

SGI Sustainable Governance
Indicators 2009

Steering capability

Strategic capacity report



Indicator **Strategic planning**

Question **How much influence does strategic planning have on government decision-making?**

30 OECD countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels:

- 10-9 = Strategic planning exerts a dominant influence.*
- 8-6 = Strategic planning exerts considerable influence.*
- 5-3 = Strategic planning exerts a modest influence.*
- 2-1 = Strategic planning exerts no influence.*

Norway

value 10

Significant strategic planning takes place in the course of government decision-making. The typical procedure for major decisions is the following. First, the government appoints an ad-hoc committee tasked with delivering a detailed report on a particular issue. Some of these committees are composed exclusively of experts, while other have a broader membership that includes politicians and representatives of interested parties such as unions, business confederations and other non-governmental organizations.

For instance, a report to the Ministry of Finance would typically be drafted by high-profile academic economists, representatives of unions, employers and the central bank. When this procedure leads to legislative action, a proposal is drafted and distributed to interested parties, who are invited to make comments and suggestions (a period of three months for comments is recommended, and six weeks is the minimum stipulated). Only after comments have been received will the government prepare a proposal for parliament (sometimes in the form of a parliamentary bill, but sometimes only as an initial white paper). Governments deviate from this procedure only in cases of emergency, and any attempt to circumvent it would lead to public criticism. There is an established procedure for the approval of the annual budget. The activity starts one year in advance, when the government holds three conferences on the budget proposal. The Minister of Finance presents the initial proposal in the first week of October. A parliamentary committee plays an active role in the budget process and makes concrete proposals on the distribution of resources. This proposal becomes the basis of parliamentary discussion. After the parliament approves a proposal for the allocation of resources, it becomes binding for subsequent, more detailed discussions that take place in various parliamentary committees. By December 15, this work is concluded, and the final budget is approved by the full parliament.

Annotation: No data on frequency of meetings is available.

Sweden

value 10

Strategic planning is the backbone of Swedish politics. The parliament often appoints so-called “royal commissions” composed of members of the social and other sciences. These commissions of inquiry then submit their proposals in the form of official reports (known as “Swedish Government Official Reports,” or SOUs), to the government. Such reports are often of a very high scholarly standard and based on research conducted at Swedish universities.

On the other hand, the government can also choose to have its ministries carry out inquiries. In such cases, the reports are published in a series called the Ministry Publications Series. Following the publication of such reports, the government will usually then refer them to various public agencies, organizations and municipalities for their input. Thereafter, on the basis of the input it has received, the government will submit a policy proposal to the parliament. In general, Swedish politics are much more oriented toward solving problems than they are in other countries.

Canada

value 9

Overall strategic planning has a dominant influence on government decision-making, and strategic planning is a government-wide undertaking. There is no single unit explicitly responsible for strategic planning and, consequently, there is no single individual specifically tasked with coordinating strategic planning. Nevertheless, the main actors in strategic planning are the Office of the Prime Minister, the Privy Council Office (PCO) and the Treasury Board. General oversight of strategic planning is the task of the prime minister’s office. The PCO, on the other hand, is responsible for priorities and planning groups that hold regularly scheduled retreats and meetings with stakeholders. The meetings aim to develop agendas for Cabinet committees as well as throne speeches and agendas for key ministers.

Denmark

value 9

Denmark has never had a strong tradition of basing political decisions on available knowledge. Moreover, in the past, the level of academic analysis in Danish reports outlining political issues and options has been rather low. Nevertheless, in recent years, medium-term plans have come to play a much more dominant role. This change applies to economic policy in general (e.g., the “2010 plan” and, most recently, the “2015 plan”) as well as to other policy areas, such as the environment or education. The large welfare package approved in 2006 is an outstanding example of the importance that has been given to medium-term planning in that it addresses demographic problems that will unfold over the coming decades and enacts policy

changes that will gradually take effect and that are aimed at counteracting a significant part of the effects of demographic change.

Another sign of the importance attached to medium-term targets can be seen in the recurrent centrality of fiscal sustainability in political debates. Strategic planning has also underlain the work of the Globalization Council and recent work on reforms in the public sector.

Hungary

value 9

Strategic planning increased in the wake of the 2006 elections, after which the second Gyurcsány government created strategic planning units in all ministries and established two cabinet committees in charge of developing medium- and long-term strategies – the Committee on State Reform (ÁRB), which handles social policy, education and public administration issues, and the Development Policy Steering Board (FIT), which focuses on national economic development and the efficient utilization of EU transfers. Line ministries have been required to build upon the strategies formulated by these committees instead of developing their own strategies, as was previously the case.

Finland

value 8

Strategic planning is well integrated into Finnish policy-making. The medium-term framework budget, which is effective for five years, forces policy planning to take long-term effects and priorities into account. Strategic goals of the government program are recorded in specific strategy documents. These documents refer to a one-year period and include a plan for pursuing priorities, with descriptions of key decisions that must be made and indicators for evaluating the government's progress toward strategic goals. The Prime Minister's Office makes these strategy documents available, along with evaluations of the documents. The government also has specific policy programs for fields of special importance. In the period under review, the Matti Vanhanen cabinet maintained four specific policy programs on the knowledge society, employment, entrepreneurship and citizen participation.

Once during each legislative period, the government presents a long-term report on the future to the parliament. In this statement, government presents strategic objectives dealing with one or more future problems of special importance, and proposes measures for action. The report is jointly prepared by ministerial and specialist working groups. In addition, the parliamentary Committee for the Future deals with future-related strategic planning and gives other committees advice on specific issues.

Ireland

value 8

The most important element in strategic planning is the Department of the Taoiseach, which is the Irish name for the Department of the Prime Minister. This department employs about 300 people who are at the heart of government policy-making and coordination between departments. Strategic planning has been central to Irish policy-making in several key areas. The importance of strategic planning may be attributed to the centrality of a neo-corporatist approach to governance that has characterized Ireland's politics since the 1987 signing of the Program for National Economic Recovery (PNER). This approach has focused several key Irish policy areas on broad strategies agreed to in tripartite "social partnership" agreements. The latest such agreement, entitled "Towards 2016," was agreed to in June 2006. This agreement represents an increased emphasis on long-term strategic planning and provides for policies under a broader time frame (the strategies laid out in the agreement run from 2006 to 2015) than has previously been the case. The agreement also embodies the social partners' endorsement of a number of strategies in key areas, including a National Development Plan (covering the period from 2007 to 2013) and the National Spatial Strategy (meant to cover "the next 20 years"). In addition, public service reform has placed a greater emphasis on strategic planning within the civil service. Under the Public Services Management Act 1997, government departments are required to produce detailed strategy statements describing their objectives and goals and outlining how they shall be achieved.

