

Programme area n°16

Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency

OBJECTIVE

Integrity and accountability of public administration improved

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Institutional capacity-building
- > Public administration reform
- > Delivery, accessibility and quality of public services
- > Accountable, inclusive and transparent government
- > Economic and financial governance
- > Cooperation between government and civil society

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Public governance reviews and follow-up with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- > Support to public administration reform programmes, with a focus on strengthening good governance, democratic institutions, transparency and prevention of corruption
- > Systems for budgeting, audit, control and supervision and for public consultations with citizens
- > Revision of national legislation on local self-government, including finance, in line with the principles of the Council of Europe Charter of Local Self Government and other European standards
- > Follow up of recommendations of the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) addressing good governance with the involvement of the Council of Europe
- > Capacity building and skills development within all levels of public administration
- > Building citizens' trust in public institutions at all levels of government
- > Social innovation policy approaches including guidelines and mechanisms for interaction between civil and private sectors, public authorities and parliament
- > Campaigns aimed at raising awareness and empowering women's participation in government
- > Development of institutional and judicial frameworks for the protection of whistleblowers in line with European standards
- > Knowledge exchange between democratic institutions, such as national parliaments

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Good public governance and a more efficient and effective public administration are key drivers for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth, which are the aims of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The economic crisis has negatively affected already strained government resources and posed challenges in the area of democratic governance. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) most countries have experienced increased income inequality since the onset of the crisis. Unemployment is high, especially among young people. Vulnerable groups of all ages and both sexes are being hit by the crisis. Inter-regional differences in public services and regional disparities combined with significant differences in fiscal capacities have deepened.

National and sub-national governments are major drivers of developments needed to find a way out of the crisis. In order to respond to the crisis, plan for the future and make the best use of scarce resources governments need to strengthen their capacity.

Within the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy and the EU's cohesion policy, national public administration reform programmes are seen as instruments to improve democratic and economic governance and foster fiscal consolidation. They are essential for structural reforms required, for investment in growth and employment, and for improved service delivery. They also help achieve a better balance between economic interests, environmental concerns and social inclusion. This is underlined in the report "State of democracy, human rights and rule of law in Europe" by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe (April 2014), which recommends measures to reinforce governance structures. Adherence to recommendations of European and international monitoring reports shall be ensured if applicable.

Governments are faced with a loss of trust in their ability to deal with the crisis and meet citizens' needs and expectations. This loss of trust can reduce the effectiveness of policies and ultimately undermine the capacity of government to uphold fundamental rights. Good public governance, including the rule of law, contributes to building trust and confidence in national institutions as stewards of national well-being, quality of life and economic prosperity for citizens.

The EEA and Norway Grants support concrete actions and reforms to develop and implement public policies of governments at local, regional and national levels. Bilateral partnerships between donor and beneficiary country entities are promoted as a way to stimulate exchanges of best practice and knowledge.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > The programme area is mandatory in each beneficiary country. It shall be implemented either as an individual programme or within other programmes
- > The programme area is particularly suitable for cooperation with international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)