

OECD
Assessment of
Ireland's second
Public Service
Reform Plan
2014-16

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Introduction

The OECD was invited to assess key elements of the Second Irish Public Service Reform Plan (PSRP 2014-2016), with a view to informing future public service reform efforts in Ireland. This assessment is based on interviews conducted during a fact finding mission at the beginning of March 2017, written responses to OECD questionnaires, and results from the reform reporting systems provided by the Public Service Reform Programme Management Office (PMO) in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

The PSRP 2014-16 was by-and-large successful in terms of completing the majority of the activities it set out. Implementation of the Plan created a Public Service-wide approach to reform, increasing awareness and visibility of reform efforts, establishing a reporting framework for greater accountability, and creating networks to learn from departmental good practices. The whole-of-Service plan also contributed to increasing strategic planning and project management capacity in some departments to deliver on PSRP actions (see box 1 for additional achievements).

The Second Plan, however, is still marked by the path set out in the first Plan. While the reform narrative acknowledges the need to strengthen service quality and citizen focus, there remains a strong emphasis on achieving cost reductions and efficiencies through its cross-cutting actions. While this is positive, more could have been done to help the plan realise its message of achieving better

outcomes for all stakeholders by helping sectors translate savings from corporate efficiencies into improved services and outcomes.

As the Irish economy gets back on track and continues to grow, the next reform programme could create opportunities/mechanisms to identify the gaps in – and barriers to – delivering outcomes, to allow public servants and citizens to contribute innovative solutions, and to learn from the reform experience. It could also more clearly lay out the respective roles of key public service actors in achieving results for citizens. There is potential to rethink the design and reporting structures of the next reform plan, moving from a process-oriented reform plan to one anchored in outcomes.

This report evaluates Ireland's Second Public Service Reform Plan on its:

- i. **Achievements;**
- ii. **Design;** and
- iii. **Governance and project management** approach.

The concluding section explores future considerations for the next Irish Public Service Reform Plan, looking particularly at what the key enablers could be to support, guide and implement public service improvement and innovation across the sectors.





Evaluating the Achievements of the Second Irish Public Service Reform Plan (2014-16)

The Second Irish Public Service Reform Plan was largely successful in achieving the cross-cutting activities set out under its action plan. Significant aims of the Second Plan included, for example, implementing shared services, centralised government procurement, digital government and property asset management as well as the development of civil service leadership and capacity, which led to the Civil Service Renewal Plan¹.

Less is known, however, about the impacts and benefits of the reform actions, particularly in relation to the implementation of shared services and centralised procurement. So far, few reform evaluations have taken place. Integrating evaluation and measurement of benefits could better inform implementation, provide learning opportunities for the next round of reforms, and a better understanding of how sectors could reinvest efficiency savings.

While the cross-cutting initiatives of the Second Plan – tracked quarterly through detailed reporting structures led by the PMO in DPER – were successful in terms of timeliness, focusing more strongly on outcomes could have improved communication with sectors and the alignment of sector plans.



1. The Civil Service Renewal Plan, launched by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and the Taoiseach at the end of October 2014, incorporates a vision and a three-year action plan to renew the Irish Civil Service. While the framework focuses specifically on the Civil Service, elements of the action plan were integrated in reporting on the fourth section of the PSRP "Leadership, Renewal, and Organisational Reform".

As regards the high-level sector reform elements, the focus on existing sectoral plans underscores the importance of sector ownership and visibility of sector reform efforts, but not how a common approach to reform can reap benefits for citizens. Further progress could be made to help convert savings from cross-cutting reforms into service delivery investments and to align with overall reform priorities or drive new rounds of reforms.

Box 1. Results from the OECD Questionnaire on the Achievements of the Second PSRP

Respondent views in terms of achievements of the PSRP 2014-16 include:

- A good level of delivery in the extent to which the 227 actions set out in the plan were implemented
- The PSRP 2014-16 providing a focus/impetus for reform action and identifying actions within each PSB that supported the reform plan
- Increasing strategic planning and project management capacity in departments, to deliver on PSRP actions: in one case, it was highlighted that a department used the plan as a framework to guide its own reform programme, and it was effective in that regard.
- The PSRP 2014-2016 providing a structure and centralised monitoring / measuring facility on reforms, creating a PS-wide approach and networks. Although it was suggested by one respondent that the goals contained in the PSRP were in the pipeline, the PSRP put a timeline and reporting structure in place, gave an impetus to ensure that the goals were achieved, and helped to get the co-operation required from other Departments on cross cutting initiatives.
- Progression towards a Civil Service HR Strategy and implementation of the Civil Service Renewal Plan, including elements such as the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards.

Source: OECD Questionnaire on the Second Irish PSRP



ASSESSMENT OF CROSS-CUTTING REFORM ACHIEVEMENTS

1. A FOCUS ON SERVICE USERS

Meeting service user needs and adapting structures to better deliver services to user expectations was one of four cross-cutting reform priorities outlined in the PSRP 2014-16. While an integral part of any reform agenda, this section could better present its overall priority objective, intended outcomes, and how activities in each of the three sub-focuses could align with this overarching goal.

1.1 Alternative models of service delivery (ASD)

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

The key objective is to design and deliver better and more cost effective public services using innovative alternative delivery models, in partnership with voluntary, community and private sectors. During the lifespan of the Plan, a public service outsourcing programmes in the area of job activation was implemented with *Jobpath*, which targeted the long term unemployed. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform also led a reform programme to secure better outcomes for citizens when the government commissions human, social and community services – mainly through the Community and Voluntary sector. Finally, the Government, working with philanthropic bodies, also invested in Benefacts to provide greater transparency and accountability within civil society².

A suite of resources and training for ASD was developed as part of the PSRP, with a view to expand options for public service provision. Particular achievements include the creation of a manual and principled guidance for External Service Delivery as well as training to up-skill Public Service managers in the execution of end-to-end outsourcing. A devoted team of service procurement specialists was created in the Office of Government Procurement to help with the procurement aspect of the end-to-end External Service Delivery process.

GOING FURTHER

While the majority of the planned actions in this component of the PSRP 2014-16 were completed, ASD and

outsourcing have not emerged as systematically viable options for public service provision. This, in part, may be related to cultural resistance towards outsourcing among managers and at the political level, as well as industrial relations. Increasing take-up would require strengthening capacity of the service delivery ecosystem, which includes the public service as well as grantees, regarding compliance with regulations, evaluation, and managing risk.

1.2 Digital government

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

The creation of the OGCIO, the ICT Strategy for the Public Service and an 18 Step Action Plan for its implementation are important achievements. The five working groups set up under the pillars of the Strategy (Build to Share, Digital First, Data as an Enabler, Improve Governance and Enhance Capability) are elements contributing to implementing the Action Plan. Advancements towards the use of public service cards are promising, however, more could be done to communicate on public data protection to increase the uptake of public service cards.

GOING FURTHER

With the creation of the ICT Strategy comes the need to ensure a workforce with the proper ICT skills to implement it, which requires consideration of ICT professional career paths and training and improved digital skills across the generalist public service. Early efforts to build a 'National Data Infrastructure', for example, will need to be accompanied by data analytic skills that can help identify new ways to combine and use data, and broader understanding among policymakers of how to design programmes that better exploit data and evidence. Data sharing and breaking down silos across public organisations and agencies are ongoing challenges, with legislation on data sharing in government not yet passed but gaining momentum.

Work surrounding the Digital First pillar of the Strategy will need to advance with consideration for the digitally excluded and for user preferences. Recent survey results show user preference remains for phone and face-to-face contact for some, across all age groups (Irish Civil Service Customer Satisfaction Survey, April 2017). Taking a "digital by design" approach is therefore critical to delivering services of choice. Satisfaction with the speed and efficiency of services delivered online or via email, for example,

2. This non-governmental entity provides financial and governance information and analytics for over 20,000 civil society organisations from a wide range of sources.



appears to have fallen since 2015 (Irish Civil Service Customer Satisfaction Survey April 2017). Sustained efforts in implementing the 'national data infrastructure' to better share data will help also improve face-to-face and phone, as well as online, services.

1.3 Improving customer experience

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

Identifying customer improvements was the responsibility of all organisations and implementation was reported through IRDPs. Results achieved include the creation of Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) as "first-stop-shops" for the micro-enterprise and small business sector, the creation of Tusla (the Child and Family Agency) for service responsibility for child welfare and protection services, and operationalising 60 Intreo offices providing one-stop shop employment services. Improvements in levels of engagement with citizens and business, and data on customer satisfaction with services, have also been achieved, notably through the commissioning of the Civil Service Customer Satisfaction survey, which now run in alternate years for surveys of citizens and business. The most recent Civil Service Business Customer Survey was published in 2016, and the Civil Service General Customer Satisfaction Survey was published in April 2017. Improving the accessibility of information for the citizen was also advanced under this action of the PSRP 2014-16 with the promotion of the use of plain language through the provision of guidelines and training³.