Netherlands

value 8

Every ministerial department has its own strategic-planning and research unit that aims to execute established strategies as well as to prepare and evaluate potential processes of intra-ministerial coordination. Strategic planning as a whole is coordinated by the governmental policy accord ("regeerakkoord"), which is presented after elections and which details negotiated policy priorities. The government has many internal and external advisory bodies, of which the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB) is particularly influential. The CPB provides forecasts and scientific analyses relevant to government and parliamentary policy-making as well as to other societal actors, such as political parties, trade unions and employers' associations. Although the CPB is part of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, its research is considered to be independent. The Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP), which is part of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, is another influential body. Its tasks are: to describe the social and cultural situation and expected developments in the Netherlands; to contribute toward responsible choices of objectives and resources in social and cultural policy and to develop related alternatives; and to assess government policy and particularly inter-ministerial policy. Another important advisory body is the Social and Economic Council (SER). This

public institute consists of representatives of employer and employee organizations as well as so-called “crown members,” who are independent experts – usually professors of economics, law, finance or sociology appointed by the Crown. The SER’s main and best-known task is to advise the government on social and economic issues.

South Korea

value 8

Strategic planning plays a large part in government decision-making. Strategic planning committees are established under the president and within the ministries. Currently, there are 13 presidential committees. Each presidential committee holds more than 10 plenary sessions a year, and subcommittees hold meetings as the need arises. In addition, the committees hold public hearings and symposiums. Furthermore, the Office of the President (also called the Blue House, similar to the White House in the United States) plays an important role in strategic planning, and serves a personal advisory role to the president.

Commission presidents and selected expert members meet once a week under the chairmanship of the incumbent national president. Cabinet members also participate in these meetings. These commissions have taken an important role in the formulation of medium-term government strategy. Government policies stand on three legs: The presidential office is in charge of long-term trends and strategies, the commissions are in charge of long- and medium-term strategies and planning, and the cabinet and ministries observe short-term changes and are in charge of policy implementation.

United Kingdom

value 8

While prime minister, Tony Blair created the position of a chief of staff to manage the entirety of Downing Street operations. He also integrated the prime minister’s operations with those of the Cabinet Office to ensure that the Prime Minister’s Office retains strategic control. In addition to centralizing the steering capacities for strategic planning, former Prime Minister Blair procured greater expertise in strategic planning. Following their second electoral victory in 2001, the Labour Party 2001 installed a Delivery Unit as part of the Cabinet Office to monitor the progress made in implementing New Labour’s electoral promises.

To improve services such as railways and health services, the government created an Office of Public Services Reform. It also established a planning cell, the Forward Strategy Unit, to develop new ideas. The Forward Strategy Unit merged with the Performance and Innovation Unit to form an integrated Strategy Unit, which eventually came under the auspices of the Reform Strategy Group.

Whereas decision-making was carried out within a general strategic framework that remained flexible enough to accommodate conflicting pressures, the Blair government was particularly strategic in communicating its policies.

United States

value 8

To an important degree, the design of the U.S. political system militates against strategic planning in a broader sense. Since department and agency decisions can be contested by congressional committees, such a process would elicit controversy over decisions that otherwise would never be explicitly posed. Understood more narrowly, however, strategic planning plays a considerable role in U.S. government decision-making. Strategic planning is highly political and not an abstract exercise inspired by ideal conceptions of outside experts about what the strategic goals should be. Strategic planning is only effective if it also includes reference to the ideological goals of the president or the dominant political coalition supporting the administration.

On an institutional level, there are many agents serving on a formal level with a statutory basis (e.g., the Office of Management and Budget, the Council of Economic Advisors, National Security Council) as well as on the informal level, which mostly comprises the White House staff. The mix is determined by the basic goals of the respective presidency, internal dynamics, personality factors, the policy discourse within the political system and the nature of the issues. There is no dearth of professional advice or strategic thinking; the real question regards to what extent they are used by the very top decision-makers, that is, the president and his or her closest advisors.

Belgium

value 7

Although there is a central planning agency, or “Bureau du Plan/Planbureau” (Planning Office), it has only marginal impact on strategic decision-making. In the Belgian political administrative system, the locus of strategic planning does not reside with stable executive bodies but with ministerial cabinets. These cabinets are staffed groups with a strongly political and often transient character. All major policy proposals are planned, elaborated and negotiated in the cabinets. Ministerial cabinets are large, with a staff of up to 80 people even for minor portfolios. Cabinet staff includes experts from universities, private or public companies or top administrative officials, all or most of whom are active sympathizers of the respective minister’s party. Staff members hold their posts for a few months or even a few years.

Since every minister has a cabinet, there are as many “strategic” units as there are ministers. Hence the overall coherence of strategic decision-making is low. This lack of coherence is aggravated by the fact that coalitions bring together parties which most of the time have conflicting goals in many policy areas.

Mexico

value 7

In certain policy areas, especially at the national level, planning capacities are well-established and have a considerable influence on policy-making. This is true not only for macroeconomic policies, but also for areas such as education and social spending. The President's Office works as a coordinating unit assisted by a strategic planning staff. This organizing principle is followed by most of the government agencies. Presidential preferences vary, but Vicente Fox was a strong believer in the planning process, and Calderon seems to be as well.

The constitution requires new governments to present a national development plan four months after taking office, while a separate law requires that every government agency be organized on the basis of careful planning. National plans are usually documents of general policy orientation and basic quantitative goals. The budgetary process forces a more detailed level of planning, which is generally carefully fulfilled.

Subnational governments are of increasing importance in Mexico's federal system. In these administrations, executive strategic capacity varies widely, partly due to the high heterogeneity of economic and political development among Mexican regions.

New Zealand

value 7

The government does not have a central dedicated strategic planning unit. However, a Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), serving the executive as a whole (including the governor-general, the prime minister and the cabinet), provides high-quality impartial advice and support services. The DPMC also coordinates the work of the core public service departments and ministries, so that decision-making is as coherent and complete as possible. It is responsible for managing the performance of the public sector, along with the State Services Commission (SSC) and the Treasury.

