

### Citizen participation in policy making

Effective participation of citizens in policy making is at the heart of open government reforms and has the potential to renew the relationship between policy makers and citizens. In times of declining rates of voter turnout, and low levels of trust in public institutions and membership in political parties, governments acknowledge the need to move from the role of simple provider of services towards the development of closer partnerships with all relevant stakeholders.

An overarching document on citizen participation in policy making, such as manuals, guidelines or strategies, provides an important step towards a more integrated approach to citizen participation. Public servants and citizens might embark on participation processes with different conceptual understandings, which could be clarified and mainstreamed by a comprehensive strategy document. To ensure their coherence, citizen participation strategies should be integrated in national open government efforts. However, fewer than half (16 countries) of all OECD countries (46%) have developed such documents.

Translating policies into tangible improvements for citizens highly depends on the degree and timing of participation in the different steps of the policy cycle. The majority (22 ministries) of the 30 surveyed ministries of Finance give citizens the possibility to provide feedbacks on how public services work (73%). In the ministries of health of Israel, Japan and Luxembourg, the involvement of citizens is most prevalent with 18 of the 24 ministries (75%) during the drafting phase of policies. Nevertheless, in both ministries citizen participation in the evaluation of the impact of policies remains below 50%.

Comparing the different degrees of involvement of citizens throughout policy making, the Survey reveals that service providers ministries, such as the ministries of health, consult more actively with citizens. This is especially true in the initial step of identifying policy priorities, as well as in the implementation phase. The only stage in which the degree of citizen participation in initiatives from the finance ministries exceeds the results from health ministries is the phase of providing feedback. In addition to consulting with citizens, the Swedish Ministry of Health uses feedback from non-governmental organisations and other advocacy groups for patients, elderly or representatives from different regions. In 28 of the 30 ministries of finance (93%) and in all ministries of health citizens are involved in stages of the policy cycle. However, countries do not yet use the full potential to include the feedback of citizens when evaluating whether citizen participation in policy making initiatives

created better policies which have a positive impact on the lives of citizens.

#### Methodology and definitions

In 2015, the OECD conducted the Survey on Open Government Co-ordination and Citizen Participation in the Policy Cycle, which was answered by 54 countries. All OECD countries answered to the Survey, together with thirteen countries from Latin America and the Caribbean (including the two OECD countries Chile and Mexico), Indonesia, Lithuania, Morocco, Philippines, Romania and Tunisia. Senior government officials in charge of the national open government agenda responded to the Survey. The OECD Survey was split into two parts: the first part focused on the existing approach to open government at the national level and was answered by the main institution responsible for open government. The second part of the Survey was answered by the countries' ministries of health, ministries of finance and focused on detecting the current approaches to Citizen Participation throughout the policy cycle. In total, 32 ministries of finance and 25 ministries of health from OECD countries submitted their responses to the Survey. Not all ministries provided answers to all of the questions, which explains the gaps in 10.10 underneath.

#### Further reading

- OECD (2016), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en>
- OECD (2009), *Measuring Government Activity*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264060784-en>
- Involve (2009), *Open Government: beyond static measures*, <http://www.oecd.org/gov/46560184.pdf>

#### Figure notes

- 10.9: This question was answered by the main institution responsible for open government coordination.
- 10.10: MF: Ministry of Finance; MH: Ministry of Health; N.A.: The Ministry did either not respond to the survey or to this question. The ministries of the United States, Korea, Latvia either did not respond to the survey or to this particular question
- Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

10.9. Existence of an overarching document focusing on citizen engagement, 2015



Source: OECD (2015), "Survey on Open Government Co-ordination and Citizen Participation in the Policy Cycle", OECD, Paris.

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10.10. Involvement of citizens in the policy cycle in the Central/federal Ministries of Finance and Health, 2015

