

## Executive summary

Colombia has undergone profound change since proclaiming its Political Constitution in 1991, and has made significant progress in implementing successive waves of a good-governance agenda with initiatives that aim to strengthen its institutions and promote sustainable, inclusive growth in all regions of the country. In pursuing this agenda, the current Government of Colombia requested that the OECD conduct a Public Governance Review to offer advice on how Colombia can address its governance challenges effectively and efficiently over time.

This Review thus advises on the “how” of effective governance reform, by identifying international good practices that can help shape and define specific reforms, and by offering concrete advice on tools and processes for the government’s objective of enhancing its strategic-state capability, that is its capacity to:

- Set, steer, implement and monitor the performance of national strategy across the central government;
- Co-ordinate effectively with sub-national authorities in setting, implementing and monitoring the performance of national strategy; and
- Effectively link strategy implementation to budget decision-making using robust evidence-based performance-assessment tools.

At Colombia’s request, this Review also focuses on whole-of-government human resources management, public procurement and e-government strategies.

**This Review notes Colombia’s reliance on a strong multi-year planning system focused on development and reducing disparities over a four-year planning horizon, and has developed robust audit and control institutions that are constitutionally protected in their fight against corruption.** The use of performance information by Colombia through its SINERGIA performance-assessment tools is well above the Latin American average. Colombia’s national budgeting has been modernised, and its new Fiscal Rule constitutes a good practice that meets OECD standards.

- Colombia could build on its national budget-modernisation successes by improving national and especially sub-national execution capacity.
- Colombia’s Centre of Government could institutionalise systematic regulatory impact assessment and governance related to regulation and rule-making that meets OECD standards and practices, as recommended in the recent OECD Regulatory Reform Review of Colombia;
- Colombia could enhance co-ordination to reduce overlap and duplication between internal and external audit and control institutions across the central government while building this co-ordination capacity sub-nationally.
- Colombia could focus on enhancing its sub-national performance-assessment capacity.

**Colombia’s centre of government faces key structural issues that influence its capacity to co-ordinate the setting, implementation and performance-monitoring of its National Development Plan, and thus achieve its development-policy outcomes successfully.** The Centre of Government’s strategic agility in managing an efficient and effective public administration that delivers sound policy and services to citizens and business in support of the country’s security, growth and prosperity, is key to ensuring that Colombia can advance its long-term development, cohesion, competitiveness and prosperity agenda.

- Centre-of-Government institutional capacity for co-ordinating day-to-day government-wide operations of government and linking these to the pursuit of medium and long-term strategic objectives could be strengthened.
- The mandates and operating procedures of the existing Council of Ministers could be assessed to build greater coherence and sustainability in whole-of-government strategy-setting, implementation and performance assessment.
- An effective whole-of-government communications strategy could be enhanced to develop greater levels of accountability and transparency to build greater trust in government.

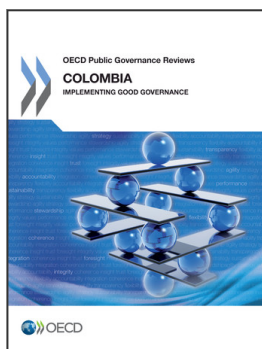
**Evidence-based policy analysis is clearly informing important policy decisions being taken by the government of Colombia, notably in relation to the implementation of its National Development Plan.** That said whole-of-government evidence-based decision-making framed by a meaningful planning horizon that, for example, takes long-term socio-demographic and fiscal trends into consideration can lead to greater effectiveness and efficiencies in achieving strategic outcomes. The government could consider building strategic-foresight capacity into its existing multi-year planning toolkit to define long-term strategic objectives, both sector-based and multi-sector, within which the Development Plan’s four-year goals could be articulated and pursued. Colombia could thus seek to ensure that the results of strategic foresight inform its four-year planning by taking into account emerging issues and trends identified over a planning horizon that extends beyond that of the electoral cycle.

**One of Colombia’s main governance challenges in pursuing its national development strategy is building a collective commitment to the country’s development on the part of public-sector stakeholders at all levels by aligning national and sub-national policy agendas.** Acute regional disparities still persist despite the significant resources Colombia invests to promote regional development. To optimise the achievement of co-ordinated national and regional development policy outcomes, the Review provides insight into how the central government could improve its engagement with sub-national authorities to enhance the impact of national socio-economic development policies on regional economic performance. The central government could thus focus on building collective commitment at the sub-national level to work together and with the central government to pursue common national and regional development objectives in a coherent and co-ordinated fashion.

**In recent years Colombia has made substantial progress in institutionalising the public service and putting in place essential foundations on which additional reforms can be based in order to capitalise on the country’s human resource management strengths.** Colombia could focus on building capacity to manage staffing levels more strategically, and improve and stabilise the government’s merit-based recruitment system. The government could further develop its strategic workforce planning capacity and more flexible workforce management. Colombia could work on improving the core components of staff management and develop better instruments to motivate staff and strengthen performance management.

**Procurement reform is an important component of the governance-reform agenda set out in the National Development Plan, and aims to enhance the quality of public-service delivery as well as transparency and accountability in government spending.** The Review addresses key reform areas in support of optimising the organisation, operation and capability of the government’s new central procurement agency, *Colombia Compra Eficiente*. The Review advises Colombia to pursue both short-term and long-term actions to ensure that *Colombia Compra Eficiente* adds a more outcome-oriented and commercial approach to its current exclusive focus on strict law-compliance, building on its 2012-13 Action Plan.

**Much has already been accomplished by Colombia’s current government in the use of new technologies and information systems.** Building on such efforts could allow Colombia to match OECD standards and practice in such areas as combating corruption and stimulating the use of ICTs in the public sector (such as for the development and uptake of useful, accessible and affordable online services). Governance of the use of information systems and ICTs could be further improved nationally and across levels of government to achieve value-for-money and user-uptake goals more efficiently and effectively.



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