The activities of the executive have been dramatically reshaped since the 1980s on the basis of New Public Management (NPM) methods. Most importantly, output-oriented contracts are used between ministers and the chief executives of a large number of departments and agencies. This type of governance by contract led in the 1990s to a fragmentation of policy-making into vertically integrated networks, and subsequently to coordination problems. After 1999, the Labor-led governments reacted to this by recentralizing the core executive's steering capacity. All contracts now have to be based on a policy approach consonant with the government as a whole.

The most important instrument is the capability, accountability and performance process (CAP), through which the SSC monitors all agreements according to criteria set by the government. Beyond steering by contracts, there is only a moderate strategic planning capacity, in the form of the Policy Advisory Group, which the prime minister can use to coordinate with other ministers.

Portugal

value 7

In a broad sense, strategic planning has a considerable degree of influence on the way the Portuguese government operates, due to both domestic and international frameworks. Domestically, one of the government's constitutional obligations is to prepare the Major Options of National Plans (Grandes Opções do Plano, or GOP), which map out the government's priorities over a five-year period (The government program, on the other hand, corresponds to the government's term in office – normally four years – and is usually based on the electoral program of the party or parties forming the government).

These documents are submitted to the Assembly of the Republic and are revised annually. Internationally, EU membership plays an important role in strategic planning. First, EU membership allows Portugal to apply for regional and structural funds, including the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Pre-Accession Structural Instrument (ISPA), after submitting medium-term plans outlining how the resources will be utilized.

Given the significant importance that EU funds have had (and continue to have) when it comes to building public infrastructure in Portugal and their “co-financing” conditionalities (which imply a participation of matching public funds during the planned disbursement horizon), medium-term strategic planning is a necessary element in significant portions of the domestic policy process. Second, EU membership also affects strategic planning as it relates to the implementation of other EU frameworks of both a systemic and a sectoral nature. For example, regarding the former, there are the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines (BEPG), the Lisbon Strategy, the associated National Reform Programs and the SGP Convergence Programs. Regarding the later, for example, there are the Environment Action Programs.

The language of strategic planning also plays a role in the current government's discourse and activity to a larger extent than it has in probably any government in Portugal's democratic history. The number of “plans” and “programs” (with a myriad of acronyms) presented by the government in all policy areas is very large. The most prominent of these is the so-called Technological Plan (see “Enterprise policy”), which is the backbone of the government's human capital development, R&D and active employment policies. There is no doubt that, to some extent, this effort is partly rhetorical, as evidenced by the abandonment of some of these programs only a few months after their much-publicized presentation. However, with plans such as the Technological Plan, they convey a sense that a set of practices and mindsets favorable to strategic planning does, in fact, permeate government activity.

Slovakia

value 7

Because of the country's experience with communism, the term "planning" continues to carry negative connotations in the Slovak Republic. However, EU accession and membership have helped ameliorate aversion to the concept. The Central Policy Planning Unit that was established in the Government Office in 2001 laid the framework for a strategic planning system, although many of the originally envisaged measures were eventually abandoned.

Under the Dzurinda government, Slovakia was characterized by a relatively high degree of strategic planning. However, most of the planning took place in the Coalition Council or individual ministries, and it relied on informal meetings of the prime ministers and/or several ministers with advisors and experts. In contrast, formal government institutions played only a secondary role. The fact that several members of the Dzurinda government had previously worked in think tanks served to facilitate strategic planning.

Australia

value 6

There is no shortage of infrastructure for strategic planning. For example, public service departments, which provide advice to government ministers, have substantial resources for researching policy options and their likely outcomes and effects. A key locus for coordinating these efforts is the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC). Originally established as a small group to support the prime minister (PM) and the cabinet, this department is now pre-eminent in terms of policy development. It deals with the coordination of government administration, assistance to the cabinet and its committees, policy advice and administrative support to the PM, intergovernmental relations and communications with state and territory governments, and even ceremonial government activities and hospitality.

The DPMC also carries responsibility for policy coordination, seeking to ensure that the PM has the best possible advice by drawing from and consulting with sources across the whole of the government. However, while the DPMC plays a pivotal role in government strategic planning and has played a key role in most of the major, high-profile policy initiatives of recent years, the very high frequency of contact between departmental staff and ministers cannot be used to infer a high level of strategic planning, because of the multiple functions of the DPMC.

Other ministerial departments are independently required to have an ongoing strategic plan providing the basis for financial planning and resource allocation. Each minister, along with the department or agency head, is part of the strategic planning group. Additional examples of long-term strategic planning include the Intergenerational Reports, produced by the Treasury Department in 2003 and 2007, which consider in detail the government's fiscal outlook over the long term and the sustainability of economic growth. Nevertheless, many government policies seem to be opportunistic political decisions with little forethought beyond immediate electoral payoffs.

Turkey

value 6

In the period under consideration, strategic planning was particularly important in the frame of the EU membership process and in the abatement of Turkey's heavy debt burden in cooperation with the IMF. However, in these cases, Turkey generally had to follow targets, precepts and guidelines designed outside of the country.

The enhanced integration of Turkey's economy into the world economy has contributed to the shift from long-term state planning to a greater flexibility toward precepts set by international institutions or global actors. The entering of new political actors, namely the Justice and Development Party (AKP), has contributed to seriously disrupting Turkish planning procedures.

Regarding the second AKP government (the first Erdogan government) which governed Turkey in the period under consideration, it can be said that no other party before has devised such a detailed, urgent action plan as well as realized most of its goals. Previous governments would publish only a short list of preliminary goals to be realized in the first 100 days of office, but often such lists were not taken very seriously.

This new strategy was successful with the parallel weakening of the authority of Turkey's central planning unit, the State Planning Organization (DPT), which has been practically reduced to the position of a research institute, and its nine-year-plans now provide mere background data for overall policies that lack multidimensional process planning.

The decisive planning role for the government today is played by the ruling party itself, which took office in 2002 with the most detailed party program in Turkish history; the party also shares this planning role with several ministries. Economic planning, as one example, was previously carried out by the DPT, but has been since divided between three ministers. These ministers include: Ali Babacan, state minister in charge of the state treasury; Ali Coşkun, minister for industry and trade; and Kürşat Tüzmen, state minister for export development.

