OECD

# OECD Public Integrity Handbook

Report

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Summary Full report


## Abstract

The *OECD Public Integrity Handbook* provides guidance to government, business and civil society on implementing the OECD Recommendation on Public Integrity. The Handbook clarifies what the Recommendation's thirteen principles mean in practice and identifies challenges in implementing them. The Handbook provides guidance on improving co-operation within government, as well between the national and subnational levels. To build cultures of integrity across government and society, the Handbook details the core elements of a merit-based human resource management system and the key ingredients of open organisational cultures. It also clarifies government's role in providing guidance to companies, civil society and citizens on upholding public integrity values. Moreover, the Handbook unpacks how to use the risk management process to assess and manage integrity risks, and highlights how to use the enforcement system to ensure real accountability for integrity violations.


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## Executive summary

Integrity is one of the pillars of political, economic and social structures, and is a cornerstone of good governance. Yet, no country is immune to violations of integrity. Across all levels and branches of government, unethical interactions between public and private actors can violate integrity at all stages of the policy process. Addressing this challenge requires a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach.

The *OECD Recommendation on Public Integrity* is the blueprint for this approach, and the *OECD Public Integrity Handbook* provides guidance for implementing this blueprint. The *Handbook's* chapters clarify what the *Recommendation* means in practice, and identify the implementation challenges countries may face.

### Commitment

This chapter clarifies the elements that demonstrate systemic political and senior management commitment to integrity. These elements include codifying standards in the legislative and institutional frameworks, such as acting with integrity, serving the public interest, and preventing and managing conflict of interest. The chapter also identifies how high-level political and managerial levels can work with key stakeholders to design targeted, evidence-based, long-term reforms.

### Responsibilities

This chapter provides guidance for improving co-operation among public organisations (e.g. the anti-corruption body, the human resources office, the audit and internal control office) as well as sharing between the national and subnational levels. One example is co-ordination committees that have a visible degree of influence and include representatives from all the integrity functions. Impediments to co-operation – entrenched silos and competition among entities – are explored, and tools such as memorandums of understanding and interoperable databases are proposed to improve sharing and learning among entities.

### Strategy

This chapter identifies how to develop an evidence-based, strategic approach to mitigate public integrity risks, most notably corruption. It clarifies the steps for carrying out a problem analysis (e.g. risk identification, analysis and mitigation) to inform the strategic objectives, benchmarks and indicators. It provides guidance on preparing an action plan to meet strategic objectives and ensure clarity on the responsible entities, the timeline for implementation, and the measurement of impact.

## Standards

This chapter clarifies how governments can set high standards of conduct that prioritise the public interest and adherence to public sector values. To ensure coherency, it identifies the integrity standards that can be incorporated into administrative law (e.g. freedom of information, political financing and lobbying activities, and access to administrative justice); civil law (e.g. compensation for damages and whistleblower protection); and criminal law (e.g. active and passive bribery, trading in influence).

## Whole-of-Society

This chapter shows how to engage companies, civil society organisations and individuals in promoting a culture of integrity. It clarifies how a balance between sanctions (e.g. monetary fines or debarment) and incentives (e.g. tax related or export credits) can help governments support public integrity in companies. It also shows how hands-on learning activities like monitoring a public procurement process can be used to help build youth's knowledge and commitment to public integrity.

## Leadership

This chapter identifies measures to attract, select and promote integrity leadership within public organisations, with an emphasis on incorporating integrity as a value into competency frameworks, job descriptions, assessment tools and performance agreements. Measures covered include interview questions asking candidates to reflect on ethical role models they have previously had in the workplace. To assess integrity performance, managers could give examples of how they demonstrated ethical decision making.

## Merit-based

This chapter recognises the influence of a merit-based system in ensuring public integrity across the civil service. It provides guidance on incorporating principles of transparency and objectivity into human resource management processes, such as establishing a clear organisational structure, and ensuring that the appropriate qualification and performance criteria are in place for all civil service positions.

## Capacity

This chapter clarifies how providing timely and relevant information on integrity standards (e.g. through posters, screen-savers and short videos), as well as carrying out regular, tailored integrity training (e.g. lectures, ethical dilemma discussions, e-learning or simulation games), can build the knowledge, skills and commitment for public integrity. It also identifies the core components of integrity advisory functions, and demonstrates how these functions can support public officials in applying integrity standards in their daily activities.

## Openness

This chapter pinpoints the measures to promote an open organisational culture, where employees can discuss ethical dilemmas and integrity concerns. It identifies tools for promoting openness, such as mandatory training for leaders on giving constructive feedback, managing conflict and holding difficult conversations. The chapter also clarifies the core elements for whistleblower protection, noting that clear rules, procedures and channels for reporting suspected integrity violations are critical for ensuring safe environments.

## Risk management

This chapter clarifies how to apply a risk management approach in an integrity system. It provides concrete guidance on identifying, analysing and responding to integrity risks, using both qualitative and quantitative methods (e.g. risk registers and dashboards). The chapter also shows how to integrate integrity into the role of internal audit functions *vis-à-vis* public managers, with a focus on their added value of providing independent, objective assurance for effective internal control and integrity risk management.

## Enforcement

This chapter provides guidance on ensuring a coherent approach across the disciplinary, civil and criminal enforcement regimes to enforce public integrity standards, and clarifies the core policies and tools for supporting timely, objective and fair enforcement decisions. It also identifies mechanisms for enabling co-operation among the bodies, units and officials of each enforcement regime, such as establishing electronic databases to manage cases.

## Oversight

This chapter shows how external oversight bodies (e.g. supreme audit institutions, ombudsmen, administrative courts) and regulatory enforcement agencies strengthen accountability. It provides examples of tools, such as dashboards, that provide clarity on who is responsible for implementing the recommendations of oversight bodies. The chapter also provides examples of how oversight functions can encourage organisational learning, such as through conducting integrity audits.

### Participation

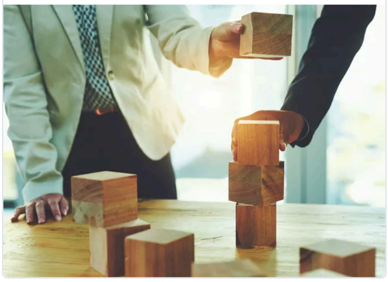
This chapter provides insights on fostering participation in the policy-making process, with guidance on open government, access to information and stakeholder engagement. It also addresses the tools necessary to prevent policy capture, such as establishing procedures to prevent and manage conflict-of-interest situations and ensure transparency and integrity in lobbying and in the financing of political parties and election campaigns.

## Related publications

Report

**Evaluating, Updating and Monitoring Anti-Fraud Strategies**

3 July 2026 • 96 Pages



Report

**Strengthening the Independence of Supreme Audit Institutions**

27 May 2026 • 83 Pages

Working paper

**The state of artificial intelligence in public audit**

Evidence from selected countries and the European Union

7 May 2026 • 58 Pages

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## Related topics

- Anti-corruption and integrity
- Responsible business conduct
- Public Integrity Indicators