

## Preface – Governance matters!

The outlook for the global economy is improving gradually, but the world continues to grapple with the consequences of the global financial, economic and social crisis. Low growth, high government indebtedness, persistent unemployment and widening inequalities require strong corrective action. Governments are expected to put our economies back on a track of stronger, greener and more inclusive growth.

Citizens look to governments to lead the way. Without strong leadership, supported by effective policies, trust is easily eroded. Indeed, the crisis has taken its toll on trust in government. Citizens across the OECD have lost their confidence in the ability of policy makers to solve economic problems and respond to their needs and demands. It is essential that governments regain the confidence of their citizens to carry out necessary reforms.

A key lever governments can use to build back trust is strong performance. The 2013 edition of *Government at a Glance* puts forth a dashboard to help decision makers and citizens analyse and benchmark government performance and to identify fields where the effectiveness and efficiency of the public sector can be improved. The 50 indicators cover the whole production chain of public goods and services (inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes) and key areas of public management and governance, such as budgeting practices, integrity and open government, e-government and ICT strategies.

*Government at a Glance 2013* demonstrates that, while governments have taken steps to strengthen institutions and improve value for money, much remains to be done. For example, despite considerable efforts in many countries, the health of their public finances needs to be further improved and substantial gender disparities still exist. For example, women occupy only 40% of middle management and 29% of top management positions. Also, Open Government Data (OGD) is gaining importance as a governance tool – 56% of OECD countries have a national OGD strategy – but more effort is required to ensure that citizens can effectively use the available information. Across these and many other areas, public sector reform needs to remain a high priority in support of our economic and social goals.

By continually extending the scope and timeliness of our governance indicators and analysis, and providing them in a variety of electronic formats for ease of access, we trust that *Government at a Glance 2013* will be a critical resource for policy makers, citizens, and researchers in their pursuit of better policies for better lives.



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