France

value 5

In spite of expert committees' historical tradition in France (for example, the former General Commission of Planning and the current Center for Strategic Analysis or Council of Economic Analysis), their direct influence on government policies and the president are somewhat limited. A visible trend has developed in recent years, in which experts are commissioned on an ad hoc basis to create reports concerning the state of France's economy or its competitiveness to complement official government policy. A central role is assumed by advisers and confidants, who traditionally influence the politics of the president. For years the government and president have conducted policy in the fields of employment and the domestic budget, a role that

has gone against the opinions and analyses of most economists. Strategic planning is also made difficult by the fact that leading up to elections, the wishes of local politicians are carried out at short notice. The observance of election campaigns plays a much more significant role than does strategic political planning.

Germany

value 5

In 2005, the Merkel government introduced a new planning unit at the Federal Chancellery. The head of this unit received the status of minister without portfolio, rather than being named a state secretary. The idea behind this change was to strengthen the chancellery's position vis-à-vis the prime ministers of the states.

However, this unit's ability to strengthen the government's strategic planning is constrained by the principle of ministerial autonomy and by the nature of the coalition government. The planning unit's impact is rather low, and has found itself often overwhelmed with day-to-day government business.

The most important avenue for political, rather than genuinely strategic planning, are the meetings and communications between the chancellor, the vice chancellor and the heads of the government coalition parties. More broadly, the federal system presents its own challenges to strategic planning in Germany.

Italy

value 5

The ability of the prime minister and of the prime minister's office to plan strategic government decision-making is weak. Given the fragmentation of the government majority and the fact that ministers' loyalty often is directed primarily to their own party, it is very difficult to conduct serious strategic planning. The prime minister's office has a number of branches that try to coordinate the proposals of different ministries, but often in a more reactive way than through any strategic planning.

The previous Berlusconi government created a department for the implementation of the government program, which was headed by a minister without portfolio; the Prodi II government has continued this institution to ensure that the government plan is put into effect. This office has gained under Prodi a somewhat greater importance, also in part because Prodi was not able to count upon the help of a party (as he had no party allegiance) to help him guide the cabinet.

Some bodies are often created to deal with ad hoc issues and therefore lack continuity of work. One of the most important examples of the former is the planning unit known as CIPE (Inter-Ministerial Committee for Economic Planning), which covers a huge range of topics and established the general guidelines for the government's economic policy in almost all sectors of activity (infrastructure, industry, depressed areas and so on). As for the latter, consultancy by professors and ad hoc committees are notable examples.

Japan

value 5

All ministries in Japan have policy-planning units whose task is to engage in strategic and long-term policy planning. There are also around 90 advisory councils (“shingikai”) attached to the ministries. Composed of business people, bureaucrats, scholars, journalists, union representatives, and others, these councils deliberate various aspects of public policy. Some of these councils, especially the ones reporting to the prime minister, also generate long-range policy proposals. Some of the larger ministries also have affiliated think tanks.

The prime minister’s office, or Cabinet Office, acquired substantial policy-generating capacity in the course of administrative reforms implemented in 2001. The newly established Cabinet Secretariat does not only coordinate ministries, but also develops political guidelines and more concrete legislation. Since 2001, the prime minister has also been able to independently appoint up to five personal advisors with individually tailored responsibility. Moreover, prime ministers also have appointed high-level advisory councils, most notably the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy (CEFP), which is staffed by major ministers plus outside members (drawn from industry and academia) and headed by the prime minister himself. These councils have taken a prominent role in guiding policy-making in some areas. While the institutional apparatus for substantial strategic planning is thus in place, strong ruling party intervention and competition among ministries have interfered with its performance. Ministers are torn between what the LDP or their party faction expects from them and what the well-informed career bureaucrats within the ministries want them to do. Ministries compete between one another, on issues such as the promotion of advanced industries. Since 2001, all ministries have had to propose their budget plans to the CEFP, which increases the ability to enforce strategic priorities. However, the CEFP’s importance depends largely on the will and personal standing of the prime minister. During Junichiro Koizumi’s market-oriented reforms, such as the privatization of Japan Post, the CEFP played a significant role. But during his government’s last year and afterwards, the CEFP became less prominent, and the influence of the Ministry of Finance seems to have risen again.

Luxembourg

value 5

Generally speaking, Luxembourg lacks authoritative, independent and competent policy advisory capacity. The main reason for this situation is the fact that social sciences are underdeveloped in the country. Neither the newly established university nor the three public research centers consider social sciences a priority. This void is typically filled by a reliance on foreign expertise. The small number of experts and administrative personnel concentrated within the capital of this small country brings about many informal contacts among a small core group of strategic decision makers. Nevertheless, the issue of strategic planning remains a problematic one.

Spain

value 5

Apart from a small unit of research and analysis within the advisory Prime Minister's Office, no organizational division at the center of the government addressed planning during the first two decades of Spanish democracy.

The decision to include planning staff as part of government organization in 1996 was a consequence of the need to monitor from the center important economic developments as part of the European Union such as: Spain's participation in the European Economic and Monetary Union as monitored through a Budgetary Office, and later the implementation of the National Reform Program (the so-called Lisbon Strategy that is at the core of the mid-term Spanish economic policy and establishes as a strategic goal for 2010 the full convergence in terms of per capita income, employment rate and knowledge-based society with the European Union). The Budgetary Office was renamed and transformed into the Economic Office of the Prime Minister in 2004. This office acts as a national coordinator for the Lisbon Strategy.

Furthermore, the Spanish Government created the Lisbon Permanent Unit (LPU) also connected to the Ministry of Economy and Finance through the Delegated Committee of the Government for Economic Affairs. The main task of the LPU is to coordinate contributions from four different economic ministries and the premiership into a final report, which is updated annually. In the line ministries, the different ministers' private office staff also includes advisors, but their role is more day-to-day rather than strategic. When a strategic unit exists in a ministry, it is normally poorly staffed (for example, only two diplomats work in the department for analysis and perspective within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Austria

value 4

Strategic planning in Austria has only had a modest degree of influence on governmental decision-making. There is a particular division in the Federal Chancellery tasked with preparing general governmental policy-making and ensuring consistent cooperation between the federal ministries. Furthermore, coalition committees set guidelines for government policy and resolve major conflicts between various coalition partners. Due to a high degree of ministerial autonomy, however, the effective influence of such a central strategic-planning arrangement is only modest.

