Preparedness

Sustainable Governance Indicators 2024

Indicator

Capacity for Strategic Foresight and Anticipatory Innovation

Question

To what extent can the central government foster the capacity for strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation within its organization?

30 OECD and EU 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 = The central government can foster the capacity for strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation within its organization.

8-6 = Most of the time, the central government can foster the capacity for strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation within its organization.

5-3 = The central government is rarely capable of fostering the capacity for strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation within its organization.

2-1 = The central government is not capable of fostering the capacity for strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation within its organization.

Denmark

Score 9

For several years, Denmark's fiscal policy has been rule-based, prioritizing medium-term and long-term issues and the sustainability of public finances. The Ministry of Finance plays a central role in initiating and coordinating strategic planning. This role is most evident in the formulation of overarching strategic policy plans, typically with a horizon of about 10 years, such as the government's 2010, 2015, 2020 and most recently, 2025 plans (Andersen 2024).

A common theme in the plans is the financial sustainability of public finances, and thus the welfare model, under the influence of an aging population. Current policies meet the criterion of fiscal sustainability, a distinction held by few countries. A primary focus of the medium-term plans is to ensure that public expenditures and revenues are on a path consistent with fiscal sustainability. Increasingly, environmental policies are included in strategic planning to ensure the targets set in the Climate Law are met.

The plans typically include various possible "what if" paths for economic development as a means of discussing potential future trajectories, as well as policies intended to influence how the economy evolves.

An agency under the Ministry of Finance, the Agency for Public Finance and Management, is responsible for developing methods and providing cross-ministry networks that serve as meeting points for information sharing. It has also served as a vehicle for rolling out new assessment tools throughout the public sector. At times,

this has led to public criticism of the agency. Additionally, it is quite common to appoint expert groups to prepare inputs for important policy discussions and reforms. The members of these groups can be experts, representatives of organizations or civil servants.

Citation:
Andersen, T.M. 2024. "Fiscal Stabilisers in Denmark." Nordic Economic Policy Review, to appear.

Finland

Score 9   Finland recognizes the need to proactively prepare for the future and navigate associated uncertainties. The government's foresight activities are designed to facilitate decision-making by fostering a collective understanding of forthcoming changes. Central to this approach is a commitment to cooperation and broad participation, ensuring that diverse perspectives contribute to shaping the nation's trajectory.

The PMO's foresight unit emphasizes that foresight is not about predicting the future with certainty. Instead, it involves exploring multiple potential paths for future development, unveiling the opportunities and challenges associated with each (Finnish Government n.d.). This approach enables a nuanced understanding of the complex and evolving landscape, guiding strategic decisions and policies for a resilient and adaptive future.

There is a dedicated central government unit for strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation at the PMO. This unit autonomously explores ideas and scenarios, provides tools and guidance, coordinates and monitors activities, offers training and coaching, and organizes events. Other central government policy units also support policy implementation in specific areas such as open government, knowledge management and digital transformation.

The current government does not encourage policy experimentation through innovation labs, behavioral insights or delivery teams. It has not utilized techniques like prototyping, human-centered design, randomized controlled trials, project-based employment or data analysis. In 2017 – 2018, Finland conducted a randomized controlled trial on partial basic income.

The present government does not allocate sufficient financial and human resources, such as grant funding and procurement, to establish test beds for new ideas. To save money, the government cut the PMO's program for targeted research projects that was directly linked to the cabinet program (VN-TEAS).

Strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation are not included as fundamental skills to be acquired in the recruitment and training of high-level civil servants.

The impact of the central government's strategic foresight and innovation unit on work practices and the organizational culture within ministerial bureaucracies is unclear. The ministries produce future outlook reports every four years.

The frequency of meetings and events between innovation units and ministries is sporadic at best. This lack of consistent engagement hinders effective collaboration and communication between these entities.

Despite the foresight unit at the PMO, the central government's planning demonstrates limited allowance for multiple futures and scenarios as expressed in its strategic plans. The planning tends to be rigid, prioritizing singular trajectories rather than embracing diverse potential outcomes.

Experimental techniques are seldom employed before policy measures are rolled out. The absence of a robust and systematic approach to testing and refining policies before full implementation leads to potential challenges and unforeseen consequences.

The level of success in projects impacting government operations, such as those focusing on open government, knowledge management and digital transformation, is notably low. These projects often fail to reach the anticipated outcomes, reflecting a shortfall in effective execution and strategic alignment. Additionally, securing adequate financial resources for sustaining these activities through the long term is a persistent challenge, compromising their viability and longevity.

Citation:
Finnish Government. n.d. "Foresight activities and work on the future." https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/foresight-activities-and-work-on-the-future/ministries-joint-foresight-activities

Estonia

Score 8   The Foresight Center (FC), a parliamentary think tank, has been active since 2017 and conducts long-term social and economic analyses, as well as drafting development scenarios. However, foresight and strategic planning efforts are still lagging, partly because successive governments have struggled to agree even on short-term goals. The FC consults with parliamentary committees but has only an implicit connection to the executive. The Estonian foresight system was inspired by Finland (OECD 2023).

The Foresight Act serves as the legal basis for the institutionalization of foresight in Estonia. This act established the Foresight Council, which consists of experts in the research, technology and business fields, along with the FC. The council approves the FC's activities. The center envisions possible future scenarios for policymakers and makes the inclusion and participation of the wider public mandatory. The center conducts ex post assessments of previous foresight work after a certain period,

essentially incorporating an evaluation component that compares actual progress to scenarios and outlooks over time.

One important step in successful foresight institutionalization is developing means of highlighting foresight's impact within the government. These processes enable the country to monitor the impact of foresight based on political discussions and parliamentary debates, among other measures.

In addition to FC, the GO Strategy Unit has also begun to innovate more extensively. The Innovation Program 2022 has brought together Innotiim, Accelerate Estonia, export agencies, and the State Chancellery to identify pressing issues within the public sector, and assists teams in reaching innovative and human-centered solutions. The new program differs from previous development programs in that all selected teams go through the phases of understanding the problem and developing solution ideas simultaneously. In the second stage, it is possible to test innovative solutions with support provided by the most suitable program, potentially through the State Chancellery's new public sector innovation measure. Several guidelines, created in conjunction with universities and think tanks, are also available to support and guide innovations and intervention research in the public sector.

Citation:
OECD. 2023. "Foresight and Anticipatory Governance in Practice. Lessons in effective foresight institutionalization." https://www.oecd.org/strategic-foresight/ourwork/Foresight_and_Anticipatory_Governance.pdf
Innovation Team in GO https://www.riigikantselei.ee/innotiim
https://oecd-opsi.org/blog/people-gov-digital-innovation-in-government-is-about-solving-peoples-problems/

New Zealand

Score 8

New Zealand does not have a centralized unit solely dedicated to strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation at the national level. However, the Public Service Act of 2020 requires government departments, independently of ministers, to produce a long-term insights briefing (LTIB) at least once every three years. These LTIBs should explore future trends, risks and opportunities. They are expected to provide information and impartial analysis, as well as policy options for responding to risks and seizing opportunities.