GOING FURTHER

The Civil Service Customer Satisfaction surveys are important tools for gaining user insights and could also form a basis for more cross-sector exchanges on how to improve satisfaction levels as well as innovative collaborative approaches to meeting user needs. Improving the timeliness of customer experience data could also be considered, with steps toward achieving more real-time data of customer satisfaction through sharing and analysis of administrative data and real-time user surveys.

3. Plain language training was sourced from the National Adult Literacy Agency and four pilot training sessions for staff across a number of Departments / Offices took place in 2014, 2015 and in Q1 2016. A Plain English Style Guide for the Public Service was published in September 2016. This guide is available via the RDO Portal www.reformoffice.per.gov.ie

2. A FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY

The PSRP 2014-16 maintained the strong focus on reducing costs and increasing efficiency from the previous reform plan. Ensuring value for money was sought through the centralisation of government procurement processes and the establishment of shared services. However, the evaluation and measurement of benefits would have better informed implementation and provided a better understanding of how sectors could reinvest efficiency savings.

2.1 Cost of the Public Service and Productivity

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

The implementation of the commitment in the 2011 PRSP to reduce public service numbers continued to be delivered at the beginning of the 2014 PRSP. With the improvement in the public finances, however, public service numbers began to rise to meet increased demographic demand but are still below peak levels of 2008. A reduction from a peak of 320,387 in 2008, was at its lowest at 288,217 in 2013 and was still below 2008 figures at the end of 2016 at 306,578 (figure 1).

Under the Haddington Road Agreement, a public service agreement focused strongly on increasing public service productivity and avoiding redundancies, additional working hours across all sectors of the Public Service were agreed, with a view to delivering significant cost reductions. Substantial reductions in overtime and other payments, changes in conditions relating to pension, sick leave and annual leave, redeployment of thousands of public servants and the provision of additional services with fewer staff were also achieved.

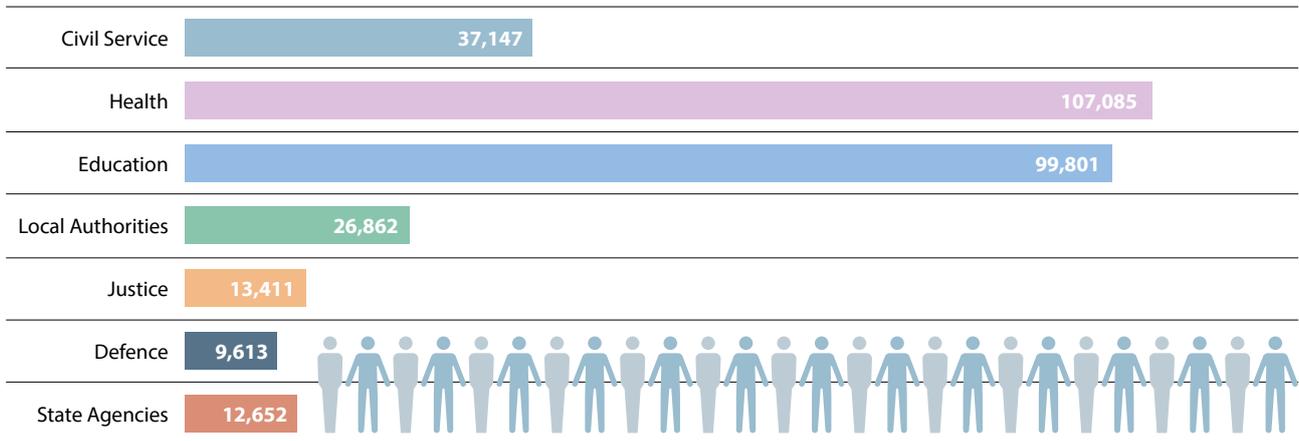
GOING FURTHER

Longer working hours appear to have enabled increases in labour output in many sectors; however, this is likely dependent on the sector and type of job being conducted in the public service. DPER analyses savings in terms of the extra hours worked (15 million hours in 2016), compensation that would have been provided to those workers for additional hours (€583M), as well as the potential replacement cost had additional people been hired to work those hours (an estimated 11,652 WTE equivalents costing from €311M-€621M depending on assumptions used).

Going beyond the cost savings associated with these extra hours to look at productivity requires tracking how these



Figure 1. **Number of Public Service Employees per Sector (2016)**



extra hours were transformed into extra output. Here, the same report provides a range of examples of how extra hours have been used to improve public service delivery. These include extended opening hours for health services and public libraries, more frequent police patrols, and reduced processing times for social welfare claims. Additional research and consultation would also help better understand the impact of automating business processes on productivity, user satisfaction and job design.

2.2 Shared Services

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

Establishment of Shared Service Centres (SSCs) has advanced and provides a large potential for benefits. PeoplePoint is providing HR and pension administration services to more than 10% of public service employees (34,500 employees) on behalf of 39 client organisations. The Payroll Shared Service Centre (PSSC) is providing payroll and travel and expense administration to approximately 103,000 payees in 44 client organisations, which includes 57,000 pensioners. The value of payments made is currently €3.2 billion. The PSRP 2014-16 established a National Shared Services Office (NSSO) to provide leadership and oversight of shared services and to develop policies that ensure that shared service centres are customer-focused.

At the local government level, the MyPay Payroll shared service has been in operation since 2012 and has over 55,000 payees. In 2016, in recognition of the need to quantify the service improvement, they carried out a customer service survey with over 74% of respondents very satisfied with the service and only 5% very dissatisfied.

GOING FURTHER

So far benefits are not being tracked in a formal benefits realisation structure and there is some concern across the system of duplication of functions and resources. This is not uncommon internationally. Integrating benefits evaluation into the original plan – including measuring the impacts on the sectors and the changes in service delivery performance as a result of consolidating back office processes – would have provided clearer ex ante expectations and baseline costs from which to measure improvement.

The next phase needs to continue to focus on simplifying and standardising processes for further automation which will help in overcoming challenges highlighted by client organisations, and putting in place effective mechanisms to track and measure the impact of SSCs and, most importantly, in each ministry/organisation. This may include guidance on reallocating labour within agencies and ministries from jobs made redundant by the SSC. Participants during interviews noted that the transition to shared services in some HR functions such as PeoplePoint and the Payroll Shared Service Centre (PSSC) has not yet resulted in more capacity in ministries (a result of no longer having to address these back office processes in sectors) or increased strategic workforce planning, as is also noted in the reporting documents.

Finally, as Elston and MacCarthaigh (2016) emphasise: using ‘negative’ feedback from end-users is important, as it reflects “an opportunity to engage end-users in reform design and implementation”.



2.3 Public Procurement

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

A new Office of Government Procurement (OGP) helped centralise public procurement and relevant expertise. The resulting efficiencies and professionalisation of business processes were predicted to be in the range of €500M out of a total procurement spend of approximately €9.5BN, however, savings have been estimated closer to €160M in the first three years to the end of 2015 (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2017 – OGP case study) and €300m of enabled savings to end-2016. Full recruitment for all roles within the organisation was challenging due to the limited pool of procurement professionals in absolute numbers. Legislation to establish the new organisation and clearly set out its roles and responsibilities and those of the Chief Procurement Officer has yet to be enacted. Notwithstanding this, the organisation is, together with sector sourcing organisations in Education, Health, Defence and Local Government, delivering to its clients. Public sector clients are now in a position to draw from in excess of 100 frameworks which OGP has put in place.

GOING FURTHER

As with the SSCs, there is a need to measure impact and evaluate the benefits of the system to date. Ensuring feedback from client organisations informs processes in the next phase and working out some of the initial challenges such as concerns over processing times will be important. Assessments should also track the specific benefits to sectors as a result of centralising and professionalising government procurement in terms of improved performance and public service delivery. It is acknowledged that these benefits are particularly challenging to track and measure.

2.4 Property Asset Management

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

This aspect of the reform put in place a platform for the more efficient use of the State's property portfolio, encouraging property managers to look at their property assets from the State's perspective rather than from an individual organisation's point of view. A new on-line State Property register was developed, and protocols put in place to prioritise intra-state transfer of assets, with procedures that supported efficient exchange or sharing of property assets between non-commercial State bodies. While savings were also achieved using centralised procurement and

energy saving initiatives, better data is needed in order to demonstrate more effective use of state resources.

GOING FURTHER

While many objectives in Property Asset Management go beyond the reform timeframe, it will be important to sustain the momentum of the longer term commitments. This approach can also be extended to improve the efficiency and transparency of management of other state assets.

2.5 Public Expenditure Reforms

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

Positive advancements occurred under this reform action in terms of developing policy analysis and evaluation capacity within the Public Service, tracking and implementing performance budgeting (which included improving and expanding Irelandstat⁴, the citizen-focused Public Service performance information website, to all Departments) and progress toward introducing elements of Accrual Accounting.

GOING FURTHER

There is general understanding and steps have been taken to better link reforms with expenditure, and particularly to draw on performance data produced through the performance budgeting process. Additional measures could still be rolled out to better align objective and target setting, as well as performance information and data in the performance budgeting and spending reviews processes, with the Programme for Government and the PSRP⁵.

