

LABOUR ADMINISTRATION

MANAGEMENT OF LABOUR ADMINISTRATION

STRATEGIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Module 3



International
Labour
Organization



International Training Centre

▶ Module 3. Management of Labour Administration

Summary

This module examines the management of labour administration as a core public governance function, focusing on how labour administrations plan, organize, resource, coordinate and modernize their activities to achieve policy objectives effectively. It explores general management models in public administration, including New Public Management approaches, delegated management and public-private partnerships, while highlighting their opportunities and limitations in the labour administration context. The module places particular emphasis on strategic planning and policy formulation, resource allocation, financial management, human resource management, coordination mechanisms and accountability. It also analyses the growing role of monitoring, reporting, e-government, digitalization and the use of data and artificial intelligence, underlining the importance of leadership, integrity, participation and risk management in a changing world of work.

Objectives of the module

- Examine the principles and models of management applied to labour administration systems
- Analyse strategic planning and policy formulation processes in labour administration
- Understand the allocation and management of financial resources, budgeting cycles and accountability mechanisms
- Assess human resource management practices, including recruitment, training, leadership and motivation
- Explore coordination mechanisms within labour administration and with other public bodies, social partners and stakeholders
- Examine the role of monitoring, reporting and evaluation in ensuring transparency and accountability
- Analyse the use of e-government, digital tools and data in improving efficiency, effectiveness and inclusiveness
- Identify management risks and challenges arising from outsourcing, decentralization and technological change



A. General management of labour administration

1.1 Overview

The **management of labour administration** is in most countries run by labour ministries or departments, which are normally ministerial offices of the government. Sometimes labour administration is associated with other ministerial departments such as economy, social security or finance. In some countries, for instance, ministries of finance or economy have come to play a more relevant role in labour matters and the responsibility for labour issues has been allocated to them.

A **characteristic of labour administration** is that some stakeholders are closely linked to its management. For example, the management of certain aspects of labour administration is shared between public officials of the ministry and social partners. This is, for instance, the case of public employment services (PES) in countries such as Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom or Denmark. Furthermore, most labour ministries have the support of tripartite councils for labour policy-making and management (for example, in areas such as social dialogue, health and safety at work, labour inspection, and so on). No other ministries involve such a participation of other stakeholders in the management of the department as it does with respect to social partners in labour administration.

There is no efficient management at all without good **management leaders**, who are those who account for the well-functioning and effectiveness of labour administration. The sayings from Jim Collins "*first who, then what*" and "*get the right people on the bus*" are perfectly applicable to public administration management¹. These managers or leaders, who hold senior positions and have expertise in labour administration, are responsible for carrying out and leading major labour administration functions. They should ensure that planned outcomes and results are reached and risks assessed. They should uphold political targets in a proactive and innovative manner, encouraging their workforces and gaining trust from social partners, stakeholders and citizens. At the same time, they should also promote personal and professional ethics and integrity in the public services. The table below sets out a set of principles and conditions that managers should abide by in the public service, suggested by the OECD.

► **Box 1. OECD: Recommendation of the Council on Public Service Leadership and Capability**²

- Values-driven culture and leadership capability;
- Impartiality and integrity;
- Inclusiveness, diversity and well-being, encouraging gender equality and equal accessibility to under-represented groups;
- Proactive and innovative public service that takes a long-term perspective in the design and implementation of policy and services;
- Identification of skills and competencies needed to transform political vision into services for delivering value to society;
- Managerial skills and specialised expertise;
- Attraction and retention of employees with the necessary skills and competencies by

CEPA strategy guidance note on Data sharing; February 2021; page 10, available at <https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/old-site/Strategy%20note%20data%20sharing%20Feb%202021.pdf>

¹ From the book *Good to Great*; further information available at <https://www.jimcollins.com/concepts/first-who-then-what.html>

² See website at <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/%20en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0445>

means of adequate compensation, non-financial incentives, and remuneration and equitable pay;

- Merit-based criteria and transparent procedures in the appointment of senior-level public servants;
- Recruitment, selection and promotion of candidates through transparent, open and merit-based processes
- Learning culture and environment through assessing, rewarding and recognising performance, talent and initiative;
- Strengthening of the effectiveness of the public employment system, setting the necessary conditions for internal and external workforce mobility and adaptability to match skills with demand;
- Determining and offering transparent employment terms and conditions (e.g. compensation, term length, job security, rights and obligations) that appropriately match the functions of the position, taking into account external and internal labour markets;
- Ensuring that employees have opportunities to contribute to the improvement of public service delivery and are engaged as partners in public service management issues.