In addition, other government organizations incorporate elements of strategic foresight and innovation in their work. The Productivity Commission conducts research and inquiry into topics related to New Zealand's productivity and economic performance, often considering future trends and scenarios. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) oversees various programs and initiatives related to innovation, including science and innovation funding, and policies that encourage research and development. The Department of Internal Affairs plays a significant role in leading and supporting government initiatives related to open government, digital transformation and information management.

The government chief digital officer is also tasked with driving digital transformation across government agencies.

Moreover, New Zealand has a network of chief science advisers, known as the Chief Science Adviser Forum, appointed to individual departments but forming part of a cohort that can work together on overall government priorities. Among other roles, they ensure that government departments, both individually and collectively, improve the evidence base underpinning their policy development and advice to ministers.

Citation:
Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Adviser. n.d. "Chief Science Adviser Forum." https://www.pmcsa.ac.nz/who-we-are/chief-science-advisor-forum/

Sweden

Score 8

The Swedish government established the Committee for Technological Innovation and Ethics (Komet) in 2018. Komet operated until 2022, when the government changed. Its mandate was to help identify policy challenges, contribute to reducing uncertainty surrounding existing regulations, and support policy development in innovation and technology, especially as it related to the relationship between governmental regulation and large private companies (Komet, 2022).

Digitalization and the effective use of technology in public administration are overseen by DIGG, the Agency for Digital Government. The agency has a four-part mission: (i) supporting the digitalization of public administration; (ii) managing Sweden's digital infrastructure; (iii) monitoring and analyzing the digitalization of society; and (iv) assisting the government in making well-informed decisions (DIGG, 2024).

Any further research that leads to innovation in public administration and political science is funded by research councils. The current structure of research funding includes five agencies:
• The Swedish Energy Agency (Energimyndigheten), which promotes research and innovation in the field of energy, had a budget of SEK 1.46 billion in 2023.
Formas, the Swedish Research Council for Sustainable Development, funds basic and needs-oriented research in the environment, agricultural and built environment fields, with a 2023 budget of SEK 1.87 billion.
The Forte, Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life, and Welfare, funds basic and needs-oriented research in the working life, welfare, and public health fields, with a 2023 budget of SEK 0.87 billion.
• The Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet) funds research across all scientific fields and supports larger research infrastructures, with a 2023 budget of SEK 8.09 billion.
• Vinnova, the Swedish innovation agency, fosters sustainable growth by funding

needs-oriented research and creating effective innovation systems. Its 2023 budget is SEK 3.41 billion.

A 2023 commission of inquiry proposes a radical reorganization of the research funding structure by phasing out the existing councils and agencies into three entities: the Science Agency, the Strategic Research Agency, and Vinnova (SOU, 2023). Additionally, public agencies fund research per sector. For example, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) has traditionally had a research department and has allocated funding to universities as well as municipalities for projects in risk and crisis management.

Citation:
DIGG. 2024. "About us." https://www.digg.se/en/about-us
Komet. 2022. "Kommittén för teknologisk innovation och etik." https://www.kometinfo.se

SOU. 2023. Ny myndighetsstruktur för finansiering av forskning och innovation. https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2023/10/sou-202359/

United Kingdom

Score 8

Foresight in the UK is led by the Government Office for Science (GOS), which has been running a foresight program for the past twenty years, publishing over 30 reports on diverse topics. The government's chief scientific adviser (GCSA) decides on topics based on various criteria, including identifying a clear customer within the government, ensuring there is added value from GOS leading the work, requiring long-term thinking, and informing government preparedness for potential changes. New projects must also be timely, filling key evidence gaps or informing upcoming government strategies, and should have the potential to inform significant, identifiable policy outcomes.

The GOS also maintains a blog that provides a platform for policymakers, stakeholders, and academics to connect with findings from its Futures, Foresight, and Horizon Scanning program. Additionally, NESTA, an innovation-focused agency, has an in-house strategic foresight function called the Discovery Hub. This hub supports teams across NESTA in using futures tools and methods to explore emerging trends and technologies that will impact their work.

Following a review led by Nobel Prize-winning scientist Paul Nurse, the government adopted recommendations to provide a more strategic approach to departmental research and development programs, engage in more sophisticated dialogue with academia, and make available documents outlining the most important research questions facing each department. The GCSA and the Government Office for Science serve as a bridge between private foresight and the government, with AI highlighted by Prime Minister Sunak as a crucial area for the UK to advance. Generally speaking, the challenge is not the lack of foresight activity but connecting that activity to routine government decision-making.

Canada

Score 7

Little strategic foresight exists in Canada, and many decisions are short-term in nature, guided by electoral cycles and imperatives. Public officials have complained about this for years (Wilner and Roy 2019).

Neither the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) nor the Privy Council Office (PCO) has an official strategic planning unit dedicated to medium- and long-term scenarios. Past efforts, such as the Science Council of Canada and the Economic Council of Canada, were abolished in the early 1990s. In 1997, Policy Horizons Canada was established under the PCO with a mandate to provide analysis and help the Federal public service anticipated emerging policy challenges and opportunities. However, its budget was small, and this initiative was more or less canceled in the mid-2000s.

In practice, however, central agencies – particularly the PCO and the Department of Finance – often have expert capacity dedicated to planning and priorities, both in policy agenda-setting and rollout, accessing these experts through the Canadian university system. Budgets typically consider five-year horizons and various medium-term scenarios in setting the fiscal framework. Planning initiatives are undertaken in the lead-up to Speeches from the Throne, and consultations with external consultants are common.

Canadian government departments and agencies tap into the expertise of academics and other experts through advisory committees and consultancies. The current Trudeau government has also used special advisory groups to provide information and consultations on a number of policy areas such as economic growth, cultural policy, and issues relating to young people. This was evident most recently in response to COVID-19, when expert councils became more prominent in the health field. A COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, for example, was created to advise on vaccine candidates and development, especially since the country lacked domestic supply. Moreover, the existing National Advisory Committee on Immunization has played a critical role throughout the pandemic.

A new chief science adviser, appointed in September 2017, continues to provide advice on issues related to science and government policies that support it.

Citation:
Wilner, Alex, and Martin Roy. 2020. "Canada's Emerging Foresight Landscape: Observations and Lessons." Foresight 22 (5/6): 551–62. https://doi.org/10.1108/FS-03-2020-0027.