3. A FOCUS ON OPENNESS, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

This element of the reform agenda was largely successful in terms of passing a suite of legislation related to FOI, protected disclosures, and lobbying regulation, as well as administrative reform including the launch of Ireland's Second Open Government Partnership National Action Plan. Impetus to achieve the actions in this part of the reform agenda stemmed generally from contextual factors in light of the 2011 financial crisis and political will for reform.

4. The website had been updated to contain data for 51 Programmes across 14 Vote Groups. The performance budgeting initiative has recently benefited from the publication in 2017 of the first annual Public Service Performance Report on performance in 2016.

5. For further detailed OECD commentary on the development of performance budgeting and IrelandStat, see also OECD (2016) Review of budget oversight by parliament: Ireland, OECD Journal on Budgeting, Volume 2016/1



GOING FURTHER

While enacting legislation is positive, monitoring and evaluation of its implementation, including assessing, where possible, its impact on behaviour change, will be equally important. This particularly relates to the implementation of the lobbying act and the lobbying register, as in its early stages will benefit from evaluating the number of lobbyists registered, how meeting disclosures with Senior Officials are playing out in practice, and how this is translating into a greater culture of openness and accountability. Going further, the public service could consider how commitments to releasing more public data sets can further strengthen social accountability.

ownership, dialogue and engagement across the civil service, and has launched a number of actions that stand to bring about significant achievements when fully implemented. These include the undertaking of the civil service engagement survey, the creation of the Civil Service Management Board (CSMB), and the first Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards. One of the innovative factors of Civil Service Renewal was its collaborative approach, whereby the team for Renewal was composed of staff from across Government Departments who had specialist skills and who self-selected to be housed in DPER and work on the Renewal. Aligned with the Secretaries General acting as sponsors for specific actions, with the home Departments covering the costs, this helped ensure strong investment and greater ownership of reform.

4. LEADERSHIP, CAPABILITY AND DELIVERY

4.1 & 4.2 Leadership and Human Resource Management (HRM) Reforms

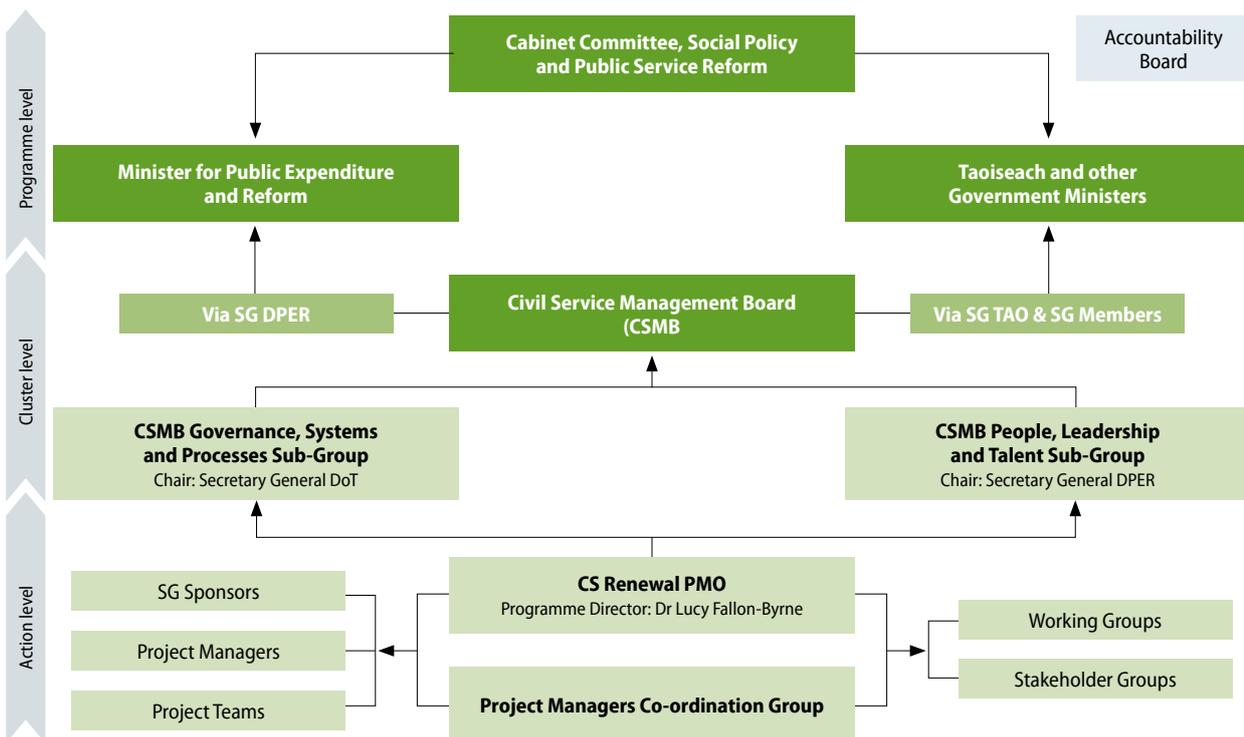
WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

The Civil Service Renewal (CSR) Plan that was envisioned as part of the Reform Plan has been seen as a success by senior leaders as well as by many civil servants. The Civil Service Renewal Plan, published in October 2014, enjoys strong

GOING FURTHER

The development of the CSR following the PSRP raised some challenges in terms of integrating and reporting on the civil and public service. Going forward into the next round of reform there will need to be an assessment of how to integrate actions with future civil and public service reform efforts. It will also be important to ensure that CSR activities become standard operating procedure, rather than being viewed as part of a renewable cycle of reforms.

Figure 2. **Governance structures of the Civil Service Renewal**





4.3 & 4.4 Organisational Performance and Delivery of Reform

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

In terms of reforming organisational performance, a key achievement has been the improved alignment of departmental strategy statements with government priorities and a mandated focus of departmental strategies on outcomes. The White Paper on Defence for example benefited from the drive for reform generated by the PSRP 2014-16, and the creation of an on-going climate supportive of strategic, long-term planning.

A number of achievements were made in relation to delivering the reform, not least of them being building project management skills and capacity at some sector levels to deliver reforms, for example by creating a civil service Project Management handbook, which complemented the existing guides prepared for the public service as a whole on Programme Management.

The Department of Education reported that the establishment of its Programme Management Office helped it to build a more strategic approach and enabled higher quality reporting on reform. Other notable achievements in delivering the reform include the Reform and Delivery Office's role in providing learning resources and experience sharing – through the RaIN network, conferences, and creating other learning opportunities for departments.

GOING FURTHER

The building of institutional capacity and oversight was accompanied by senior-level governance structures and leadership for the delivery of reform. The Cabinet Committee dedicated to steer the Public Service Reform was merged into the Social Policy Cabinet Committee, and the Civil Service Renewal Management Board gained more senior-level attention relative to the PSRP. This may reflect a perception that the PSRP is about delivering efficiency rather than policy outcomes. This will be further explored in section 3.





2. Assessment of the Design of the Second Irish Public Service Reform Plan (2014-16)

Box 2. Results from the OECD Questionnaire on the Design of the Second PSRP

Respondents' views in terms of the design of the PSRP 2014-16 include:

- A relatively clear vision and action plan – with specific actions to be taken and deadlines for completion – however respondents had the view that there were too many actions set out in the Plan. One respondent noted that to assist with “focusing energy and to maximise the chances of successful implementation” the next PSRP should have a smaller number of Goals and Actions.
- Greater use of specific, quantifiable targets, were recommended for future plans, as well as the recommendation to embed any future plans more at the level of individual organisations. While the Plan 2014-16 was broad, enabling each Department and agencies under their aegis to adopt various aspects of it and report on their existing activities aligned with PSRP goals, one respondent recommended that the next Plan could have departments provide a commitment reflecting how they will engage and progress the reform agenda locally.

Source: OECD Questionnaire on the Second Irish PSRP

CROSS-CUTTING VS. SECTOR REFORM ACTIONS

The cross-cutting actions sit at the core of the PSRP 2014-16. The **high-level sector** reform elements drew, for the most part, on existing sector plans. While there were attempts to integrate the sectors' reform efforts into the cross-cutting reforms via IRDP reporting, the PSRP could have better demonstrated the impact of public service reform by showing how the cross-cutting actions support sector reforms. Nonetheless there was general agreement that the PSRP gave impetus to sectors or acted as an umbrella under which to position their own sectoral reform initiatives. In some cases, such as the Department of Education, the PSRP drove a more strategic planning approach.

There is a valid question around how to steer reform in very heterogeneous public sector organisations. In designing whole-of-government reforms, OECD countries face similar challenges. There is a need to set cross-cutting reform priorities while ensuring the tools, capacity and incentives for sectors to implement them in ways that fit with their business priorities and contexts.

Trends in designing civil and public service reform programmes in OECD countries over the last five years have leaned towards:

- setting a **clear and participative vision for the reform initiative** (a collective exercise across the entire public service which oftentimes focuses on public service values or principles of what a good public service might look like)
- agreeing on a **select number of cross-cutting priority areas and objectives**; and
- ensuring a **clear, actionable and measurable set of outcome-focused goals and targets for the top priorities** that can be used to monitor implementation.