Traditionally, **managers have been recruited in the public sector** and picked up from senior civil servants who hold appropriate skills and training for the management position. They all should in general be highly talented, experienced and motivated civil servants. These managers from the public sector sometimes belong either to general corps of civil servants or to a specialized cadre of officials. Managers may also be recruited on the basis of political trust and in this case they may not belong to the civil service, but this an issue to be tackled later on.

Less commonly, **hiring professionals from the private sector** has of late become a more frequent practice. It has to be said that the appointment of executives not belonging to the public service does not involve itself any risk for the management of the institution, provided that they have the necessary expertise and knowledge and are not affected by corporate biases. On the contrary, this experience could be considered innovative in the majority of labour administration systems in the world, where in most cases the managers of the institution are civil servants by profession. The managers coming from the private sector are usually required to be persons of renowned prestige, high scientific level and professional experience in areas related to the assigned tasks and especially in the fields of labour law, social protection or employment. They should always be selected exclusively on the basis of their professional background and through a recruitment process in which a variety of public administration officials and representatives from involved stakeholders participate. These managers from the private sector usually sign a contract with the competent labour administration ministry, which lays down his/her obligations and the qualitative and quantitative targets to be achieved. The contract generally does provide for special annual bonus if the annual targets set in the contract are reached. The remuneration of the manager can be fixed either on the basis of annual periods or for the entire duration of the term of office.

► Box 2. Greece: management of the Hellenic Labour Inspectorate (HLI)

In Greece, the HLI has transformed into an independent agency managed by new bodies such as the management council and the governor; both the members of the management council and the governor do not necessarily come from the labour inspection profession, although they must have experience in the area of labour and/or labour inspection.

The governor's profile requires stringent qualifications, such as being a person of university education, renowned prestige, high scientific level and ten years of experience in areas related to labour inspection. Moreover, the governor signs a contract with the ministry of labour where an annual bonus is envisaged for achieving annual targets or otherwise dismissal (on legally defined grounds) if the inspection targets are not reached, which all together turns the position of the Governor into a great professional challenge, far from political fellowship patterns and closer to a genuine independent executive manager job. The post of governor is a full-time exclusive job and its duration is five years renewable only once by decision of the minister of labour and social affairs, with the consent of the management council (article 113 and following of Law 4808/2021³).


On the other hand, the general management of labour administration should be guided by the **governance principles associated with the implementation of the 2030 and the UN** principles of effective governance. The latter are a set of voluntary principles and practices of effective governance for sustainable development grounded in the 2030 Agenda and other United Nations agreements. They consist in 11 principles, which can be grouped into the following three pillars.

- **Effectiveness**, which implies that labour administration bodies have the means to implement policies effectively and to ensure that the labour law and labour rights are complied with, for which the help of enforcement agencies is necessary. The principles for effective governance in this pillar are: i) competence; ii) sound policy making; and iii) collaboration;
- **Accountability**, which is linked to labour administration's capacity to measure performance and ability to provide clear and transparent information to ministers and parent departments. Accountability also means that labour administration's decisions can be challenged by legally established procedures and that the public has access to information about the role and performance of labour administration. The effective governance principles for this pillar are: iv) integrity, v) transparency and vi) independent oversight;
- **Inclusiveness**, which concerns the protection of vulnerable groups of people and their inclusion in the coverage of employment rights and social security entitlements. The corresponding principles in this pillar are: vii) leaving no one behind, viii) non-discrimination, ix) participation, x) subsidiarity and xi) intergenerational equity.