Lithuania

Score 7

The central government is often able to foster the capacity for strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation within its organization. The Government Strategic Analysis Center (STRATA) has actively introduced strategic foresight into its work. The preparation of the long-term Lithuania 2050 strategy, which took place in 2022 – 2023, is perhaps the most visible example of such an exercise. STRATA experts, who led this process, consulted and used best practices from the Joint Research Center of the European Commission and several EU member states in employing strategic foresight methodology to guide the process.

The legal basis establishing the National Crisis Management Center was drafted in 2022, and the institution began operation in early 2023. It is doing important work in anticipating and preparing for potential crises. Additionally, the establishment of the Committee of the Future in the Seimas after the 2020 parliamentary elections and its work in organizing thematic discussions has also helped foster a culture of strategic foresight.

However, the methods of strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation need to be used more systematically. Their systematic use is constrained by low capacities across government policy units and by the underdeveloped culture of policy experimentation and ex ante impact assessments in the process of preparing draft laws.

Norway

Score 7

The Norwegian central government is relatively rigid and predictable in its approaches, but many organizations have innovative cultures and units dedicated to anticipating future events, often related to digital transformation. Many agencies collaborate closely with research institutes to improve their services. For example, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration invests significantly in using artificial intelligence and machine learning for decision-making to enhance services, in collaboration with various research institutes.

Many regulatory agencies have developed regulatory sandboxes, allowing government entities and private corporations to experiment in a controlled test environment. The Labour and Welfare Administration, for instance, has worked closely with the Norwegian Data Protection Authority to explore how different types of personal information can be utilized to improve services. Other regulatory agencies, such as the Financial Supervisory Authority of Norway and the National Archives of Norway, also use regulatory sandboxes.

The Norwegian Tax Administration is considered one of the most innovative organizations in the country. It is relatively advanced in digital transformation,

encourages experimentation, and maintains a long-term perspective on innovation and public sector changes. It collaborates closely on digitalization with universities, including the Norwegian School of Economics and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, and is a significant actor in the Open AI Lab.

At a general level, the Norwegian Digitalization Agency is the primary organization responsible for improving the public sector and facilitating more coordinated digital activities. The agency has high ambitions for innovation and collaborates with government agencies, municipalities, the private sector, and voluntary organizations to achieve this. Overall, the government can be considered innovative, though it is not uncommon for IT projects to take longer than planned. Such projects don't always produce effective policies and can be criticized by the public. One example is the Health Platform (Helseplattformen), intended to improve patients' health records, but it has been criticized by health personnel for numerous reasons, including poor technical systems.

Citation:
Finansdepartementet. 2018. "Etablering av regulatorisk sandkasse for fintech." https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/etablering-av-regulatorisk-sandkasse-for-fintech/id2618678/

Arkivverket. n.d. "Regulatorisk sandkasse." https://www.arkivverket.no/arkivutvikling/innebygd-arkivering/regulatorisk-sandkasse

Data Protection Authority. n.d. "Regulatory Privacy Sandbox." https://www.datatilsynet.no/en/regulations-and-tools/sandbox-for-artificial-intelligence/

Skatteetaten. 2020. "NHH oppretter nytt innovasjonssenter og Skatteetaten er med som samarbeidspartner." https://www.skatteetaten.no/presse/nyhetsrommet/nhh-oppretter-nytt-innovasjonssenter-og-skatteetaten-er-med-som-samarbeidspartner/

Norwegian Digitalization Agency. n.d. "About the Norwegian Digitalisation Agency." https://www.digdir.no/digdir/about-norwegian-digitalisation-agency/887

Spain

Score 7   The National Foresight and Strategy Office, a Directorate General of the Presidency of the Spanish Government, is responsible for analyzing future challenges and opportunities and planning multiple scenarios to prepare for them. Reporting directly to the president and his chief of cabinet, it consists of a multidisciplinary team of researchers. While the office's impact on work practices and organizational culture within ministerial bureaucracies has been limited, the new Sánchez government, which took office in November 2023, has highlighted the office's positive impact and announced plans to strengthen it and increase cooperation between the office and the administration.

Several high-level policy units support policy implementation in areas such as open government, knowledge management, and digital transformation. Examples include the State Secretariat for Digital Transformation of the Ministry of Economy and Digital Transformation and the Directorate General of Public Governance of the

Ministry of Finance and Public Administration. In 2023, Spain launched the first national Agency for the Supervision of Artificial Intelligence in the EU.

Spain has invested significantly in the digitalization of its public sector, ranking well above the EU average in the EU Digital Public Administration Indicators from 2012 to 2022. Significant resources for digital transition over the coming years are committed by the NextGenerationEU program, although these resources are limited to a specific timeframe and conditional on fulfilling specific objectives. Resources for experimentation are more limited, and the government has not clearly engaged in policy experimentation through various innovative techniques.

The Learning Strategy of the National Institute for Public Administration 2023–2024 does not include strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation as essential skills for high-level civil servants.

During the Spanish EU presidency, the government presented the strategic plan "Resilient EU2030" to enhance the resilience and global competitiveness of the European Union in sectors such as energy, digital technologies, health, and food.

United States

Score 7   There is no central body that coordinates strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation for the entire federal government. However, a wide range of entities within the federal government provides this functionality (Halloran).
The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) proposes initiatives aimed at shaping trends in science and technological research (Hart 2014).
The Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996 created Chief Information Officers (CIOs) in executive branch agencies (Daminescu 2016). The Chief Information Officers (CIO) Council brings together CIOs from various government agencies to enhance IT practices throughout the federal government. The initiative aimed to foster "mid-stream" connections across agencies to improve information technology management (McClure and Bertot 2000).
One of the most significant areas of federal government support for innovative research is the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). DARPA funds high-risk but potentially high-reward science projects, helping to keep the United States at the cutting edge of science and technology research (Fuchs 2010).

Citation:
Erica Fuchs. 2010. "Rethinking the Role of the State in Technology Development: DARPA and the Case for Embedded Network Governance." Research Policy.
Valentin Daminescu. 2016. "The Competencies of the Chief Information Officer (CIO): An Analysis of the Federal US CIO Council Members' Background." Journal of Defense Resources Management.
Charles McClure and John Bertot. 2000. "The Chief Information Officer: Assessing Its Impact." Government Information Quarterly.
Halloran, John. 2015. "Coordinating Science: White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Influence in Federal R&D Budgets." Unpublished PhD thesis, MIT.
David Hart. 2013. "An Agent, Not a Mole: Assessing the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy." Science and Policy.

Australia

Score 6

Australian governments, both federal and state, have shown increasing interest in strategic foresight (BETA, 2023; DPC, 2023). Although still in early stages, new initiatives and training in this area are accelerating. The defense and intelligence communities have long appreciated strategic foresight in decision-making. Across the government, there is greater familiarity with behavioral economics, and specialized units have been created to spread knowledge of experimental and data-gathering approaches to ground policymaking rigorously.

