IX. INTEGRITY

Fostering integrity and preventing corruption in the public sector support a level playing field for businesses. They are essential to maintaining trust in government and markets and to ensuring a sustainable recovery after the financial crisis. "Integrity" refers to the application of values, principles and norms in the daily operations of public sector organisations. As such, officials must use information, resources and authority for intended purposes in order to promote the public interest.

Achieving a culture of integrity requires coherent efforts to update standards, provide guidance, and monitor and enforce them in daily practice. It also requires countries to anticipate risks and apply tailored countermeasures. These include specific guidelines or restrictions, increased transparency or tightened control, and enforceable sanctions. The OECD helps countries build an integrity framework by mapping out good practices and developing principles, guidelines and tools. The framework brings together the instruments, processes and structures for fostering integrity and addresses areas vulnerable to corruption, particularly those at the interface of the public and private sectors (e.g. procurement, revolving doors and lobbying).

This chapter examines measures for promoting integrity and preventing corruption in central government, including the scope and transparency of conflict-of-interest disclosures and whistle-blowing protection. It also reviews the top government activities at risk for corruption, with a focus on public procurement.

25. Conflict-of-interest disclosure by decision makers

Citizens' trust in government is weakened when public officials allow personal bias to pervade their decision making. At a time when the interface between public and private sectors has significantly increased, measures for preventing and managing conflict of interest are crucial to ensure that the integrity of decision making is not compromised by public officials' private interests.

To maintain public confidence in the integrity of official decision making, the vast majority of OECD member countries have implemented conflict-of-interest policies that require decision makers (in particular the president, prime minister and ministers, as well as members of the Legislature) to disclose their financial interests. Disclosure is a critical first step to determine whether private interests could improperly influence the performance of official duties. Disclosure may also support the detection of illicit enrichment.

Almost all OECD member countries require decision makers in the executive and legislative branches to disclose private interests, and a few countries have also begun requiring disclosure for officials in the judiciary, such as for judges in Finland and Hungary. Moreover, countries increasingly require officials in vulnerable positions, such as public procurement, customs and tax administration, to disclose their private interests.

Providing information on assets and liabilities remains the primary focus of disclosure requirements. In the past decade, the number of countries requesting information on loans has almost tripled. Likewise, countries have placed an increased emphasis on the disclosure of ancillary employment arrangements. The number of countries requiring information on previous and future employment has more than doubled in an effort to manage "revolving doors", or the movement between the private and public sector, which has recently received particular public attention.

Stepped-up citizen demand for transparency in public life and closer scrutiny by the media and opposition parties have increased expectations for disclosure by high-level public officials. Although the vast majority of countries require decision makers to disclose more and more of their private interests to avoid potential conflicts, it is much less common to make these disclosures available to the public. Ten countries provide full access to disclosed private interests, in particular those by legislators and ministers. In other countries, the information provided is often for internal use and stays confidential.

Methodology and definitions

The data focus on the conflict-of-interest measures for decision makers in the central government that were in place in OECD member countries in 2000 and 2009. Data for 2000 were collected by the OECD via a survey and were originally published in *Trust in Government* (2000). Respondents to the survey were OECD member country delegates in charge of integrity in central government. Data were updated in 2009 via a survey completed by members of the OECD Expert Group on Conflict of Interest. A total of 28 OECD member countries responded to both the 2000 and 2009 surveys. Annex D provides data for each country on the types of private interests disclosed by decision makers and the extent they are available to the public. It also provides data for the Slovak Republic, which only answered the 2009 version of the survey.

Further reading

OECD (2000), *Trust in Government: Ethics Measures in OECD Countries*, OECD, Paris.

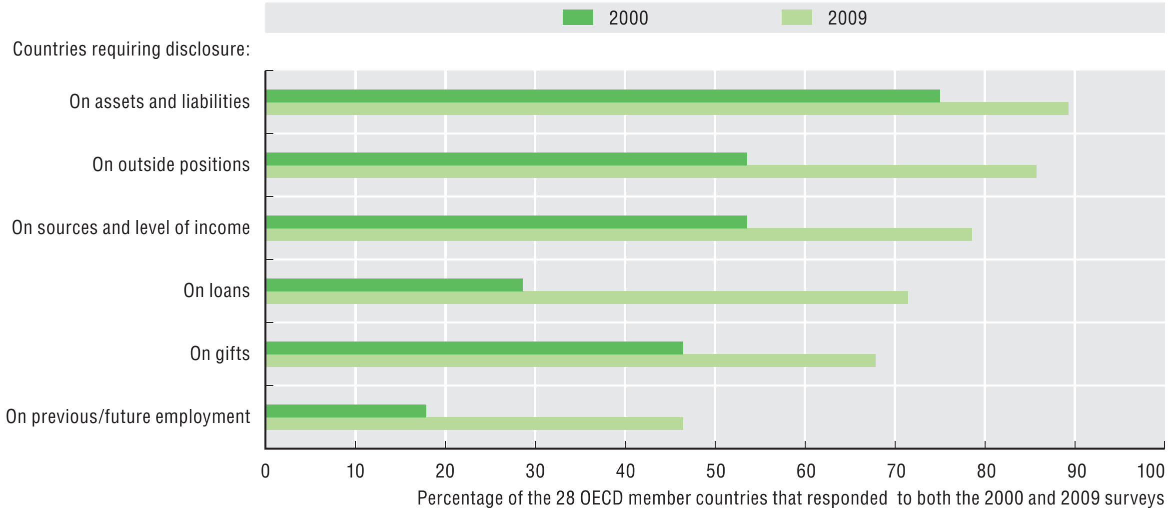
OECD (2003), *Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Service, OECD Guidelines and Country Experiences*, OECD, Paris.

Notes

25.1: Data are not available for Greece and the Slovak Republic.

25.2: Data are not available for Greece and Denmark. "Fully" available means that all required disclosures are available to the public; however, some specific information included in the disclosures (such as bank account numbers) may be excluded due to privacy law. Countries responding that disclosures are partially available to the public publish disclosures for some, but not all decision makers and/or some, but not all types of interests (such as assets and liabilities, but not loans).

25.1 Percentage of countries that require decision makers in the central government to formally disclose potential conflicts of interest (2000 and 2009)



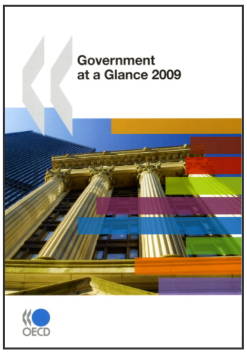
25.2 Public availability of private interest disclosures by decision makers in the central government (2009)

Level of transparency	Total	Country
Fully available to the public	10	Australia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States
Partially available to the public	14	Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Korea, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovak Republic, Spain, Switzerland
Not available to the public	2	Mexico, Turkey
Disclosures not required	2	Iceland, Luxembourg

Source: OECD Survey on Integrity (2000 and 2009).

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/724123642681

A corrigendum has been issued for this page. See: http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/59/28/44251675.pdf



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