1.2 The New Public Management and the "businesslike" management model

An efficient management of labour administration would not be possible without a good deal of **knowledge**. Without it the administrations will fare poorly and disoriented. The greater is the access to knowledge the more accurate will be the decision-making process. Access to knowledge requires the use

³ See the law at <https://www.kodiko.gr/nomothesia/document/727771/nomos-4808-2021>



of proper databases, scientific expertise and evidence-based tools that can be consulted and used by the public officials when managing their services.

But the businesslike management model takes more than a good acquaintance with knowledge. The transition from the Weberian or bureaucratic model of public administration to the New Public Management (NPM) has headed towards the **introduction of private sector management concepts** in the public administration. Performance indicators, management autonomy and prevention of red tape have been some of the principles that the new “businesslike” way of thinking has brought. Managers are today more independent, but also more accountable and mainly judged on performance results. The NPM focuses on more decentralized service delivery models, enabling local agencies to deliver services with more autonomy, but concepts such as financial control, value for money, efficiency, monitoring and evaluation of performance, achievement of targets, benchmarks and audits should be always kept at the forefront of management.

However, while this new performance management has in many cases led to improved services, not always it has been praised as efficient in so far many aspects or **objectives of public administration are difficult to quantify** and public decisions often do not draw on business-minded approaches but on politic criteria. This fact drives to situations in which decisions based on quantity incrementalism and political commitments make managers to distance themselves from the genuine performance management. This practices are usually known as the ‘scatter gun’ approach, according to which public managers measure everything and anything that comes into their view⁴. In addition, some other times performance indicators are so vague or imprecise that operational and strategic criteria are mixed-up.

Therefore, the management and governance of labour administration is also vulnerable to all these risks and often deviates from proper performance tools such as applying rational measurement methodologies, adopting indicators that benefit citizens in the service they are receiving or devising outcomes that prioritize effectiveness. It should be noted that **all these challenges could be overcome** with efficient information systems, well-staffed public services, sufficient financial resources, well-equipped and well-trained staff, customer focus and accountability to citizens so that these find it worthwhile to complain when the public service does not work properly. Moreover, these risks can be tackled with a clear view of the mandate, goals, citizens expectations and performance methods of the administration concerned.

1.3 Delegated management: outsourcing and public-private partnership

1.3.1 Overview of outsourcing

Outsourcing and decentralization were also part of the broader NPM movement in the 1980s. The process has been called “*agencification*” of public services⁵. The NPM sought to foster competition in the provision of public services through outsourcing tasks to external actors (either private or public). **The goal was to improve efficiency** and reduce costs⁶. The outsourcing process has been historically

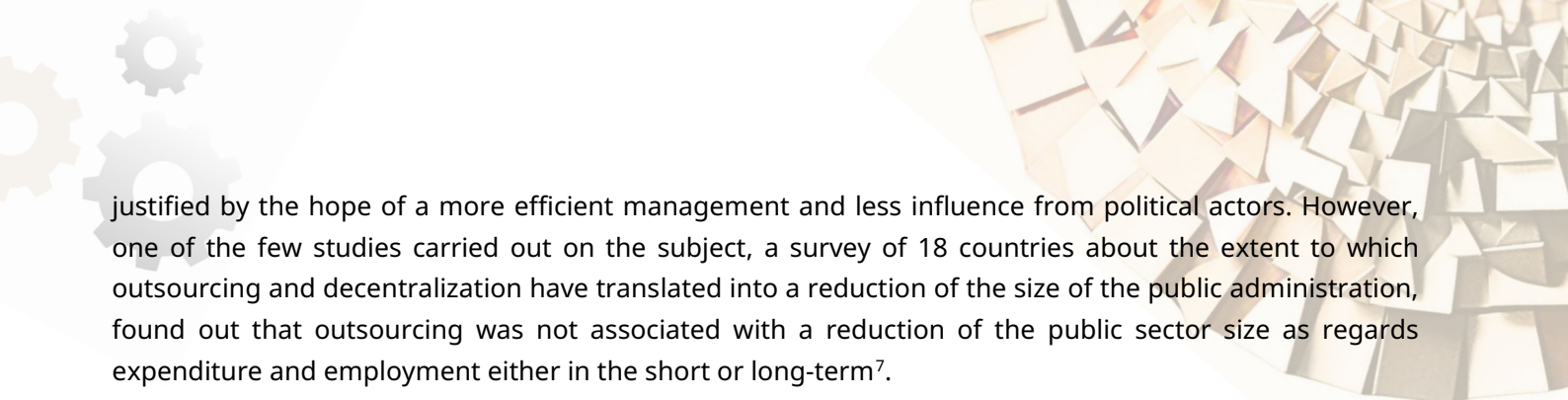
⁴ *The Governance of Labour Administration*; Robert Cameron; *An analysis of performance management in the South African*; Department of Labour; page 264; available at