A recent project by the Behavioral Economics Team of the Australian Government (BETA) involved investigating retention challenges in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) workforce (BETA 2023). The advisory report noted high turnover rates (17%-25%) compared to similar organizations. The main reasons for leaving included high workload, concerns about service quality, and paperwork volume. BETA is designing and testing interventions to improve welfare and retention in the NDIS.

In summary, while attention to strategic foresight is increasing, the relevant institutions are still relatively new and not yet major players in policy circles.

Citation:
BETA. 2023. "BETA Projects."Australian Government Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. https://behaviouraleconomics.pmc.gov.au/projects

DPC. 2023. "Strategic Foresight." Government of South Australia Department of the Premier and Cabinet. https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/responsibilities/strategic-foresight

Austria

Score 6

Strategic-planning units and bodies consisting of public officials exist within individual ministries. The Federal Chancellery can be considered the principal strategic-planning unit, as it is responsible for coordinating the government's various activities. However, it generally lacks the specialized personnel that would enable it to function as a comprehensive strategy unit and has no power to issue instructions to other ministries.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a new forum called the "Future Operations Clearing Board" (see Koenig 2020) emerged within the chancellery. It was designed to facilitate the exchange between scientific knowledge and policymaking. Until its dissolution in early 2022, the think tank "Think Austria" was a key unit in the chancellery dedicated to fostering strategic foresight. In September 2021, a new unit was established to coordinate foresight-related activities (Referat IV/10/a – Europakommunikation, EU-Gemeinderäte).

However, an in-depth study of foresight-related structures and activities in the Austrian political executive found little evidence of systematic coordination in this field, with various ad hoc activities shaping the overall picture (see Rat für Forschung und Technologieentwicklung 2021).

Citation:

https://goeg.at/sites/goeg.at/files/inline-files/Briefing%20Paper%20Foresight%20Szenarienforum.pdf

Koenig, Thomas. 2020. "Wissenschaftliche Politikberatung in Österreich. Die Erfahrungen mit der Einrichtung und Durchführung eines 'Future Operations Clearing Board." Forschung. Politik – Strategie – Management 13 (3-4): 101-106.

Rat für Forschung und Technologieentwicklung. 2021. "Strategische Foresight-Prozesse: Übersicht und Handlungsoptionen." https://repository.fteval.at/id/eprint/665/1/211115_EBP_Foresight_Schlussbericht_anFTE.pdf

Belgium

Score 6

Belgium has not developed a robust culture of anticipatory innovation and strategic foresight. However, it features several organizations that support economic forecasting and expert analysis. Notably, Brussels, as both the capital of Belgium and Europe, houses European institutions with strategic foresight units. Belgium regularly collaborates with these institutions and the OECD for its strategic thinking. Despite this, these remain external bodies, often imperfectly integrated into Belgian government procedures.

The oldest and most competent planning organization is the Federal Planning Bureau, founded in 1959. It has evolved into an expert and independent entity providing economic forecasts at multiple levels, quantitative analyses, technical support for greening the Belgian economy, and independent assessments of the financial sustainability of public finances. Recently, it was tasked with "costing" the main proposals of political parties before elections. Next to this well-structured (yet partly underfunded) bureau, Belgian governments have created a rather large number of supporting bodies that cover a broader range of topics. However, the distribution of resources can sometimes prevent each body from reaching critical mass, possibly by design, as each remains dependent on its minister and thus remains amenable.
Exceptions to this trend include the "BOSA" ministry at the federal level and the VARIO unit in Flanders, Belgium's largest and wealthiest region. BOSA provides strategic support mainly for human resources purposes and is expanding its technical capacity, although it cannot impose a methodology on other ministries. VARIO provides strategic analysis for industrial policy and mobility (TomorrowLab 2024).

Citation:
Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (oecd-opsi.org)
https://www.plan.be/aboutus/institution_desc.php?lang=nl
OECD Review of the Belgian Federal Planning Bureau
https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20161209_02616808
https://www.vlaanderen.be/departement-kanselarij-buitenlandse-zaken
Over Vario | VARIO: https://www.vario.be/nl/over-ons

https://www.tomorrowlab.com/cases/mobility-in-flanders
https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/view-file/56338
https://www.tomorrowlab.com/cases/mobility-in-flanders
https://www.belgiantrain.be/nl/about-sncb/en-route-vers-mieux/innovation/innovation-lab
https://bosa.belgium.be/fr/themes/soutien-strategique/innovation/innover-au-sein-de-ladministration
annual report FPS BOSA A5l NL v2022 final.pdf
https://bosa.belgium.be/fr/themes/soutien-strategique
https://bosa.belgium.be/nl/themas/digitale-overheid
https://www.digitalwallonia.be/fr/

Czechia

Score 6

In June 2022, the Ministry of the Interior published an analysis assessing the potential of the Czech public administration to foster and support innovation. This analysis followed an OECD declaration on May 22, 2019, regarding innovation in the public sector. The declaration included examples from various countries, highlighting good practices. The study is part of implementing the Concept of Client-Oriented Public Administration by 2030, which the government approved in 2020 with EU funding support. The concept aims to enhance the client orientation of public administration by achieving five (notable but potentially ambiguous) strategic goals:

Accessible and quality public administration services
An efficient public administration system
Effective public administration institutions
Competent human resources
An informed and participating citizenry (Mugglin et al. 2022: 21)

The Ministry of the Interior regularly analyzes innovations in public administration. An OECD evaluation of progress was generally positive but noted that more work is needed. It found that participation in policymaking was weak, rarely extending beyond prominent individuals. The evaluation recommended experimenting with ways to involve citizens more broadly, such as a central interactive portal.

The evaluations indicate that Czech public administration lacks a systematic approach to innovation. Innovations are developed sporadically, primarily depending on political priorities. Employees are generally not motivated to propose new ideas and ways of working, limiting the emergence of innovations. However, the situation varies across different segments of public administration.

The annual report on public administration for 2022 noted that half of the central organs had implemented some form of innovation, a higher figure than in previous years, although data only go back to 2020. It remains unclear what qualifies as an innovation and whether many of those recorded had a significant impact.

France

Score 6

The central government is able to rely on a substantial apparatus for strategic foresight. Several services in this area are attached to the prime ministerial office. France Stratégie prominently provides the government with expertise in this respect, and holds a mandate to elaborate scenarios for the future. More specialized agencies focus on the areas of pensions (Conseil d'Orientation pour les Retraites), employment (Conseil d'Orientation pour l'Emploi) and the economy in general (Conseil d'Analyse Économique). Many ministries also have statistical offices and analytical teams.