Cross-cutting priority areas for action are increasingly **data-driven**, with an emphasis on ensuring quantitative, but also qualitative, evidence to measure performance and results (see section below). A defining feature of recently designed public and civil service transformation plans in a number of OECD countries has been that of building accountability measures for senior civil servants so as to mobilise leadership and attention (See annex for examples of this in Canada, Finland, Estonia, and the United Kingdom).

Implications for Irish Public Service Reform

While the PSRP 2014-16 did provide a vision, actions in the reform plan could have been more clearly linked to that vision. Ireland could take inspiration from the participative and horizontal features of the Canadian



exercise highlighted in Blueprint and Destination 2020, including linking vision to actions. Ireland could also look to the Finnish, Estonian and UK examples in terms of their efforts to agree on a select number of cross-cutting priority objectives with actions that cascade from these.

PROCESS VS. OUTCOME-ORIENTED PUBLIC SERVICE REFORMS

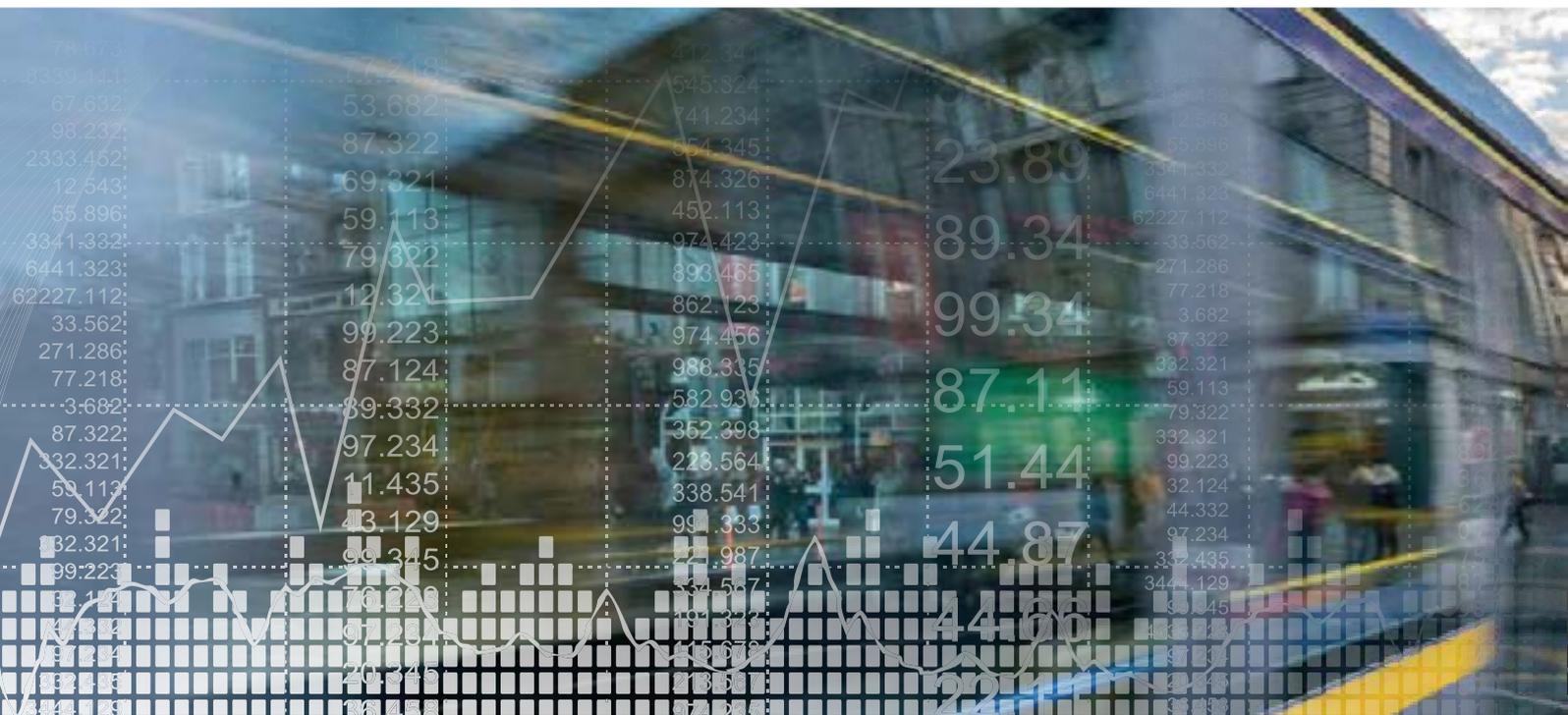
The very comprehensive and activity-based design of the Second Irish PSRP (with over 200 actions) was well-managed. It could have been strengthened, however, with **greater prioritisation and a stronger focus on outcomes.** Focusing on prioritisation can help link to objectives in the government programme, and sends a strong message to sectors about where to focus efforts. Prioritisation also supports evaluation and evidence building, to show early lessons that then can be generalised to other areas, while building a case for reform. Putting a stronger focus on outcomes in a reform agenda can open space for flexibility and innovation in achieving them, as opposed to building up an overly complex reporting system that may divert limited resources to measurement and compliance. Focusing on processes can limit innovation and achievement of the desired outcomes, and is thus less resilient and responsive to changing circumstances and needs.

The next PSRPs could take a more outcomes-oriented approach, also linking key objectives to priorities in the Programme for Government. As the next reform agenda broadens beyond achieving internal efficiencies and cost savings, a focus on delivering results for both citizens and business will have implications for the top policy priorities of the Irish State, such as how to manage cross-border services in the context of BREXIT. Service quality is not simply about setting arbitrary service standards, but involves putting in place mechanisms for feedback, dialogue and alignment of expectations to build trust and responsiveness between citizens and government.

This will require significant and distinct capacities in departments and adequate data to track service quality and progress towards outcomes.

DESIGNED TO BE DATA DRIVEN?

The PSRP would benefit from a more data-driven approach. With a shift towards an outcome-oriented PSRP comes the need to ensure the necessary data and indicators to measure progress towards achieving those outcomes. While this does not happen overnight, the next Plan could start by identifying existing data and those areas where data is most needed to build a better understanding on performance.





In areas where data is not readily available but necessary to track progress towards achieving outcomes, strategies to collect and use some data – even if it is not of highest quality – can help start a public conversation about whether it is the right data, what would be better, and to bring in other stakeholders to propose clean-ups and alternatives.

Positive work is underway in terms of improving data collection on the impact of reform. For example Civil Service general and business **customer satisfaction surveys** (run every 2 years) as well as some sectoral customer and business surveying are key enablers to measure outcomes of the next reform plan.

The IrelandStat pilot also provided a good source of performance data tracking commitments in the Programme for Government. IrelandStat has now been superseded by an annual Performance Report with the first publication launched in April 2017. However more timely, continuous or real-time data on service satisfaction and quality could be either identified or generated to support tracking of public service reform outcomes. During interviews with agency officials it was suggested that the wealth of data and knowledge from front line service delivery could be better shared and used to track key outcomes of the public service reform. These shortcomings are acknowledged and,

under Civil Service Renewal, work is underway to improve the national data infrastructure so that data can be better exploited to improve accuracy, service delivery and ultimately outcomes.

Evaluation capacity and building an evaluation-oriented public service culture has been advanced through the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES). IGEES – an integrated cross-Government service – aims to support better policy formulation and implementation in the civil service through economic analysis and evaluation. Analysis and evaluation is targeted at driving implementation of VfM principles in public service delivery; supporting evidence based policy making; supporting reform and strengthening of the Civil Service; and supporting progress on cross-cutting challenges (growth, social inclusion). More recently, IGEES and DPER are collaborating with departments for the 2017 spending review, which is a positive advancement to gain efficiency and effectiveness evidence in the aim to re-prioritise funding to areas where it will deliver the most value and impact.

DESIGN OF THE REFORM LINKED TO EXPENDITURE?

The connection between reform and expenditure in the PSRP 2014-16 could have been stronger and more explicit. While there was positive work to develop medium-term expenditure ceilings and the Comprehensive Reviews of Expenditure, a stronger focus on outcomes would require closer alignment between public service reform and the expenditure in the future, with performance information generated via spending reviews, performance budgeting procedures or other evaluations used to inform reform achievements in the sectors.

Going forward, outcomes in the reform programme should be aligned with the Programme for Government and budget, which provides the basis for performance dialogue with sectors and is part of the alignment of expectations and data. This is necessary from the perspective of policy coherence and alignment of policy levers to improve organisational performance, but also in terms of minimising administrative burden and making the most of existing analytical capacity in the system when it comes to developing indicators, collecting data and reporting on performance.





3. Assessing the Governance and Project Management of the Second Irish Public Service Reform Plan (2014-16)

Box 3. Results from the OECD Questionnaire on Governance and Project Management of the Second PSRP

Participants' views in terms of the Governance and Project Management of the PSRP 2014-16 include:

- Initial governance structures for the PSRP were adequate; however the next Plan could focus on building a stronger sense of ownership or drive from the top.
- The Programme Management Offices in the sectors ensured dedicated resources to drive the Plan, as well as being

accountable for its implementation. It allowed practitioners and leaders in individual organisations to come together in a focussed way to discuss implementation and refinements.