In each ministry, there is an "advisory cabinet" composed of personal assistants, who are usually drawn from the respective minister's party. A lack of authority and resources limit the ability of these ministerial cabinets to serve as strategic bodies.

Annotation: The score lies outside the range of the country experts because the lower score is justified in relation to the scores of the other countries.

Switzerland

value 4

Strategic planning is rather modest in the Swiss political system, with relatively few projects taking place over a long time horizon (e.g., the reform of the federal system was finished after 15 years of debate). Most of the policy program is made on an ad hoc basis. Strategic planning is made difficult by the fact that the country has a quasi-presidential political system, with a collegial government, a strong militia element, a consociational decision-making structure, a strong corporatist relationship between a weak federal state and interest organizations, and uncertainty due to the system of direct democracy.

The Swiss government is not a parliamentary government and does not have a policy agenda comparable to a “normal” parliamentary government. The Federal Council has only two weak instruments at its disposal: the so-called Annual Goals and the Goals for the Four-Year Legislative Period, which serve as benchmarks by which a legislative term’s implementation record can be evaluated.

Czech Republic

value 3

The government’s strategic planning largely operates on a day-to-day basis. Strategic planning has been complicated by frequent changes in government, by the nature of coalition governments in which ministers have considerable authority over their policy areas, and by the extremely narrow majorities for governments, which make it difficult to predict the outcome of parliamentary votes and which are sometimes dependent on carefully satisfying the demands of individual members of parliament. There is no specific strategy unit at the core of government. There have been attempts within the government office to set long-term objectives (e.g., the 2005 Economic Growth Strategy), but these have merely been general statements that are not reflected in the policy-making decisions of the individual ministries.

Greece

value 3

The governing party, New Democracy, maintains a strategic planning unit. Each minister has a political office comprised of several personal advisors, some of whom have expertise in the ministry’s policy area. The Prime Minister’s Office employs top advisors in a few policy areas such as macroeconomic policy and administrative reform. However, in practice, there are no predictable or periodic meetings of any collective body in charge of long-term government strategy, or of any individual ministry’s strategic planning. Weekly meetings of the prime minister with a few of his advisors and a few ministers who are his closest allies in the government substitute to an extent for the function of strategic planning. However, such meetings

are probably concerned with tactical political moves and the day-to-day operations of the government. Finally, a governmental committee, consisting of the prime minister and four or five top ministers, also focuses on operational rather than strategic issues.

Iceland

value 3 Long-term strategic planning in Iceland is often vague, lacking a plan of execution, supervision and revision. Planning often features deadlines that have no guarantees of being met. Policy-making is essentially in the hands of cabinet ministers who rely for policy advice and implementation, including strategic planning, on the staff of their respective ministries as well as on political advisers.

Poland

value 3 There is little strategic planning in government decision-making. Cabinet and individual ministries have issued a number of strategy papers, but most of the missives have lacked substance. While a plethora of support, advisory and consultative bodies exist and a huge number of “strategies” is adopted, the impact of these efforts on decision-making is modest. The PiS government did not undertake any major attempts at improving strategic planning. In April 2006, it even dissolved the Government Center for Strategic Studies, which had provided strategic analyses for the cabinet since 1996.

Indicator Scientific advice*Question* How influential are non-governmental academic experts in government decision-making?

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10-9 = Experts have a dominant influence.

8-6 = Experts have considerable influence.

5-3 = Experts have modest influence.

2-1 = Experts have no influence.

Netherlands

value 9

Academics in the Netherlands have a high degree of influence on government policy. The administrative system has an extremely high number of external consulting bodies consisting of academics, researchers or éminence grises from the political world, who give their advice and opinion either on request or on their own initiative. Article 79 of the constitution calls for the maintenance of so-called “advisory councils” (Colleges van Advies) that deal with legislation and policy-making while remaining outside the official government apparatus.

Two of the most important advisory councils of the government in general and the Ministry of General Affairs – as the prime minister’s office is called – in particular are the Wetenschappelijke Adviesraad (WRR), a scientific advisory board, and the Social and Economic Council (SER, see also “Strategic planning”). The prime minister is obliged by law to respond to the reports of these bodies in detail.

In addition, the Science Council for Government Strategy (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor Regeringsbeleid, or WRR), the Advisory Council of Science and Technology Policy (Adviesraad voor het Wetenschaps- en Technologiebeleid, or AWT) and the Health Council of the Netherlands (Gezondheidsraad) advise the government and the Council of Economic Advisors (REA), an independent counseling body for the parliament made up of six academics.

The renowned Clingendael Institute (Netherlands Institute of International Relations), an independent, not-for-profit organization, serves as an important external advisory body to the government.

Canada

value 8

The high number of academics in Canada makes academic advice easily available, when needed. Since the 1980s, think tanks and research institutes there have also

gained in number, visibility and perhaps influence. There are influential Canadian think tanks across the political spectrum. Academics are invariably invited to contribute to royal commissions and government-led task forces. Ministries also create special temporary advisory positions for academics.

For example, in 1983, the Ministry of Finance created the Clifford Clark Visiting Economist position, a key advisory position often filled by an academic. This economist is appointed by the deputy minister of finance and takes part in the highest level of policy development within the ministry for a one-year term. Additionally, senior ministry officials attend annual retreats at which they meet with outside experts to exchange their thoughts on various key issues.

The current government is less influenced by nongovernmental academics than previous governments have been. However, although there are some variations across ministries, nongovernmental academic advice retains a considerable degree of influence overall.

Norway

value 8

There is a significant degree of academic influence on policy-making. Academics are regularly involved in the preparation of public reports (the so-called green papers) to parliament. On a more informal level, various departments regularly consult academic experts. Academics are active in public debate (e.g., by writing newspaper articles) and their views often prompt replies and comments from senior politicians. However, it is relatively uncommon for academics to be appointed to senior government positions.

Slovakia

value 8

Under the Dzurinda government, nongovernmental experts had a substantial impact on policy-making. The prime minister and most ministers relied heavily on the advice of experts from the academic community and from think tanks. Government leaders consulted individual experts, ran advisory bodies and brought outside experts into the ministries. In addition, the Dzurinda government, like its predecessors, asked the Slovak Academy of Science to prepare documents on important future trends. However, these documents have not carried sufficient political weight to be relevant. Compared with its predecessor, the Fico government has had much less access to the academic community, think tanks and NGOs.