Leveraging data with the aim of improving services and impacting society as a whole has also been a key policy goal in recent years. The Direction Interministérielle du Numérique (DINUM) is an interministerial task force for the digital transformation of government. The portal data.gouv offers a repository of publicly available data from public authorities. More generally, the digital transformation of government has been pushed quite far, even leading to discussions about whether all citizens have the capacity to exercise their rights in such an environment. Coordination and the actual capacity to process all this information have also been regularly lacking.

Policy experimentation has been popularized as a form of testing new policies in all domains. However, this is most often viewed as a testing ground for a new policy rather than actual randomized controlled trials. Such experiments have sometimes been implemented in partnership with academic researchers, but these remain very limited in scope. In most cases, civil servants are not accustomed to this type of technique, and access to the highest-ranked civil servants still follows a rather traditional pattern of competition (Babinet 2020).
Overall, these transformations of the modes of governance have had a limited impact on public management. If new public management has had tremendous consequences for the workings of public authorities, the bureaucratic culture has not wholly adopted effective strategic foresight.

Citation:
Babinet, G. 2020. Refondre les politiques publiques avec le numérique. Paris: Dunod.

Germany

Score 6

Strategic foresight approaches have been strengthened in the German government over the past few years. The Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik has established a Strategic Foresight Competence Center, which supports federal ministries and authorities in incorporating and expanding the concepts and methods of strategic foresight in their work. In particular, the BAKS offers the Strategic Foresight methodology seminar and other event formats (Bundesakademie für

Sicherheitspolitik, 2024). The BAKS provides information about the broad arsenal of foresight methods, including most that are mentioned in the question.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) plays a coordinating role with its "Vorausschau" (Foresight) initiative. A mid-term conference of this initiative gathered contributions from various ministries, each of which has increasingly devoted resources to strategic foresight over the past ten years. Consequently, attention to long-term trends has grown. Structures also include a strategic foresight group in the Federal Chancellery. Experts see some impact of these increasing foresight analyses on government policies (Bovenschulte et al. 2021).

Currently, the BMBF Vorausschau initiative is ongoing, with trends and topics continuously being developed for discussion within and outside the BMBF. A future office has been established to systematically search for and briefly describe new developments using scientific methods. Every six months from 2019 to mid-2022, 50 to 60 topics were identified, updated, and then discussed with the Zukunftskreis (Future Circle), a committee of experts from science, business, and culture.

Finally, the Future Circle identifies topics that it believes could be important for future developments and should be further investigated. The initial focus – in a first detailed study – is on the social values of people and how they are changing. The Chancellor's Council for the Future ("Zukunftsrat") primarily advises the federal government on new developments in science and technology.

Other scientific institutions advising the government also apply strategic foresight tools. The German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) integrates strategic foresight into its policy advisory processes. Specialists aim to assist policymakers in making sophisticated, long-term decisions within a dynamic global context by applying foresight methodology. This adaptable methodology allows for customization to address specific circumstances in areas of interest (DGAP, 2024).

Information on whether strategic foresight know-how plays a significant role in the recruitment of top civil servants is not available. It is also unclear whether this forward-looking approach has already had a significant impact on policy reflections. The prevailing impression is that the German government often responds reactively to major upheavals and crises. For example, events such as the Russian aggression against Ukraine or the sudden halt of Russian gas imports were not systematically analyzed as potential scenarios beforehand.

Citation:
Bovenschulte, Marc, Simone Ehrenberg-Silies, Kerstin Goluchowicz, and Christoph Bogenstahl. 2021. "Regierungs-Foresight – Stand und Perspektiven." Working Paper des Instituts für Innovation und Technik in der VDI/VDE-IT, Nr. 59.
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Greece

Score 6

Greece has established a dedicated central government unit for strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation. Established in 2022 by the Presidency of the Government, the Special Secretariat for Foresight is responsible for exploring ideas and scenarios, providing tools and guidance, and coordinating and monitoring relevant projects.

The Ministry of Digital Governance, established in 2019 as a successor to the Ministry of Digital Policy, Communications, and Information, also contributes to policy implementation in areas such as open government, knowledge management, and digital transformation.

The government allocates financial and human resources, such as grant funding and procurement, to establish test beds for new ideas through the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (ELIDEK). Since 2016, this state-funded institution, supervised by the Ministry of Development, has organized various rounds of calls for tender, funding research teams from across Greece and all scientific disciplines. These teams provide research results and policy recommendations to the scientific community and public administration.

Higher civil servants receive training at the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA), which covers strategic management methods, innovations in public administration, and digital skills.

However, most of the aforementioned government units are relatively new and have not yet matured enough to engage in policy experimentation through innovation labs, behavioral insights, or delivery teams using relevant techniques. As a result, it is too early to determine their impact on work practices and organizational culture within ministerial bureaucracies.

Citation:
The ELIDEK Foundation was established by Law 4429/2016.

The website of the Ministry of Digital Transformation is https://mindigital.gr/

The Special Secretariat for Foresight was founded in 2022 under Presidential Decree 19/2022. The website of the Special Secretariat of Foresight is https://foresight.gov.gr/en/

The website of ELIDEK is https://www.elidek.gr/en/homepage/

The website of the school in which higher civil servants are trained, namely the EKDDA, is https://www.ekdd.gr/

The course curriculum of the EKDDA is available at https://www.ekdd.gr/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/%CE%A0.%CE%A3.-%CE%9A%CE%98_%CE%A0%CE%B1%CF%81%CE%AC%CF%81%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%B1-1.pdf

Netherlands

Score 6

The coalition agreement for the Rutte IV government was entitled, "Looking after each other, and toward the future" ("Omkijken naar elkaar, vooruitkijken naar de toekomst"). "Looking after each other" implied paying detailed attention to what had gone wrong in the past in terms of miscommunication and distrust. Arguably, the central government paid most attention to restoring citizens' trust. The key notion here was replacing bureaucratic rigidity by "customization" ("maatwerk") as a solution for citizens who might otherwise fall between the cracks. Several of the major executive agencies have set up so-called customized workplaces. There are now several within the Employee Insurance Agency, as well as within the Social Insurance Bank. Customized workplaces are also emerging in other places: for example, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) in Amsterdam has opened its first customized work desk, and since 2021, the central government has maintained a Multiproblem Measurement Desk to help implementers in multiproblem situations.

As to be expected from a government with a prime minister who quipped that politicians with future vision ought to see their eye doctors urgently, there is no dedicated central government unit for strategic foresight. In a 2021 study, public administration scholars observed that the Algemene Bestuursdienst – a training and selection center for a pool of some 1,500 high-level civil servants for top-level positions in all Dutch departments – has too little strategic orientation and is too focused on operational management and recruitment, thus failing to help managers see links between present and future social tasks. In 2022, the Ministry for the Interior published a "Guide to Civil Servant Craftsmanship" ("Gids Ambtelijk Vakmanschap") that is manifestly a response to disturbed politician-civil servant relationships (see also "Quality of Horizontal Coordination"). Regarding a more strategic approach, both the Council for Public Administration and the Dutch School for Public Administration have published reports focusing on transition management and the need for policy learning as novel approaches to policy innovation in the face of systemic change.