- The reporting and some communications suffered at times from being a "box-ticking" exercise and lacked substance, whereas others were vital to keeping the roll-out of the plan uppermost in so many minds.

Source: OECD Questionnaire on the Second Irish PSRP

SENIOR LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

There seems to be a general recognition that the governance of the PSRP could have benefited from a dedicated, but more specifically sustained senior leadership forum for decision making and accountability. The Cabinet Committee developed to act as an accountability and monitoring forum for the PSRP lost momentum vis-à-vis other priorities, and was merged into the Social Policy Cabinet Committee (figure 3).

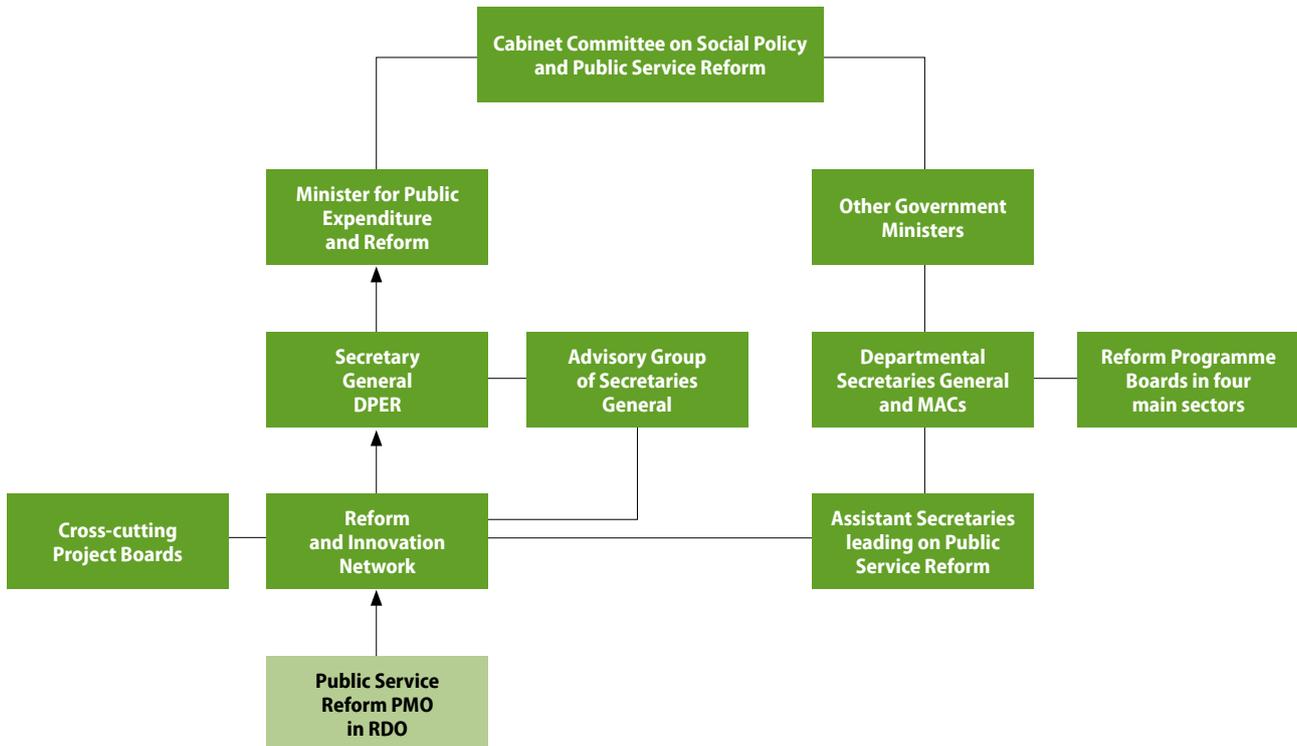
The RaIN network, provided opportunities for experience sharing and learning at the Assistant Secretary level, but did not become a decision-making body. While the two programmes are complementary and should be mutually reinforcing, momentum for the PSRP 2014-16 waned in light of the development and implementation of the Civil Service Renewal Plan, even if implementation of the CSR Plan had a positive impact on bringing out more examples of learning from sectoral reforms.

Many civil servants with whom the OECD spoke expressed interest in exploring options to transfer effective governance models for the civil service renewal programme to the public sector reform programme in its next iteration. While this seems a reasonable exercise, the two programmes also have significant differences that need to be reconciled. For example:

- **Size:** the number of organisations within the CSR is much less than those of the PSRP (see figure 1). This makes for a more inclusive governance structure where all heads of implicated organisations have a seat at the table. The PRSP includes hundreds of organisations.
- **Diversity of organisations:** CSR focuses on a much more homogenous set of organisations, which have similar governance structures, similar competencies and accountabilities, and share a relatively common culture. The PSRP includes a much broader and more diverse set of institutions with various mandates, operating regimes, contexts and constituencies, reporting and accountability structures, enabling legislation, collective agreements, etc.
- **Ministerial vs. Administrative oversight:** While the CSR officially reports to a ministerial body, the main power of its governance systems rests with the Civil Service Management Board, which provides a forum for the Secretaries General to meet as equals. Each is assigned priority actions which they are expected to drive on behalf of the whole civil service. The PSRP, on the other hand, appears to rely on the Ministerial Cabinet Committee for legitimacy and co-ordination, leading some informants to suggest that the integration of this Committee into the Social Policy Committee represented a significant loss of momentum and prioritisation.



Figure 3. **Governance of the Second Irish Public Service Reform Plan (2014-16)**



With these challenges in mind, it is clear that the positive experience of the CSR governance structure can provide an inspiration for the PSRP. Given the breadth of the PSRP, one option may be to set up representative oversight committees for different aspects of the programme which include a smaller selection of organisations most implicated by those particular aspects of the reform. These committees could report upwards to a revised version of the Civil Service Management Board which would include just those Secretaries General who are the most implicated (e.g. from each of the 5 main sectors, with the possibility of rotating as appropriate) to represent the civil service, plus one representative of the public service for each sector (e.g. the head of the largest agency for each sector), rotating where appropriate. Care would have to be taken to ensure that not too many committees and working groups are created with the potential for overlap and/or governance fatigue, and that the structure allows sufficient flexibility to take into account the varying missions, capacity, and organisational culture of the different sectors.

See ANNEX for OECD country examples.

THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT APPROACH OF THE PSRP 2014-16

Delivering complex cross-cutting public sector reform is a major challenge which requires programme and project management skills which are not always abundant in public services. The temptation to bring in external consulting support can be high, but tends to miss opportunities for capacity building in these areas.

DPER's approach to building project management capacity in some departments to deliver reform through the establishment of programme management offices was very well regarded by many and the support given in terms of building human capacity and expertise appears to be providing benefits to departments and whole sectors. Connecting these PMOs through networks, developing programme and project management guidelines (through Civil Service Renewal a project management handbook), and providing opportunities to learn and develop through the sharing of experience are all positive actions which stand to improve the public service's capacity to deliver.



Setting up PMOs is a good start to improve project management capacity and to contribute to the implementation of the PSRP. A next order goal is to find ways to integrate them into the work of the ministries and agencies to generalise ownership of PSRP. This would require finding ways to link the capacity of PMOs with high level accountability so that PMOs become centres of expertise and change agents to drive real culture change across the sector.

One way to support government agencies to build more project management capacity is to develop shared standards and tools. Canada's Treasury Board Secretariat, for example, has created a suite of policies, directives and standards for project management. These include tools designed to assess organisational project management capacity, project complexity and risk. The organisational assessment includes a range of questions with scores that classify organisations into one of 5 groups. This can help organisations position themselves on a scale and clarify the kind of help they may need, or areas they need to develop in order to successfully deliver. In Ireland, such a tool could help to establish the kind of PMO required, the level of support needed from DPER, and help to guide the PMO employees.

A different approach is the example of Finland's change makers' network, a loosely organised and self-directing team of experts from different ministries, with different backgrounds, education and expertise. This network not only consists of project management specialists, but of anybody with an interest in changing organisational culture and developing new ways of working. The fluid nature of the network is key to enabling change beyond the boundaries of a specifically mandated change unit (e.g. PMOs in Ireland). Something like this could complement Ireland's existing network of Project managers, so that the idea of change is embedded in a broader cross-section of public employees.

CHALLENGES IN DRIVING REFORM FROM THE CENTRE

Sector reporting on reforms feeding into the PSRP was designed with more flexibility than cross-cutting reforms. The sector reforms appeared to be primarily an aggregation of reforms already planned/occurring in each sector, many continuing from the 2011 Reform Plan. The value added may have been in surfacing the reform activity with a view to better integration, however, the reporting structures and





PMOs may have lacked capacity to integrate beyond simple tracking. Rather than driving sector reforms, the next phase of Public Service Reform could better clarify the enabling function(s) that could support the delivery of sector outcomes and objectives, and use this to inform the design of the next PSRP.