Sweden

value 8

Specially appointed commissions of inquiry play an important role in the Swedish policy process. Such commissions often include advisers who are nongovernmental

academic experts. For example, both professional economists and political scientists are often included in commissions, such as the Working Committee on Constitutional Reform, which is in charge of carrying out a concerted review of the present Instrument of Government from 1974. This is one of the four fundamental laws of the Swedish constitution, and it spells out the basic political rights and freedoms in the country and its political structure. Thus far, this commission has produced several high-quality academic reports that are meant to form the basis for the commission's final report. Despite this input, politicians still take over policy-making later in the process and are ultimately responsible for them.

Luxembourg

value 7

Luxembourg lacks a robust independent policy advisory capacity. The Economic and Social Council, which consists of 32 individuals representing business owners and wage-earners in equal proportion, as well as 3 individuals directly appointed by the government, advises the government on socioeconomic policy initiatives. But this body lacks an independent research capacity. Its composition furthermore leads to consensus-seeking behavior that seldom produces innovative or potentially controversial advice.

The only explicitly socioeconomic research facility is the publicly financed CEPS/INSTEAD (Center for Population, Poverty and Public Policy Studies/International Network for Studies in Technology, Environment, Alternatives, Development) in Differdange, which monitors social conditions and the effects of public policy. CEPS/INSTEAD does have some influence on policy-making, as was evidenced by its leading role in the introduction of the guaranteed minimum income. In addition, the Central Statistical and Economic Studies Office and the research department of the Central Bank of Luxembourg increasingly contribute to the public policy debate. If these institutions are not able to provide the advice needed, the government turns to foreign institutions such as the OECD, universities or foundations.

New Zealand

value 7

Academic experts have considerable influence, although their relevance in governmental policy-making depends on the subject area. A large number of advisory committees work for the Ministry of Health. For example, the advisory committee on assisted reproductive technology consists of eleven academics advising the ministry.

Another example is the cancer control council, which is also comprised of eleven members. The council meets six times a year and works on the implementation of the ministry's cancer control strategy. Similarly, the Treasury runs an academic linkages program, set up in 2001 to deepen its links with the academic community. This

includes guest lectures from foreign academics, as well as offering visiting research fellowships.

South Korea

value 7

Non-governmental academic experts have considerable influence on government decision-making. Currently there are a total of 403 commissions operating with legal mandate. Almost all ministries organize advisory committees consisting of professionals and academic experts.

During the Roh administration's first years, the influence of experts was even stronger than usual, and the president established a great number of commissions, such as the Government Innovation and Decentralization commission in 2003, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2005. The Tripartite Commission on labor issues includes not just government officials and representatives from employees' and employers' organizations, but also academic experts.

However, over the course of the period of this analysis, the government was criticized for shifting decision-making to informal commissions. Some of the advice from academic experts met considerable resistance, or was simply not successful. Consequently, the bureaucracy regained importance. Nevertheless, academic experts retain a role in government decision-making functions, and quite a few have joined the administration. For example, university professor Ahn Kyong-whan took over as president of the National Human Rights Commission in 2006.

United Kingdom

value 7

Whitehall has, as another component of its strategic capacity, a well-developed think tank culture, and the New Labour government has drawn extensively on policy advice from left-wing think tanks.

A former cabinet secretary declared in a 2005 speech that the government was very much open to ideas from think tanks, consultancies, special advisors, and frontline practitioners. The secretary also stated that the government cast a wider net than before in seeking consultation while developing policies, and that it involved outsiders to a far greater degree in the policy-making process.

Whereas expert advice informs the government of alternatives in problem-solving, it has no authority of its own when it comes to political decision-making. In this respect, special advisors, as political appointees with temporary government contracts, play a more important role than think tanks. New Labour started with 60 such advisors; by 2003 there were 81. Of those 81 individuals, 26 worked in the Prime Minister's Office, the rest in the ministries.

United States

value 7

In principle, the exchange of persons as well as ideas between the academic world and decision-makers in Washington, D.C., is much more intense than in most other OECD countries. Academic experts are influential as long as they share some of the ideological assumptions and goals of the government in power. The use of academic experts inside and outside of government may best be described as issue networks that are based on scholarly credentials, but at the same time serve certain ideological and value positions.

During the reporting period for this index, however, the Bush administration dramatically cut resources devoted to policy analysis as a result of a fairly explicit philosophy of relying on principles or ideology rather than on supposedly objective policy analysis. High White House officials have been quoted as dismissing the “reality-based community,” presumably with some degree of irony. There are few, if any, prominent examples of the administration’s seriously consulting outside experts on a major policy question, apart from representatives of conservative think tanks.

There are no regular meetings between senior Bush administration officials and representative groups of mainstream policy experts. The administration has also been widely accused by scientific groups of undermining or distorting the scientific-advisory processes, for example, by removing qualified independent scientists in favor of individuals closely tied to business interests or strongly committed to conservatives views on policy questions.

Denmark

value 6

The Danish government has a certain amount of in-house expertise. For example, through various agencies, medical doctors are involved in administering health policy, and veterinarians are involved in administering food safety policies. The general administrators working in the various ministries have university degrees in political science, economics or law, and they usually do not feel the need to consult outside their organizations.

In general, apart from involving outside experts in preparatory commissions, Denmark’s government has only a limited tradition of involving outside experts. There are, however, a few exceptions, such as the Danish Economic Council, which until recently was chaired by three professors of economics and whose advice is listened to by politicians. Furthermore, an Environmental Economic Council has also been recently established. Both councils are chaired by the same economics professors, who are known as the “wise men” and of whom there are now four. The chairmen prepare reports that are then discussed by the council members representing unions, employers, the Central Bank and the government. The reports also receive media attention. The American system, in which a university professor can spend a few years as part of an administration and then return to academia, does not exist in Denmark.

Finland

value 6

Although academic policy experts have participated in foreign and security policy preparation, and legal experts regularly testify in parliamentary hearings, social sciences in Finland are directed more toward analysis of government efforts than to playing a direct role in policy-making. Scholars are oriented, so to speak, toward the sphere of enlightenment rather toward the sphere of engineering. This division of labor is well understood by both camps, and is reflected in the prevailing patterns of contact and collaboration.