<https://www.ilo.org/publications/governance-labour-administration-reforms-innovations-and-challenges#:~:text=This%20timely%20book%20provides%20detailed>

⁵Rychly, Ludek ; *Ministries of labour : comparative overview : history, mandate, challenges world-wide database and organizational charts*; International Labour Office. - Geneva: ILO, 2013, Working paper ; No.27; page 8;

https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/167490/wcms_216424.pdf

⁶ Victor Lapuente, Steven Van de Walle; *The effects of new public management on the quality of public services* <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gove.12502?msocid=31b14f403e3068ee21a55d253f986994>



justified by the hope of a more efficient management and less influence from political actors. However, one of the few studies carried out on the subject, a survey of 18 countries about the extent to which outsourcing and decentralization have translated into a reduction of the size of the public administration, found out that outsourcing was not associated with a reduction of the public sector size as regards expenditure and employment either in the short or long-term⁷.

Rivers of ink have run about contracting out public services and whether this practice brings **more or less efficiency** in the management of public service⁸. The cases of contracting out labour administration services are not very much widespread as long as most of its services are considered core governmental functions and narrowly linked to key ministerial public policies. In general, the rise of independent agencies finds its *raison d'être*, despite the shrinkage of the ministries' competencies, in the operational flexibility they own for dealing with specific issues together with the specialization of their employees. Outsourcing of labour administration functions is better understood if addressed to public independent agencies. In respect to the private sector, outsourcing is much more limited and confined to very specific technical areas. For instance, labour administrations typically resource to private entities for delivering vocational training, elaborating research studies or developing ICT systems.

As regards **international standards**, Article 2 of Convention No. 150 and paragraph 2 of Recommendation No. 158 provide for the possibility of entrusting or delegating certain labour administration activities to non-governmental organizations. In this respect, the CEACR has noted that central coordination and oversight of these agencies by labour administration are essential for ensuring compliance with ILO Conventions⁹.


1.3.2 Main areas of work affected by outsourcing

Social security funds, labour dispute settlement, labour inspection, health and safety at work are some of the areas where labour administration often delegates functions to parastatal public entities. Labour administration may also outsource certain activities in the area of employment services. The **delegation of functions in the field of employment** to independent entities, also to the private sector, includes active labour market policies. It has been recognized that public-private partnerships (very common with universities or training institutions) in the area of active employment policies may foster the creation of employability opportunities. As a matter of fact, public-private partnerships have been expanding across the world in recent years and such collaboration has proved particularly useful in promoting employment and in managing training through partnerships with private employment agencies, universities, business schools or other training organizations. The ILO Conventions No. 88 and No. 181 recall the need to secure effective cooperation between the public employment service and private employment agencies. More recently, labour administration has also turned to the private sector for matters traditionally considered

⁷ Jose M. Alonso, Judith Clifton, Daniel Diaz-Fuentes; *Did New Public Management matter? An empirical analysis of the outsourcing and decentralization effects on public sector size* December 2011, pages 27 and following; available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2187902

