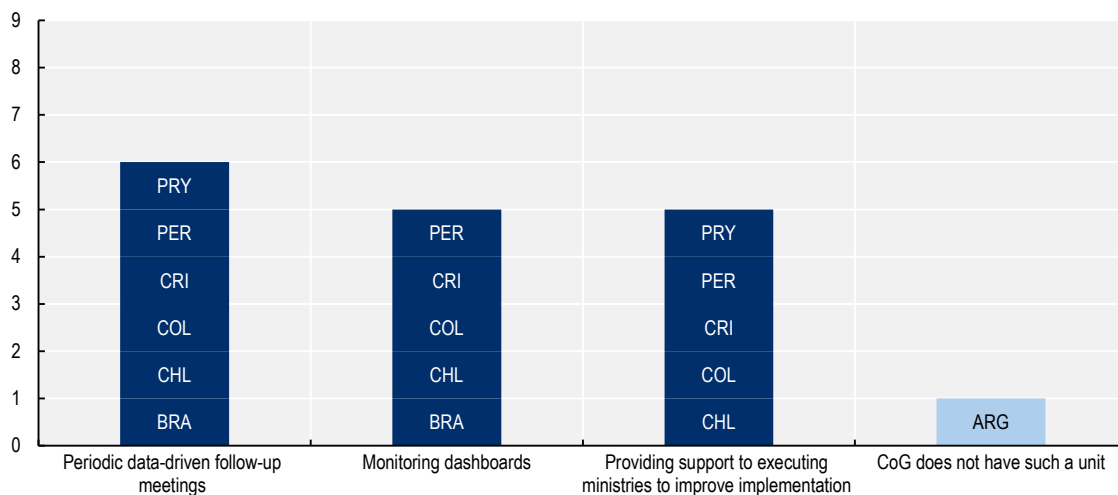
Table 3.2. Responsibilities of the centre of government for strategic planning, 2018 and 2022

	CoG's responsibilities for the definition and design of whole-of-government national strategies						CoG's responsibilities for the implementation of whole-of-government strategic priorities					
	Identifies and defines whole-of-government strategic priorities		Co-ordinates the design of long-term strategic planning with line departments		Mandates line departments to develop long-term strategic plans in different cross-cutting areas		Monitors implementation		Collects reports on implementation and carries out evaluations		Ensures line ministries' proposals are linked to government priorities	
	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022
Argentina	○	●	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●
Brazil	●	●	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Chile	●	●	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●
Colombia	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Costa Rica	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
El Salvador		●		○		○		●		○		○
Honduras	○	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	○	●	○
Paraguay	●	●	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	○	○
Peru	●	●	○	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●
LAC												
● Yes	6	9	4	4	2	4	8	9	8	7	7	6
○ No	2	0	4	5	6	5	0	0	0	2	1	3

Source: OECD-IBD Centres of Government Survey 2022.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/10q2sf>

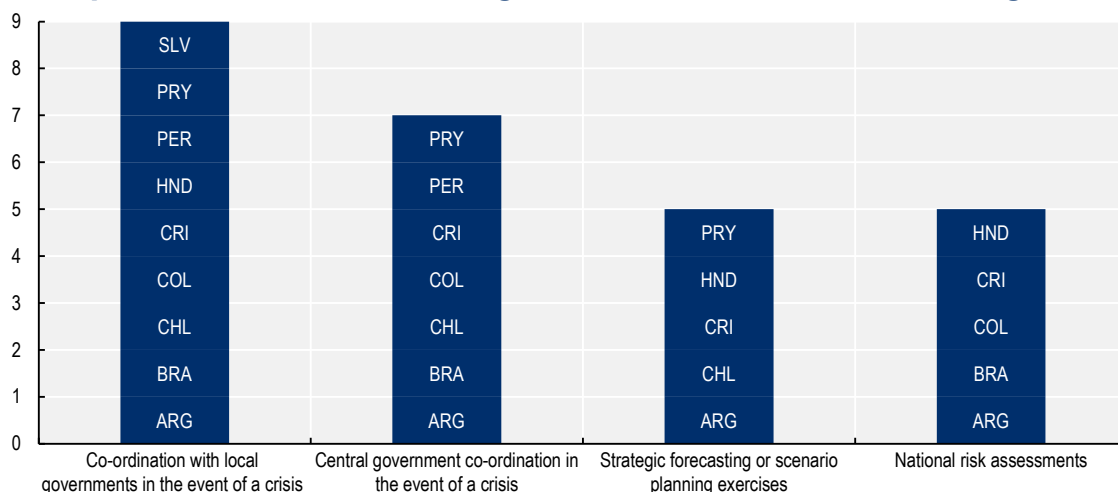
Figure 3.3. Tools used by monitoring units to track implementation of policy priorities, 2022



Source: OECD-IBD Centres of Government Survey 2022.

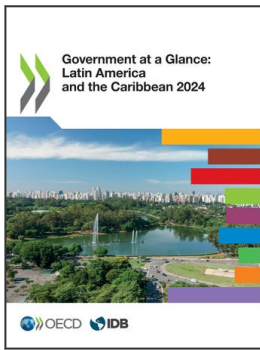
StatLink  <https://stat.link/3h12o9>

Figure 3.4. Responsibilities of the centre of government for risk and crisis management, 2022



Source: OECD-IBD Centres of Government Survey 2022.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/b4htaf>



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