The years 2022 and 2023 saw an avalanche of futures studies by all government-supported knowledge and advisory institutes (CPB, SCP, CBS, KNMI, PBL, etc.) and the agricultural university (Wageningen University Research). All of these studies used standard scenario methodology. The Scientific Council for Government Policy produced an awareness-raising major futures study on the challenges of AI as a key system-wide technology. Since spring 2020, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) has operated a behavioral unit, originally tasked with supporting COVID-19 policy. The behavioral approach to policy design is also being picked up, less formally, by the CPB, SCP and PBL. For example, the government has produced lists of what individual citizens or families can do to alleviate the burdens of climate change and energy reduction.

Parliamentarian Pieter Omtzigt, by adopted motion, advocated the establishment of a think tank focusing on the future of taxation and the tax services. New GL/PvdA leader and former Green Deal Eurocommissioner Frans Timmermans has also called for long-term future policy studies by "cathedral architects." Universities and some larger municipalities have started policy labs, frequently as frugal public/private partnerships and with AI startups and businesses as private partners.

All in all, the Netherlands confirms its image as a very reluctant governance and policy innovator (see previous SGI reports) that is chronically delayed in arriving at major decisions concerning its strategic future.

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Slovakia

Score 6

Since 2016, Slovakia's central government units, known as analytical units, have been established within ministries to focus on strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation. These units independently explore ideas and scenarios, provide tools and guidance, coordinate and monitor activities, offer training and coaching, and organize events. The primary funding source for these policy units has been the EU-financed Efficient Public Administration operational program. The national Building and Development of Analytical Units at Selected Central State Administration Bodies project supported the creation of analytical units at 14 central administration bodies.

Before this project, the Institute of Financial Policy at the Ministry of Finance and the Institute of Health Policy at the Ministry of Health were established and widely recognized as effective public policy units. However, the Institute of Health Policy was transformed into the less effective Institute for Health Analyses in 2021 (see Čunderlíková, 2021).

The Institute of Financial Policy (IFP) has maintained its important cross-sectoral position during the 2022–2024 period. The IFP's mission is to provide reliable macroeconomic and fiscal analyses and forecasts to the Slovak government and the public. It also functions as the policy unit of the Finance Ministry. The IFP comprises several core departments:

The Macroeconomic Department: Analyzes and forecasts developments within the Slovak economy, such as GDP growth, inflation, and unemployment.

The Tax and Fiscal Department: Analyzes and forecasts public budget revenues (taxes and social insurance), fiscal policy, and public finance sustainability.
The Structural and Expenditure Policies Department: Evaluates government spending and structural policies, such as education, health, and the environment, from the Finance Ministry's perspective.

The Value for Money Department (UHP): Aims to enhance the value received by the public for their money. Its primary objectives are to increase the effectiveness of general government expenditures, improve public services, and consolidate public finance. This department reviews public spending and assesses planned public investment projects, particularly those costing above €40 million or €10 million in the IT sector.

Beyond the IFP, the Office of Government and other ministries generally do not promote policy experimentation through innovation labs, behavioral insights, or delivery teams using techniques such as prototyping, human-centered design, randomized controlled trials, project-based employment, or data analysis.

The government occasionally allocates financial and human resources to external bodies for establishing test beds for new ideas, but it often expects predetermined results (see Sedlačko and Staroňová, 2022).

Citation:
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Slovenia

Score 6

The Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy was founded in 2014. In January 2023, the office was reorganized within the Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development. Among other responsibilities, the ministry coordinates development planning documents with those of the European Union and other international organizations. The Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 was prepared in 2017. Although the government has established a special website for the implementation of the strategy, the last report on development was produced in 2020.

In 2017, the public sector introduced some innovations, such as the interactive Policy Jam workshops. In these workshops, stakeholders worked on predetermined policy topics, attempted to understand the main challenges, and sought possible solutions. However, only two Policy Jams were organized. In October 2021, a global conference was held under the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU. This conference marked the first time that governance in terms of innovation, drafting better laws, and improving the quality of the public sector was discussed.

The government is also supported by two offices: the Institute for Macroeconomic Analysis and Development and the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. These offices produce data and forecasts essential for the country's various strategy and development processes.

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Ireland

Score 5

Irish policymaking is largely defined by short and medium-term timescales. Consequently, policy and supporting analysis almost exclusively rely on predictive forecasting, with limited evolution over the past two decades. While central statistics office population projections and climate impact analyses are notable exceptions,

most policy development relies on single forecasts, including key areas such as economic and fiscal management and environmental policy, including emissions reduction. This over-reliance on uncertain forecasts has had severe consequences for the economy, notably playing a role in the 2008 financial crisis and recession (O'Mahony et al. 2023). It has also significantly impacted environmental priorities of sustainability and climate action, as technological forecasts have narrowed the scope of solutions, leading to unsustainable development paths (O'Mahony 2010) and practices that are out-of-step with international standards (O'Mahony and Torney, 2023). The lack of methodological diversity has been a significant constraint on policy innovation for sustainable development (Torney and O'Mahony 2023).

The default approach in Irish public policymaking has been to avoid using multiple scenarios or to consider them in a highly constrained fashion. For instance, Ireland's National Development Plan to 2030 (Government of Ireland 2021a) and the National Planning Framework to 2040 (Government of Ireland 2021b) are based on a single population projection from the ESRI, with minor variations in internal migration patterns (Morgenroth 2018). Consequently, strategic national policy and planning for economic development, services, infrastructure and spatial planning are not adequately prepared for high levels of uncertainty, as alternative population scenarios and variations in other key drivers are not applied. Similarly, the national Housing Need and Demand Assessments use the same constrained projections, with only minor variations in variables such as incomes and prices (DHLGH, 2021). This limited approach to scenario planning increases the risk of policy failures, with significant consequences for social, environmental and economic objectives. It also curtails the potential for strategic policy innovations that can achieve synergies and pursue opportunities, a problem evident in national planning and policy for emissions mitigation and energy, which also rely on single forecasts (O'Mahony and Torney 2023).

Science Foundation Ireland is beginning to support test beds and new ideas, yet strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation and governance are still peripheral to the skills and capacities of high-level civil servants. The Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) was established in response to recognized weaknesses in strategic planning and capacity skills within the Irish government (Wright 2010). However, IGEES has yet to substantially engage with strategic foresight approaches. Recognizing the limitations of current policy development approaches, there is growing interest in the application of strategic foresight and anticipatory governance (OPSI/OECD 2021). Building capacity in these areas, starting from a peripheral public policy activity, can facilitate the application of these approaches, harnessing the innovative mindset evident in Ireland's economic development in the 20th century and more recently in response to COVID-19. Accordingly, the OECD report on the Irish public service emphasizes the need to develop capabilities for strategic foresight (OECD 2023).