The tracking of the implementation of the PSRP through the integrated reform plans may have also helped to provide a snapshot of multiple reform initiatives with a view to promoting more co-ordination, however, the process appeared somewhat mechanistic and compliance-based as opposed to monitoring progress towards outcomes. It was not clear how DPER is using the information in the IRDPs beyond tracking progress. The sharepoint reporting, which tracked each of the 230 actions against their timeline, according to green, yellow and red classifications, adds another layer of tracking against timeline, which provides a useful snapshot of forward movement in the process. However, without the link to outcomes, it is difficult to link the completion of activities with the quality of those activities and their contribution to the final transformation. Put another way, with so many activities tracked it is

not immediately apparent which of the 230 should be prioritised for closer attention and which are key to delivering impact for citizens and stakeholders.

Taking a risk-based approach to tracking could help to prioritise items and provide more robust criteria beyond timeliness to assess its status and the need for it to be escalated for higher level management attention. For example, the tools can be developed and used that assess each of the projects' level of complexity and risk. When used together with organisational capacity assessments described above, these assessments can help central authorities to focus attention on higher risk projects in lower capacity organisations. Guidelines can then be developed to ensure that capacity and project complexity are well matched. Canada provides an example of such a tool.





4. Future considerations for the next Public Service Reform

GOVERNANCE OF THE NEXT REFORM

Governance of reform involves identifying the appropriate role of each reform actor so that they are working together in a transparent and effective way to carry out a shared vision. The breadth of the Irish Public Service and of its mandate requires an approach to reform that is flexible, yet identifies and builds common elements across the system. In this respect, the PMO in DPER has a privileged vantage point in gaining insights into the reform process, and so its greatest contribution is to draw on those insights, in order to convene, align, advise, build capacity, partner (with academia, private sector), negotiate, set standards, monitor and control quality. This is particularly important vis-à-vis the sectors that have the primary responsibility for implementation, but that also need sufficient capacity to design their reforms and to adjust and report on progress.

Furthermore, DPER's responsibility for both expenditure and management give it the tools and levers to strengthen the focus on outcomes (see next section), and its relationship with the Taoiseach's Office puts it in a privileged position to help demonstrate the links between reform and not just better performance, but the achievement of high-level outcomes in the Government Programme. If this case is not made, then the reform agenda loses its political salience and the prioritisation in the hearts and minds of public servants. This requires the ability to identify top level priorities within a broader reform agenda, and a stronger focus on communication – to politicians, to public servants, to citizens – in order to instil a sense of purpose and urgency to the reform agenda.

Finally, building citizen trust means engaging citizens not just at the end-stage of reform, but throughout the process. The co-production of reform means giving citizens a role in prioritising outcomes and in making decisions about how to achieve them. In some cases, this entails bringing in new actors in the delivery process. All of this implies building in even greater space for consultation with citizens and businesses, and engagement with civil servants to support further buy-in, responsiveness and agility, and to help demonstrate the link between change and improved outcomes.

- What role could the PMO in DPER play given its capacity and position overseeing reform from a whole-of-government perspective?
- How can other reform enablers help align the reform agenda and sector outcomes, e.g. aligning institutional capacity, expenditure vote, government programme, political leadership and accountability, and systemic change?
- How to take into account sector specificities and the role of the sector actors, e.g. setting outcome objectives, collecting data, building capacity, implementation, communicating results, providing feedback?
- What is the role of the broader society – including individual civil and public servants – in setting the priorities and monitoring progress of the plan?

BUILDING UP EVIDENCE TO INFORM THE NEXT PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM

A focus on more cross-cutting and innovative ways of working is contingent on moving towards a greater focus on outcomes. It is important to recognise, however, that a stronger focus on outcomes is not a silver bullet and that it takes time to achieve. Taking a performance approach is rather a step towards building a shared public service culture that provides a foundation for developing more citizen-centric approaches, dialoguing with social partners, improving management and employee engagement in work, and collaborating across organisational boundaries.

Once there is an agreement to focus on outcomes, then reform approaches need to be better aligned to move away from process compliance to greater openness, contestability, and data re-use to achieve shared objectives. An important development in many OECD countries is the commitment to make the results public so that they do not remain technical exercises that are not used. This is not just about evidence, but also about increasing social accountability and supporting public policy discussions.



Monitoring outcomes, however, is no easy task, and even the most advanced countries are not necessarily able to demonstrate causality of government action on desired outcomes. Instead shared outcome objectives help to set direction and ambition. Still data is needed to inform discussions, and the lack of data on results has been a consistent theme across the OECD assessment. Developing a performance focus will mean building capacity, consulting broadly and aligning expectations, getting creative in terms of using administrative data, and a steady commitment to building data over time to contribute to tracking and measuring reform priorities.

Recent experience from OECD countries such as the US and France is to avoid an overly complex system that tries to measure all public activities and outcomes. Instead, focus is on data that is useful for decision making, that will influence behaviour of top level decision-makers, and that can be used to adjust policies before they fail. Creating room for more experimentation allows government to build up its evidence base when there is no overall data on outcomes. See the experiences of U.S., Canada and Finland.

- *Focusing on outcomes can help to overcome vested interests that resist reform. What opportunities are there to hold conversations on desired outcomes to build greater consensus on how to move forward?*

- *Building evaluation and experimentation into processes and ways of working is an important first step, but how to build the use of the results into decision making?*
- *Are external actors in the Irish system (media, civil society etc.) ready and willing to engage in a transparent dialogue that focuses on outcomes and social accountability, but that also allows the public service to take risks, experiment, make mistakes and correct course?*

OBJECTIVE OF THE NEXT PLAN

Governments are increasingly faced with the pressure to deliver better outcomes at the same times as managing increasing complexity of social, economic and environmental issues. Many of the traditional practices and processes of government are ill-suited to an environment that is increasingly faster-paced, inter-connected, and digital, and where citizen expectations about the role and responsiveness of government have changed. There is an ongoing need for innovation to respond to citizen requirements, government pressures and in how public sector organisations operate.

This need has been met by an increase in the practice and theory of public sector innovation. Various governments have both innovated – introducing new (or dramatically





changing old) policies, programs and services – and worked to support further innovation – introducing innovation strategies, establishing innovation labs and units, supporting innovation networks, and reforming structures, processes and practices. There is an increasing understanding of the range of possible interventions and what can assist to support fostering public sector innovation.

Yet innovation systems are dynamic. They are systems that evolve over time, building upon what has gone before as well as being shaped by the interactions of numerous sub-parts. While there are a number of frameworks for understanding aspects of the innovation system (e.g. around capabilities and skills, about the innovation lifecycle/process, or around functions and governance), each innovation system is different. Factors such as traditions, precedents, conventions, political dynamics, and many others means that the critical limiting and enabling conditions for each system will vary, even if there are commonalities, thereby introducing increased uncertainty as to which interventions may be best for that specific context.

This variability means that while individual initiatives and actions can be beneficial, they may struggle to make a lasting impact if they are not grounded within a larger systemic view, informed by an understanding of the lived experience and where the gaps and opportunities might lie. OECD research points to the role that central governments play in identifying opportunities as well as barriers for innovation, helping to set the right conditions for innovation to take place within the system (see *Fostering Innovation in the Public Sector*, OECD 2017).

Given the calls for increased innovation, there is an opportunity for Ireland to consider how to best support its Public Service in its ability to identify, test, apply, embed and learn from innovative approaches that meet the needs and ambitions of Irish citizens and the Irish government. Ireland might consider to engage in a new type of country review - currently been piloted in Canada – which looks at helping governments in an assessment of the current state of their public sector innovation system and what it delivers; develop a framework for understanding the public sector innovation system in-depth, including the position and the role of the different components, the system's strengths and weaknesses, and the system's ability to

deliver change that makes a difference; propose a set of priority areas for action for governments to reinforce its capacity to innovate and thereby deliver better outcomes for citizens and the government.

- *Is Ireland ready to move beyond a series of public service reforms to a state of continuous change and transformation to meet the challenges of a globalised and interdependent world?*
- *Would a public service innovation focus resonate with the needs and aspirations of the Public Service?*

IDENTIFYING SKILLS GAPS AND BUILDING CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE NEXT REFORM

Meeting the objectives of the next Public Service Reform Plan will require a careful look at the skills and capabilities required to deliver change in Ireland's civil and public service. Just as public sector processes must be updated in the face of fast-changing and multi-dimensional governance challenges, people management approaches also need to be rethought.

In order to achieve impacts, many of the changes described above call for specialist skills and expertise that can, at time, be difficult to identify in a civil service system which emphasises generalist profiles, such as Ireland's. This challenge, of developing more specialist skills related to, for example, digitalisation, project/change management, data science and reform leadership, was often referenced as a key barrier to achieving effective and sustainable reform. Developing a public sector workforce with these skills is a common challenge in OECD countries since, in most cases, these are also profiles sought after by the private sector which can usually offer candidates higher salaries.