However, these conditions also result in a lack of empirical data illuminating the question at hand. It can safely be said that meetings between government and academic experts are infrequent, typically taking place on an ad hoc basis. Government planning does make frequent use of academic research and at times contributes to large-scale research programs. However, attempts at steering research beyond the funding of specific topics are as a rule regarded unfavorably by the scientific community.

Hungary

value 6

Nongovernmental academic experts have a considerable influence on government decision-making, and a number of permanent or temporary advisory councils exist. Since 2003, the government has cooperated with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA). In addition, ministries and ministers often rely on individual experts. Cooperation with MTA intensified in 2006 when the government commissioned a number of reports on strategic policy issues which were then presented and discussed at regular meetings with public officials and academics. However, academic experts have to date played a limited role in the actual drafting of government measures.

Ireland

value 6

Although the government does draw on academic expertise in many areas, scientific advice does not usually reach the government through formal channels, and consultative bodies (e.g., the National Economic and Social Council, the National Economic and Social Forum, and the National Statistics Council) frequently include academics among their members.

A noteworthy trend in recent years – and especially under the 2002 – 2007 Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrats government – has been an increase in the proclivity of government departments to engage consultancy firms to provide expert advice across several policy areas. A response to a parliamentary question provided a spending

estimate of €230 million on external consultancies between 1997 and November 2006. This estimate even excluded several large departments, such as the Department of Health, which has frequently engaged outside consultants. While the last budget noted a drop in consultancy fees, this was due to a redefinition of terms rather than to a real decrease in the use of consultants.

It is difficult, however, to discern the degree of influence that nongovernmental scientific advisers have. Focusing on the increasing number of reports commissioned may be misleading, as their recommendations and reports are frequently either ignored or taken into consideration only selectively when they fits the political aims of the decision makers.

Italy

value 6

The influence of experts on government is rather modest. However, several external academic experts have de facto entered the perimeter of public administration via a consultancy post or by joining permanent or ad hoc commissions, which are often the most common ways for the government to take advantage of the cooperation of experts.

Academic experts brought in by ministers are often involved as consultants and contribute significantly to the drafting of bills. However, the practice of consulting experts in decision-making is in general not well regulated and is therefore more dependent on the political discretion of policymakers. Consultation efforts are also somewhat weakened by the fact that each political force has its own experts, the autonomy of whom is understandably not well established. The influence of academic experts is average, although with regard to specific, highly technical pieces of legislation, their influence can be greater.

Mexico

value 6

There has traditionally been a relatively high degree of permeability between Mexico's ministerial bureaucracy and the academic sector. As a consequence, academics have high prestige, and their advice is often sought by government. Academics are sometimes promoted to senior government positions, either into the full cabinet or more often into deputy ministerial positions. The presidential system also enables academics to give advice to presidential policy advisers. With regard to formal channels of influence, there are an increasing number of commissions and committees aimed at giving politicians more access to academic expertise and vice versa. The constitution and several laws mandate regular consultation procedures, but these are in reality rarely observed.

Several government agencies, such as the Federal Regulatory Improvement Commission (Cofemer), include expert representatives. Nonetheless, important advisory bodies do not exist for many important policy areas, such as economics or

health care. There are many informal channels linking politicians, bureaucrats and academic experts, partly as a result of the abovementioned permeability. However, there is not much of a “think tank” culture, in the sense of institutionalized communication with universities on matters that do not concern the universities directly.

Portugal

value 6

The advice of academic experts from outside the government is a significant part of the policy-formulation process in several of Portugal’s reform areas. A concrete example is the use of academic analysis as a basis for reform proposals concerning the sustainability of the National Health System (SNS).

Nevertheless, meetings between government representatives and academic experts are rare. Instead, the practice has been to set up committees, “coordination units” and “mission units,” that are semi-permanent and tasked with producing reports and preparing policies in several areas of governmental activity. In other words, contact between government and academic experts exists, but such contact takes place in a setting that mitigates the independence and autonomy of such experts vis-à-vis the Council of Ministers.

Switzerland

value 6

Independent experts do not play a particularly powerful role in advising the Swiss government. This is linked to the fact that the Swiss political system is a corporatist system with extraparliamentary and parliamentary committees. Academic experts are elected to these extraparliamentary committees (which numbered 145 as of September 2007), selected due to academic profiles as well as ideological affinities with political parties or interest groups. Military issues, social insurance, education and research policy, environment and legal reform are all policy fields in which scientific advice is widely heeded, especially in the preparatory phase of legislation.

Turkey

value 6

The AKP government has integrated scientific advice in its rulings, particularly from experts in the humanities. In the second year in government, the AKP even invited Turkish and foreign intellectuals to speak at a party symposium designed to function as a brainstorming event for the drafting of a new understanding of the AKP as a conservative party of the center. The most obvious influence of governmental and non-governmental academics on Turkish politics doubtlessly has been the decision of the Turkish parliament to resist pressure by the U.S. government prior to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and to refuse the deployment of U.S. troops on Turkish soil,

despite the traditional favorable leaning of Turkish foreign policy toward the United States.

Prime Minister Erdogan several times also invited non-governmental and critical intellectuals (as well as NGOs) to present their opinions on sensitive political issues. In this regard, he welcomed groups of academics to discuss Turkey's Kurdish question and the new formulation of regulations in the penal code that deal with the limitations on political expression. The prime minister also has asked a group of non-governmental academics to prepare a draft of a new and "civic" constitution to replace the present document that was formulated under the military in the years following the 1980 military coup.

The participation of women's NGOs in the drafting of the new civil code constitutes another example of the government's willingness to take scientific advice into account. The consulting of non-governmental academics, however, does not constitute a consistent theme in AKP politics. The reform of the health system, for example, was carried out without almost any discussion and/or consultation with academics or health authorities.

Australia

value 5

The government has long relied on academic experts to assist in policy-making, although their real influence on government decision-making is debatable. Prior to the 1990s, many of these scientific experts were public servants and employed in government-funded organizations charged with undertaking fundamental research like the Commonwealth Scientific and Research Organization (CSIRO) established in 1926. In recent years, many of these organizations have been abolished, their budgets reduced, or their mission changed to focus on more immediate concerns. Now the public service must rely more directly on external sources, especially universities, to provide expert advice. In areas such as economic and social policy, the influence of academic experts is probably lowest, whereas in matters of medicine, science and technology, their influence is stronger. Academics likely have a stronger influence on departments and agencies than on top levels of government. For example, the Productivity Commission, which provides advice to the government on microeconomic policy, regularly draws on the expertise of academics in producing its reports and recommendations.