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Israel

Score 5

Since 2006, nearly all government ministries have established new departments for strategic planning and policy. The power and resources of these departments vary by ministry. For some ministries, they play a significant role in policymaking, while in others they are less meaningful. For instance, the strategic planning department in the Ministry of Health is highly influential. Its director participates in all management meetings, and the department issues numerous assessments and reports used for policy planning. Conversely, the strategic planning department in the Ministry of Social Welfare has less influence.

The PMO is responsible for coordinating these units and providing guidance and tools. In addition, the National Security Council, the National Economic Council, and the Planning, Coordination and Organization Division operate within the PMO. Each of these bodies is responsible for developing national strategy in the domains of defense, economy and government, respectively.

In practice, a large proportion of strategic development takes place in other bodies, most prominently the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Finance. Meanwhile, cooperation and coordination between the bodies is not stable. For example, in recent years, the National Economic Council has become increasingly perceived as politicized and its cooperation with the Ministry of Finance has been limited.

The PMO also includes the National Digital Agency, which is responsible for developing digital tools to improve government activities and promote transparency.

There is no strategic policy regarding policy experimentation. Some departments promote more experiments than others. For instance, the National Insurance Institute and the Ministry of Transportation promote many policy experiments based on random sampling and scientific procedures. The Ministry of Welfare promotes many pilot projects on various programs and services. However, these are often not randomized trials and the targets are purposefully selected. All ministries have research departments, but their budgets are not large and their capacity to promote policy experimentation is limited. The current government initially intended to close down the scientific departments, but decided not to do so only after public pressure. Foresight and innovation are not considered the main traits for the recruitment of civil servants.

In general, strategic plans do not include various scenarios and, in most cases, strategic planning units do not contribute significantly to the policy planning process. However, there are exceptions. For instance, the Ministry of Health has a very powerful strategic planning department that often issues policy proposals and scenarios. An attempt to empower the strategic planning department in the Ministry of Social Welfare did not succeed largely due to the objections of ministerial staff. At the same time, almost all Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health programs are piloted before being rolled out.

Japan

Score 5

Different cabinets in Japan have relied on various organs as central policy units. In 2009, the DPJ government established the National Strategy Unit. However, the unit lacked the necessary resources to adequately perform its tasks. Since returning to power in 2012, the LDP government has relied on advisory councils specializing in separate fields rather than on a single central policy unit for policy coordination.

Civil servants in Japan are not sufficiently trained in strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation, and these skills are not required to pass ministerial entrance exams. The ethos of public officials is based on protecting the interests of their line ministries and following the existing stance of their departments, which does not incite creativity. Most policy proposals among bureaucrats are drafted in a bottom-up manner through the round-robin (ringi) system, which strengthens collectivism and leads to a blurring of responsibility for decisions.

Ministries rarely plan multiple scenarios, though there has been improvement in this field due to the introduction of an ex ante RIA requirement under the Government Policy Evaluations Act from 2001. The necessity to address new challenges in recent years has created the need for seeking innovative policy solutions, though most bureaucrats remain opposed to far-reaching reform. The central government encompasses several organs that support policy implementation in specific areas. In particular, digital transformation and to some extent open government tasks are

coordinated by the Digital Agency, which was established in September 2021. About one-third of its initial employees were hired from the private sector, with the aim of making the agency open to new technologies and innovative solutions. Nevertheless, the agency still lacks the budget and staff to achieve its goals in a timely manner. Progress on digitalization has been hindered by resistance from other ministries and agencies.

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Latvia

Score 5

In late 2018, the State Chancellery of Latvia initiated a project to bolster the innovation culture in public administration, aligning with the Public Administration Reform Plan 2020. Initially, three interdisciplinary labs were established, focusing on reducing administrative burdens, strategic human resource management, and enhancing the public administration's reputation. By the end of 2019, these labs merged into a single innovation lab. This lab continues to foster innovative problem-solving in public administration; however, it needs more capacity to provide strategic foresight and anticipatory innovations as it focuses on policy issues.

Innovations in Latvia's public sector include various projects. The Ministry of Health has improved written communication through initiatives like "Friday Advice." The "Una" virtual assistant, powered by AI, enhances customer service quality for the Enterprise Register. The e-kvits system streamlines data submission for healthcare service expenses, facilitating tax filing. The Central Finance and Contracting Agency employs user experience (UX) design thinking to enhance the Cohesion Project Information System, automating specific project-related checks. Additionally, Latvia hosted its first policy-maker hackathon – fostering collaboration between policy creators and entrepreneurs to enhance 5G technology implementation in the Baltic region and the EU. So far, Latvia has a project-based approach to strategic foresight with limited impact on the policymaking system (Valsts Kanceleja, 2023).

To support public institutions, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (MoEPRD) in Latvia has developed a simplified evaluation methodology for website and mobile app accessibility, available on their website. The methodology includes guidelines for assessing compliance impact and developing accessibility notices. The MoEPRD also offers two training courses focusing on user-oriented content and managing online information, aimed at improving skills in public administration information provision and accessibility. These initiatives have seen significant participation from public administration staff

and have included several webinars and conferences to further promote digital accessibility.

There is a growing demand for evidence-based knowledge in policymaking, but this demand varies between line ministries and specific factors of the policies. The evidence-based approach has a limited impact on strategic policymaking processes and is poorly reflected in strategic documents. Even the white papers, which serve as medium-term documents, reflect alternative policies. Usually, the policy to be accepted is justified, while other alternatives are rejected. As critical policy designers, the ministries strongly rely on their "in-house" knowledge, where alternatives are subject to non-review.

The Innovation Laboratory's current sprint process, which seeks solutions to submitted problems and concludes with a prototype, takes approximately 1.5 to 3 months. Given the laboratory's recent inception and the novelty of its participation methods, assessing its real impact is challenging. Funding for expanding innovation practices and environmental development from 2021 to 2029 amounts to €1.3 million, with 85% from the European Regional Development Fund and 15% from the national budget (Labs of Latvia, 2023; Valsts Kanceleja, 2023).

The strategic plans currently lack a diverse range of future scenarios and possibilities, indicating a more linear approach to planning. Multiple potential outcomes and varied scenarios are not extensively explored or considered.

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Portugal

Score 5   Exercising strategic foresight remains an underdeveloped practice within most of Portugal's public administration. There is no central government unit with the robust capability to conduct strategic foresight. Evidence from the past few years – specifically from 2022 to 2024 – indicates a lack of comprehensive foresight analysis in Portugal. The most thorough recent analysis was a study conducted by Ribeiro in 2021 under the aegis of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, a private entity.