To address some of these challenges, OECD public employers are taking steps to better understand the non-financial motivators they can offer to attract candidates with these skill-sets and the features of jobs and career paths that help to retain them. This may include emphasis on interesting jobs that contribute to the public good, career paths that provide opportunities to work on a range of projects and develop a broad range of experience and skills, and flexible working opportunities to balance work and family obligations. These are all elements which need to align in genuine ways, and be communicated through effective employer branding, in order to have an impact.



Developing an innovation-oriented civil service cannot only happen amongst specialists. The OECD has engaged with a wide range of public sector innovators to identify six skills areas that should be emphasised across all public sector institutions. The first three - Iteration, Data Literacy, and User Centricity - suggest a need to develop a workforce with a wide range of specialist backgrounds while ensuring that all civil servants have, at least, some level of awareness of understanding of each. The second three – Curiosity, Storytelling and Insurgency – relate to mind-sets and working methods, where all public employees are supported to ask questions, search for unexpected solutions, communicate with a range of audiences, and be drivers of change in their organisation. This not only requires skills, but supportive workplace culture and leadership.

Developing a cadre of senior public servants with a common understanding and vision of change is a high priority reform in most OECD countries. The goal is to develop and reinforce leadership skills and competencies needed to develop organisational cultures that value and reward innovation, (safe) risk taking, evaluation and learning. In Ireland, the focus on leadership in the context of Civil Service Renewal has, by many accounts, helped to strengthen a common leadership culture in the Civil Service and provides opportunities to align leadership activities

with reform efforts. A challenge of the next plan may be to embed some of these leadership development strategies in the civil service and expand these to the broader public service in a way that emphasises common leadership skills and vision, while not losing sight of the separate skills and experience needed to lead complex operational and sector specific organisations.

- *What are the current skills and/or capacity gaps that are limiting the successful implementation of reform? What are the priority sectors and levels for addressing these gaps?*
- *Beyond technical and professional skills, how can the Irish public service foster risk taking, evaluation and learning (through experimentation, evaluation, etc.) to support innovation and build learning organisations⁶?*
- *While the PSRP has developed additional capacity (PMOs, economic analysis for example), how can it ensure that it leverages organisational change throughout ministries and agencies so that there is broad ownership of the reform process and results?*

6. https://www.oecd.org/media/oecdorg/satellitesites/opsi/contents/files/OECD_OPSI_LearningForInnovationStudy_Alpha.pdf





Annex: Country examples

DESIGN OF OECD COUNTRIES' REFORM PLANS

Cross-cutting vs. Sector reform actions

In **Canada**, the federal government has developed the **Blueprint 2020 vision**⁷ for a world-class public service, which embodies innovation in many of its transformation and modernisation elements, and which was built from the ground up by civil servants. Public employees were **engaged in a discussion around the vision** and in the development of an action plan (Destination 2020). This engagement process was largely bottom-up, with public servants offering opinions, ideas, and innovative solutions. At the same time, implementation of the horizontal initiative is led by the Clerk of the Privy Council, who provides overall horizontal leadership to a board of management and public service renewal, which ensures follow-through of the strategy down to departmental level.

The **Finnish** government, following an OECD public governance review and recent elections, sought to create a limited number of cross-cutting policy packages to implement key political objectives. Each policy package has a ministerial group that steers its implementation (a minister with main responsibility and other ministers) and a shadow group of senior civil servants (at the Permanent Secretary level) which lead and co-ordinate work on the civil service level, including ensuring that fiscal frameworks and the strategy are aligned and monitoring performance information.

In **Estonia**, implementation of the new government programme was designed under 5 priority goals in the coalition programme following from 5 challenges. They identified a select number of indicators and outcomes, agreed upon jointly with line ministries and the Centre, coupled with a multi-annual budget framework for these goals.

The **United Kingdom** has taken somewhat of a similar approach to designing reforms through their **Government Transformation Strategy**⁸ and **Civil Service Work Force Plan 2016-2020**. Defining features in the design of both Plans include **citizen-centric visions, five actionable**

priority objectives, and actions set out for each objective to be achieved by 2020.

Process vs. Outcome-oriented Public Service Reforms

In the **UK Government Transformation Strategy**, for example, one of the three broad themes of transforming citizen-facing digital services has an outcome associated with improved digital citizen experience (see Table 1). In the Irish PSRP 2014-16, while each sub-focus under the four broad priority themes laid out a key objective and planned benefits, it is less clear if there were indicators measuring whether these were achieved and how the activities planned under each contributed to them. The expected outcomes of the four priority themes could have been clearer: for example “a focus on service users” could have outlined improved outcomes for users and what success would look like.

The **Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in the United States Federal Government** has been building **an outcomes-focused framework** through the design and implementation of their performance management system. Based on Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) and Agency goal setting, the framework is and data-driven, uses performance reviews, and engages senior level leaders at the centre and delivery agencies to own performance of goals set. The approach focuses on:

- Engaging leaders
- Focusing on clear goals and data-driven performance reviews that incorporate a broad range of qualitative and quantitative inputs
- Expanding impact through strategic planning and reviews
- Strengthening agency capabilities, collaboration and knowledge
- Communicating performance results effectively

Performance on key cross-cutting and agency goals is reported publically on a quarterly basis via Performance.gov. The benefit of such an approach and using these kinds of performance goals is to help align efforts, motivate reform, and improve accountability.

7. <http://www.greffier.gc.ca/eng/feature.asp?pagelid=349>

8. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/590199/Government_Transformation_Strategy.pdf

Table 1. **Expected outcomes of the UK Government Transformation Strategy**

Component of the strategy	Outcome	Explanation
Transforming citizen-facing digital services	Departments improve the digital citizen experience	We will continue to deliver a steady stream of high-quality digital services, which must be both available to citizens and used wherever possible.
Transforming the way departments deliver their services inside, enabled by digital	Departments deliver policy objectives in a flexible way, with improved citizen service across channels and improved efficiency	We must safely achieve the commitments departments have made to deliver major business change programmes to the way they operate internally. These are complex and take much longer than delivering just online services.
Transforming the way government delivers change	All of government is able to deliver transformation more effectively	To enable both of the above, we must transform the way government governs itself. Critically, this will rely on even greater collaboration between professions and departments. We will identify and address challenges which are common to transformations in all departments, with the aim of making it easier to successfully deliver transformation and change across government.





Designed to be Data Driven?

The **UK government** has built up real-time data tracking public service cost per transaction, user satisfaction, completion rate and digital take up. Outcomes are publically reported via gov.uk/performance.

The **New Zealand Better Public Services Results Programme** defined 10 specific results to be achieved over 4 year period,

each with targets and indicators which required departments to work together. Progress was reported to cabinet and the public every 6 months through dashboards. Figure 5 is an example for one result. It shows progress towards the result, followed by important actions taken to achieve the result, and plain language accounts of the impacts such changes have had for citizens. In 2017, the State Services Commission released 10 new goals available here: <http://www.ssc.govt.nz/better-public-services-next-steps>

Figure 4. **UK Performance data on government services**

Measuring how services are performing



Cost per transaction

The average cost to government of each transaction.



User satisfaction

Satisfaction is calculated by asking people to rate a service.



Completion rate

The percentage of people who successfully complete a government service.



Digital take-up

The percentage of people using government services online compared to other methods (eg phone or post).

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/performance> - performance data of government services



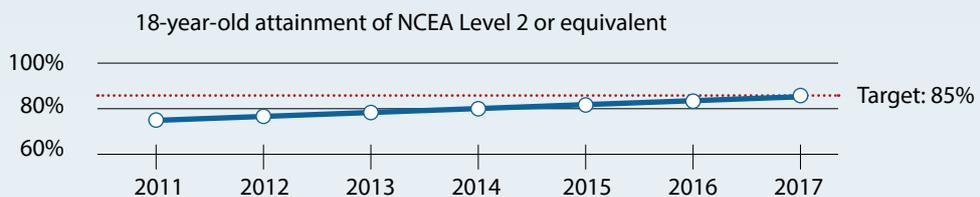
Figure 5. **Result dashboard for inter-agency performance target in New Zealand**

Increase proportion of 18-year-olds with NCEA L2

85% of 18 year olds will have achieved NCES level 2 or an equivalent qualification in 2017



Progress towards target



What the data tells us

The final end of year data for 2015 shows that 83.3% achieved NCEA Level 2 or equivalent in 2015. This is lower than indicative estimates from earlier in the year (84.4%) but represents an increase of 9 percentage points since 2011. We are on track to achieve the 85% target for all learners by 2017.

While achieving the national target is the primary objective, equitable achievement for Māori and Pasifika young people remains a clear goal.