| Country           | Identification of policy priorities |           | In drafting policies |           | In the implementation of policies |           | In providing feedback on how public services work |           | In evaluating the impact of policies |           | Citizens are not involved in the policy cycle |          |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------|---|-----------|--------------------------------------|-----------|---|----------|
|                   | MF                                  | MH        | MF                   | MH        | MF                                | MH        | MF  | MH        | MF                                   | MH        | MF  | MH       |
| Australia         | ○                                   | ○         | ○                    | ○         | ○                                 | ●         | ●   | ●         | ○                                    | ●         | ○   | ○        |
| Austria           | ○                                   | ●         | ○                    | ●         | ●                                 | ●         | ●   | ●         | ○                                    | ○         | ○   | ○        |
| Belgium           | ○                                   | ●         | ○                    | ●         | ○                                 | ○         | ○   | ●         | ●                                    | ●         | ○   | ○        |
| Canada            | ○                                   | ○         | ●                    | ○         | ○                                 | ●         | ○   | ●         | ○                                    | ●         | ○   | ○        |
| Chile             | ○                                   | N.A.      | ○                    | N.A.      | ○                                 | N.A.      | ●   | N.A.      | ○                                    | N.A.      | ○   | N.A.     |
| Czech Republic    | ●                                   | ●         | ●                    | ●         | ●                                 | ○         | ●   | ○         | ●                                    | ●         | ○   | ○        |
| Denmark           | ○                                   | N.A.      | ●                    | N.A.      | ●                                 | N.A.      | ●   | N.A.      | ○                                    | N.A.      | ○   | N.A.     |
| Estonia           | ○                                   | ●         | ●                    | ●         | ○                                 | ●         | ●   | ●         | ○                                    | ●         | ○   | ○        |
| Finland           | ●                                   | ●         | ●                    | ●         | ●                                 | ●         | ●   | ●         | ○                                    | ●         | ○   | ○        |
| France            | ○                                   | ●         | ●                    | ●         | ●                                 | ●         | ●   | ○         | ○                                    | ●         | ○   | ○        |
| Germany           | ○                                   | ●         | ○                    | ●         | ○                                 | ●         | ○   | ○         | ○                                    | ○         | ○   | ○        |
| Greece            | ○                                   | ○         | ●                    | ●         | ○                                 | ○         | ●   | ●         | ○                                    | ○         | ○   | ○        |
| Hungary           | ●                                   | ○         | ○                    | ●         | ○                                 | ○         | ●   | ●         | ○                                    | ●         | ○   | ○        |
| Iceland           | ○                                   | ○         | ○                    | ●         | ○                                 | ●         | ●   | ●         | ○                                    | ○         | ○   | ○        |
| Ireland           | ○                                   | N.A.      | ●                    | N.A.      | ○                                 | N.A.      | ○   | N.A.      | ●                                    | N.A.      | ○   | N.A.     |
| Israel            | ○                                   | ○         | ●                    | ●         | ○                                 | ○         | ○   | ●         | ○                                    | ●         | ○   | ○        |
| Italy             | ○                                   | N.A.      | ○                    | N.A.      | ○                                 | N.A.      | ○   | N.A.      | ○                                    | N.A.      | ●   | N.A.     |
| Japan             | ○                                   | ○         | ○                    | ●         | ○                                 | ○         | ○   | ○         | ○                                    | ○         | ●   | ○        |
| Luxembourg        | ●                                   | ●         | ○                    | ●         | ○                                 | ●         | ●   | ●         | ●                                    | ○         | ○   | ○        |
| Mexico            | ●                                   | ○         | ○                    | ○         | ●                                 | ○         | ●   | ●         | ●                                    | ○         | ○   | ○        |
| Netherlands       | ○                                   | N.A.      | ●                    | N.A.      | ○                                 | N.A.      | ●   | N.A.      | ●                                    | N.A.      | ○   | N.A.     |
| New Zealand       | ●                                   | ●         | ●                    | ○         | ●                                 | ○         | ●   | ○         | ●                                    | ○         | ○   | ○        |
| Norway            | ○                                   | N.A.      | ●                    | N.A.      | ○                                 | N.A.      | ●   | N.A.      | ●                                    | N.A.      | ○   | N.A.     |
| Poland            | N.A.                                | ●         | N.A.                 | ●         | N.A.                              | ●         | N.A.  | ●         | N.A.                                 | ●         | N.A.  | ○        |
| Portugal          | ●                                   | ●         | ●                    | ●         | ○                                 | ●         | ●   | ●         | ○                                    | ○         | ○   | ○        |
| Slovak Republic   | N.A.                                | ○         | N.A.                 | ●         | N.A.                              | ●         | N.A.  | ●         | N.A.                                 | ○         | N.A.  | ○        |
| Slovenia          | ●                                   | N.A.      | ●                    | N.A.      | ○                                 | N.A.      | ●   | N.A.      | ○                                    | N.A.      | ○   | N.A.     |
| Spain             | ●                                   | ○         | ●                    | ●         | ●                                 | ○         | ●   | ○         | ●                                    | ○         | ○   | ○        |
| Sweden            | ○                                   | ●         | ●                    | ○         | ●                                 | ○         | ○   | ●         | ○                                    | ○         | ○   | ○        |
| Switzerland       | ○                                   | ●         | ●                    | ○         | ●                                 | ○         | ●   | ○         | ●                                    | ○         | ○   | ○        |
| Turkey            | ○                                   | N.A.      | ●                    | N.A.      | ●                                 | N.A.      | ●   | N.A.      | ●                                    | N.A.      | ○   | N.A.     |
| United Kingdom    | ●                                   | ●         | ○                    | ●         | ●                                 | ●         | ●   | ●         | ●                                    | ●         | ○   | ○        |
| <b>OECD Total</b> | <b>10</b>                           | <b>14</b> | <b>18</b>            | <b>18</b> | <b>12</b>                         | <b>13</b> | <b>22</b>   | <b>17</b> | <b>12</b>                            | <b>11</b> | <b>2</b>                                      | <b>0</b> |
| Yes               | ●                                   |           |                      |           |                                   |           |   |           |                                      |           |   |          |
| No                | ○                                   |           |                      |           |                                   |           |   |           |                                      |           |   |          |

Source: OECD (2015), "Survey on Open Government Co-ordination and Citizen Participation in the Policy Cycle", OECD, Paris.

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