Within the central government, PlanAPP is currently building capacity in strategic foresight, but its capabilities are not yet fully developed. Currently, its activities are limited to organizing workshops on the subject (PlanAPP 2022).

Regarding policy implementation, particularly in innovation labs, LabX – the Centre for Innovation in the Public Sector, within the Administrative Modernization Agency (AMA, I.P.), plays a significant role. LabX's mission is to foster an innovation ecosystem within public administration, aiming to rejuvenate public services to better align with the actual needs of citizens and businesses.

A noteworthy initiative by AMA/LabX, conducted in collaboration with the OECD's Observatory of Public Sector Innovation, is the Anticipatory Innovation Starter Kit (AISK). Launched in early 2022, the AISK comprises guides, tools, and detailed instructions designed to equip users within the Portuguese public administration to adopt anticipatory and foresight practices. By implementing the AISK, the central government aims to cultivate a culture oriented toward strategic planning and future preparedness, thereby integrating anticipatory innovation within public organizations.

LabX also aimed to establish a network of experimentation labs in public sector institutions. However, a recent review in January 2024 reveals that, after an initial project with Coimbra Municipality in 2019, there has been no significant progression.

In summary, despite some methodological analyses and capacity-building efforts during 2017 – 2020, the central government has seldom been able to effectively champion strategic foresight and innovation from 2022 to 2024.

Citation:

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Switzerland

Score 5   Strategic planning is not given significant weight in Switzerland. It is further rendered difficult by the fact that the country has a quasi-presidential political system – meaning the government cannot be voted out of office by the parliament – with a collegial government, a strong nonprofessional element, a consociational decision-making structure, a strong corporatist relationship between a weak federal state and

outside interest organizations, and considerable uncertainty deriving from the system of direct democracy. The rather weak administration and the fact that there are no specific and specialized education curricula for public servants are further factors hindering the prospective capacities of the state. Compared with other advanced democracies, strategic planning in Switzerland is underdeveloped. Moreover, as it is constrained by the governmental and federal structure and the logic of direct democracy, it is rather inefficient.

Strategic planning is the task of the Federal Chancellery, the central coordinating body of the federal administration. Strategic planning in this context involves identifying the current legislative period's major challenges, describing the period's major goals and instruments, specifying goals for the current year, and exercising accountability by providing parliament with annual reports.

A recent review of the state of research finds that "in the context of a strongly federal and non-parliamentary system with extended direct democracy, the Federal Council usually fails to present – and implement – a forward-looking strategic management and coherent policy-planning with clear priorities" (Vatter 2020: 251). The COVID-19 crisis revealed shortcomings in the government's prospective preparedness, as many crisis-management functions had to be put in place in an ad hoc manner (e.g., procedures for coordination between cantons and the federal state, scientific advice) and could not rely on previously planned procedures (Hirschi et al. 2022; Mavrot/Sager 2023).

Citation:

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Hungary

Score 4   The institutional backbone of strategic foresight is located within the core executive, specifically the Prime Minister's Office and the Cabinet Office. The strategic aim here should be understood as the administration's ability to advance the prime minister's illiberal agenda, rather than proactively addressing policy challenges and changes in the political and economic environment. The open government tier is very underdeveloped and highly politicized. The digital agenda, however, is better

organized, with several programs aimed at digitalizing the administration. Anticipatory innovation remains relatively weak, and the relevant programs and training methodologies are underdeveloped.

Due to the high pace of lawmaking in Hungary, there is often insufficient time for scenario-building and impact assessments. Nonetheless, the Cabinet Office regularly monitors public opinion through flash polls outsourced to pro-government think tanks such as the Századvég Institute or Nézőpont; therefore, it has a fairly precise evaluation of public opinion that frequently influences policymaking or political decisions. The selection of high-level civil servants is based on political nominations rather than merit, extending down to the middle-range ranks. Consequently, the best-trained civil servants do not always oversee policies.

Italy

Score 4

At the central level, Italy lacks dedicated units for strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation, although specific units like Open Government and Digital Transformation do exist. As a result, no behavioral experimentation is developed by the central government, and no experimental strategies are in place. Additionally, there is no policy for seeking new ideas, apart from funds allocated to basic and applied research in universities and public research centers.

In the recruitment process for senior civil servants, strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation are not yet included as essential skills for candidates. Although some training is available for those already working in central administration, it is not mandatory and is provided by the National School of Administration.

While there is minimal use of the behavioral social science perspective, there are official plans to enhance open government and digital transformation. The NRRP is investing around €6 billion in the country's digital transformation. However, it remains unclear how far the funded projects have progressed.

Overall, central government plans do not account for multiple scenarios and potential related strategies, resulting in a lack of real preparation for future strategic challenges. For example, there is no activity addressing the socioeconomic effects of the dramatic decrease in population projected for the next 30 years. It is important to note that none of the significant funds to be invested over the six years of the NRRP have been allocated to developing strategic preparedness activities.

Poland

Score 4

The government's strategic focus during Morawiecki's first term as prime minister centered on sustaining and expanding its social base, with all crucial strategies adopted to reach the perspective of 2027 – 2030.

The Government Center for Analysis, housed within the Chancellery, was responsible for foresight and strategic planning. It provided analyses of critical public policies to various government entities. The departments of Strategic Studies, Analyses, and Regulatory Impact Assessment evaluated socioeconomic areas horizontally and strategically, analyzed public discourse, and assessed the functioning and efficiency of state structures. Their formal objectives included instilling a project-oriented culture in public administration and improving the efficiency of portfolio initiatives.

The conservative administration established or reshaped specialized bodies focused on opinion-forming, research, publishing, popularizing and disseminating best practices. These bodies included the Institute of Central Europe (2018), the Institute De Republica (2021), the Generation Institute (2021), the Institute of War Studies (2021), the Polish Economic Institute (2018) and the Institute of Justice (2016), in addition to existing institutes such as the Western Institute (1945) and the Institute of East-Central Studies (2011). Aligned with the government's ideology, these organizations provided extensive analysis, training and coaching. They often received public financial support and contributed significantly to policy formation.

Under the Morawiecki government, digitalization of the public sphere was a priority. The prime minister established the GovTech Center, an interministerial team, to coordinate strategic digital projects across the public sector. The MeinTech initiative (2022) aimed to modernize the Polish education system, involving collaboration between the Ministry of Education and Science, the Educational Research Institute, the Information Technology Center for Education and Science, the Information Processing Center – State Research Institute, the Education Development Center, and the GovTech Center.

However, policy experimentation techniques, particularly in a human-centered direction, were employed to only a limited extent. Strategic foresight and anticipatory innovation were not consistently considered fundamental skills in recruiting and training high-level civil servants.