Percentage of 18 Year olds with NCEA L2 2011-2015

	% 2011	% 2015	% point change
All	74.3	83.3	9.0
Māori	57.1	71.1	14.0
Pasifika	65.5	77.6	12.1

Progress and contributors towards achieving the BPS 5 target

To accelerate achievement of the equity targets of 85% of Māori and 85% of Pasifika achieving NCEA Level 2 at age 18 in 2017, the Ministry of Education has a range of initiatives in place:

- Count Me In, which finds and supports Maori and Pasifika 16-18 year olds, that are outside of the education system, to re-engage in learning (primarily through fees-free tertiary pathways);
- Youth Guarantee, which includes working with secondary schools and tertiary fees-free providers to support them to track, monitor and support 16-19 year olds to be successful in their studies;

- Ministry of Education staff working with 440 secondary schools, using a student focused methodology to support young people that have been identified as being at risk of not achieving NCEA L2.
- Over 45 secondary-tertiary-industry partnerships across 61 projects is supporting the development and implementation of sustainable pathways from secondary to tertiary education and employment.
- The FindMyPath mapping tool from Levels 3 to 7, aligned by pathways, to support learner choice and decision making was launched on 30 June 2016.

What has happened for NZers

Improved learning outcomes and opportunities to progress

- Improved learning outcomes for students providing greater choice and opportunities to progress to further education, training and employment.

Contextualised learning environment and choice

- Schools and providers are working in partnership to provide curriculum choice and delivery that is relevant to students and responsive to the labour market.

Active engagement

- Parents, whānau, family, iwi and local communities are actively involved in student engagement with education and their success.

Accelerated success moving toward equitable outcomes

- Accelerated NCEA L2 success for Māori and Pasifika.

Source: <http://www.ssc.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Case-Study-Interagency-Performance-Targets-IBMCCAG-2017.pdf>



GOVERNANCE AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT OF REFORM IN OECD COUNTRIES

Senior leadership and accountability

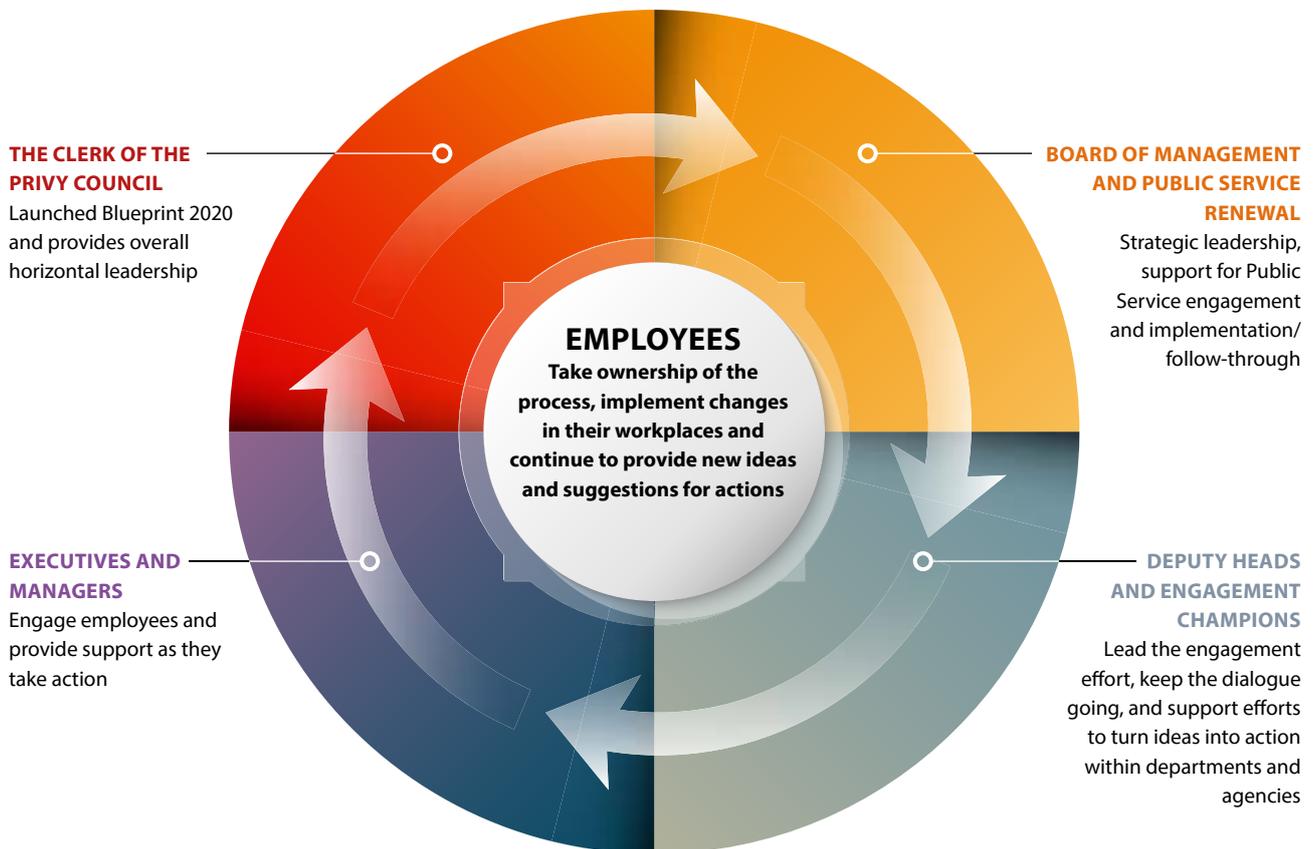
The **Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in the United States Federal Government** has also continually made leadership a central focus of its **Cross Agency Priority goals (i.e. CAP goals)**. CAP Goals are a tool used by leadership to accelerate progress on a limited number of Presidential priority areas where implementation requires active collaboration between multiple agencies. In an effort to ensure effective leadership and accountability across the Federal Government, the goals **have a named senior leader both** at the Centre (within the Executive Office of the President) and within the key delivery agencies, that are tasked to work together, engage officials from contributing

agencies and build CAP goal teams to work to monitor the achievement of results. The White House Leadership Development Program (WHLDP) contributes to building leadership capacity to successfully implement CAP goals by allocating senior leaders to lead one-year terms, responsible for implementing a particular CAP goal.

In **Finland**, the government is working towards building collective commitment among senior leaders on cross-cutting priorities. Each cross-cutting policy package has a ministerial group that steers its implementation (a minister with main responsibility and other ministers) and a shadow group of senior civil servants (at the Permanent Secretary level) which lead and co-ordinate work on the civil service level.

The governance model of the **Canadian Blueprint 2020** Public Service Reform, outlined below, could also be of interest to Ireland.

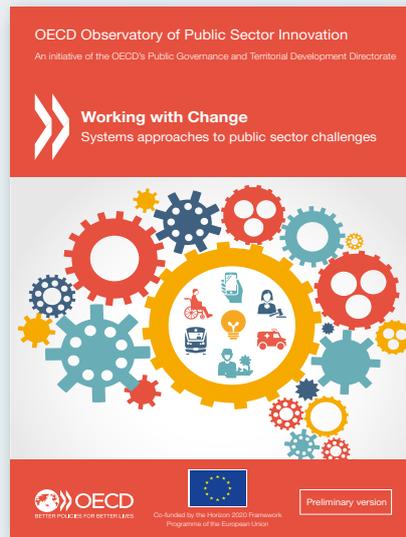
Figure 6. **Governance of Canada's Blueprint 2020 Public Service Reform**



Other publications



Fostering Innovation in the Public Sector



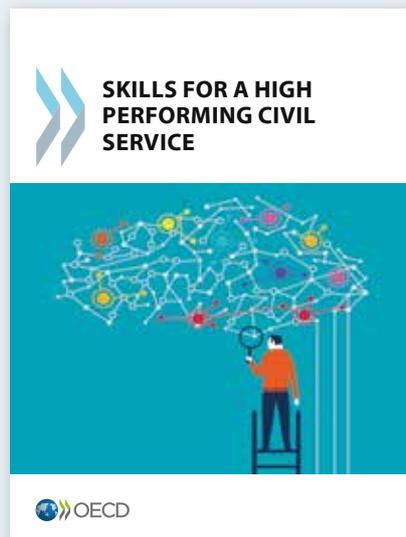
Working with Change: Systems approaches to public sector challenges (forthcoming)



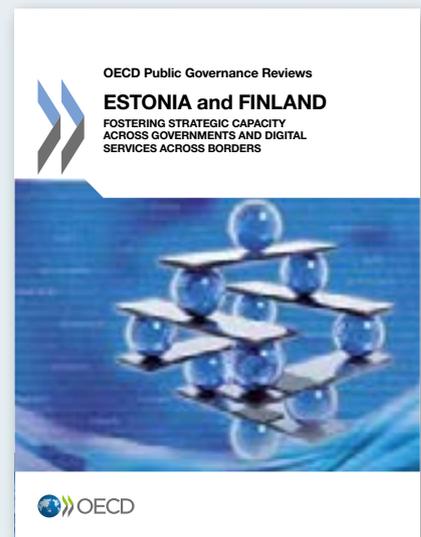
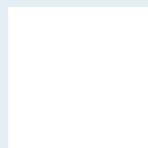
Innovation Skills in the Public Sector: Building capabilities in Chile



OECD Review of Budget Oversight by Parliament: Ireland



Skills for a High Performing Civil Service (forthcoming)



Public Governance Reviews: Finland and Estonia





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