Austria

value 5

The Austrian government does not seek scientific advice in a systematic fashion. Nevertheless, the government and the line ministries are increasingly interested in obtaining such advice, especially when it regards controversial reform efforts or follows after the formation of a new ruling coalition. On a less-frequent basis, scientific institutions conduct applied research for governmental studies on a wide

range of subjects. The influence of the latter, however, is limited.

The “Austria Convention,” which was convened in 2003 in order to revise the federal constitution, also included academic experts. These constitutional experts, most of whom were university professors, headed several of the convention’s subcommittees. Although the convention provided a large number of reform proposals, it ultimately failed owing to differences both between party representatives and between federal and state representatives.

Belgium

value 5

Academic experts have little influence in policy-making, even though there are many consultative commissions. Government officers seldom rely on the advice of external academic experts and traditionally rely on experts in ministerial cabinets and in the party’s study centers. While some ministries do regularly commission-funded research projects, their conclusions are seldom considered seriously in the process of policy formation.

Czech Republic

value 5

Nongovernmental academic experts have only modest influence on government decision-making. There is some willingness to seek expert advice at the ministry level, and the ministries do fund some research institutes. Nevertheless, scientific advice could not be called institutionalized, and some advisers appear to be chosen for their political views rather than genuine expertise. In a few cases, governments have sought formal and public outside expert advice when there was a need for long-term consensus across parties. For example, pension system reform was discussed by an expert commission, but its report released in July 2005 led to no action by the center-left government.

Germany

value 5

With only a few exceptions, independent academics have not historically played a central role in advising the German government. The influence held by the German Council of Economic Experts or the Council of Environmental Affairs is small compared to that of their counterparts in the United Kingdom or the United States. However, in recent times most federal ministries have begun to rely on at least some outside academic and non-academic experts. The Berlin think tank culture in particular has improved in recent years, giving ministers a richer potential source of policy analysis.

Iceland

value 5 The government consults selectively with external academic experts, on issues such as fisheries policy, energy policy, engineering and the economy. Lawyers and legal experts are consulted in the drafting of bills to be presented in parliament, and in some aspects of the public administration. Experts consulted are often affiliated with the political parties of the ministers seeking their advice. Some independent experts, especially in the fields of energy and the environment, feel that their views are not taken into account in policy-making. Even so, government policies are generally well informed.

Japan

value 5 Academic experts routinely participate in the roughly 90 advisory councils that exist at the ministerial level in Japan. However, academics constitute just one group within these councils which, depending on the task area, might also be composed of civil servants, journalists, trade unionists and representatives from economic associations or other lobbying organizations, including NGOs. As a rule of thumb, a council with 15 members is likely to have two academics as members. Moreover, the influence of advisory councils varies enormously – some exist to assess the implementation of given programs, other are de facto used to legitimize decisions taken elsewhere, and some actually develop policy proposals which may be taken up by the relevant ministries or government. Overall, the influence of academics on government decision-making must be judged as modest. However, every now and then academics gain prominence because they possess expertise that does not exist elsewhere and is needed at a certain moment in time or because they play a leading role in one of the more influential advisory councils. Although their overall number is limited, academics sometimes become ministers, as did Heizo Takenaka in the Koizumi government. In late 2006, Prime Minister Abe appointed Hiroko Ota, an academic and Takenaka ally, to a ministerial position. However, it is doubtful whether Ota truly has strong influence.

Spain

value 5 Consultation between the government and external academic experts does not regularly take place. At the beginning of any legislative process, particularly on technical issues, every ministry may pursue ad hoc meetings with experts, but career civil servants and other insiders close to the party government tend to control the initiation of draft bills. For this reason, non-governmental academic experts have just a slight influence on government decision-making. Experts are only summoned for advice when highly technical issues are being discussed; for example, in health care

or environmental matters. Non-governmental academic experts are never approached to provide advice on matters of political strategy.

Some recent reform initiatives, such as with the Public Policy Evaluation and Services Quality Agency (Ministry of Public Administration) which was established in 2006 has tried to change this trend as the agency maintains contact and has frequent meetings with external experts. The influence of experts in the Spanish legislative process is seen through the usual appointment of academics as ministers, top officials or political and technical advisers.

France

value 4

Apart from a few exceptions, independent experts do not play a central part in advising the French government and president (exceptions include, as mentioned above, the personal advisors of the president). The influence that economists and think tanks have is also small when compared to other European countries.

This situation stems from the role of the powerful bureaucracy in recruiting the best graduates from the “grandes écoles,” eliminating the need of expert knowledge from outside. Nevertheless, in the recent past, changes to this closed-system have become apparent.

Poland

value 4

Under the PiS government, the overall influence of non-governmental experts on government decision-making was limited. The government distrusted the academic community, which it perceived as part of the establishment. Upon coming to office, the government dissolved the Government Center for Strategic Studies, which had provided scientific advice for many years. Most ministries lack academic advisory committees. However, some national-conservative intellectuals had considerable influence on the formulation of policies toward the European Union and Germany.

Greece

value 3

The government seeks scientific advice, but mostly on an ad hoc basis. Some ministries maintain staff units consisting of experts. However, these are not necessarily consulted by the incumbent minister, who may choose instead to resort to the help of personal friends or technocratic supporters. There is no predictable pattern of meetings between the government and external academic experts. Nevertheless, the academic community has been called on for help at specific times of acute crisis. In 2006, constitutional lawyers were called in to give advice on the interpretation of gaps or inconsistencies of the text of the constitution. Seismologists and geologists were consulted when earthquakes shook the greater Athens area in

1999. Each ministry employs a number of scientific advisers who directly confer with the minister, if required, and discuss draft bills to be submitted to parliament. One example is the Council of Economic Advisers at the Ministry of Economy and Finance. This board consists of a number of economists, primarily professors, who advise the minister and the government generally on economic questions. It is not possible to state explicitly how often meetings take place and how much influence this board has on governmental decisions. Occasionally, officials reveal in press interviews that a specific decision is based on recommendations given by the advisory board of specialists.

This report is part of the Sustainable Governance Indicators 2009 project, which assesses and compares the reform capacities of the OECD member states.

More on the SGI 2009 at www.sgi-network.org

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