⁸ Public Management Occasional Papers; *Contracting Out Government Services; Best Practice Guidelines and Case Studies No. 20*; info at: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264162174-en>; Mikušová Meričková, B., Nemeč, J. & Jakuš Muthová, N. ; *Contract management of municipal public services: the Slovak experience*. Humanit Soc Sci Commun 11, 41 (2024); available at <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02549-2>; Andrew Kakabadse, Nada Kakabadse; *Outsourcing in the public services: a comparative analysis of practice, capability and impact*; First published: 21 December 2001; <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.200>

⁹ See the ILO report *Labour administration in a changing world of work*; third item on the agenda of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference (3-14 June 2024); page 75. <https://www.ilo.org/resource/conference-paper/labour-administration-changing-world-work>



as core labour administration functions, such as labour conciliations and arbitration, social services and social care.

1.3.3. Management of decentralized public agencies: characteristics

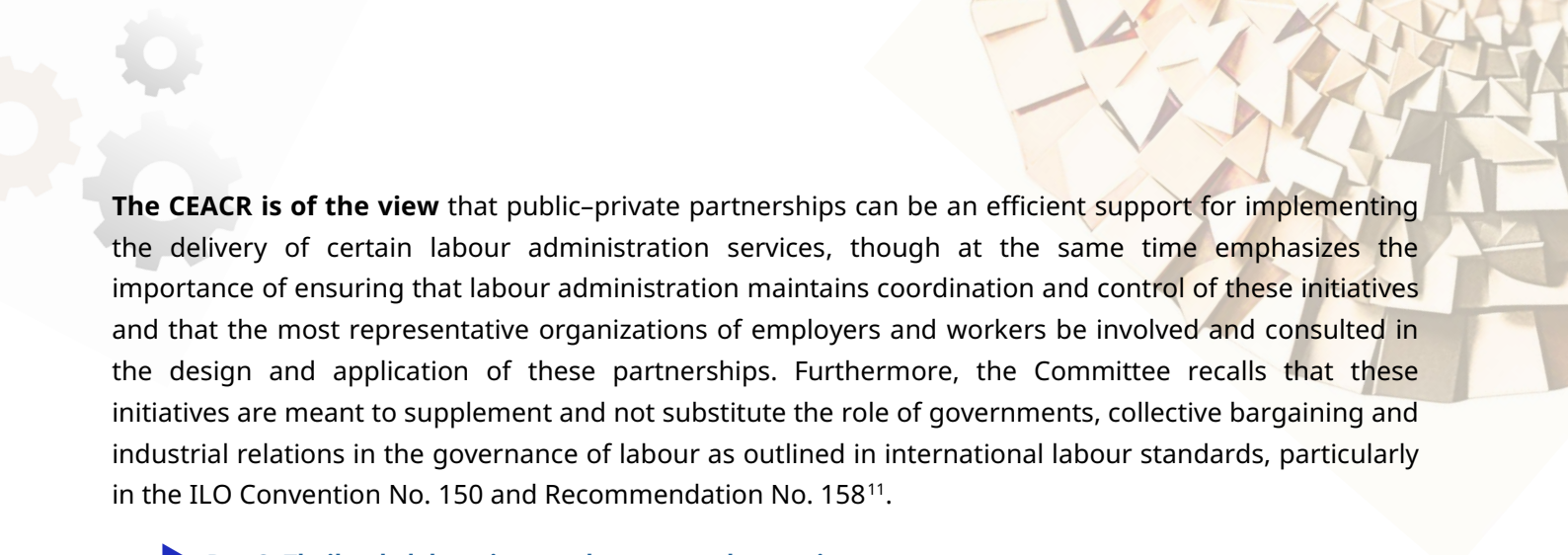
The decentralized public agencies are always governed by the principles of administrative independence, transparency and accountability. The main **characteristics** of their management can be set down as follows:

- ▶ They are in general vested with functional and budgetary autonomy;
- ▶ Their management is normally commended to a board of directors and an executive manager who, both in the exercise of their functions, are only bound by law, not being directly subject to the hierarchical control of the ministry;
- ▶ The board of directors often serves as a counterweight to the power of the executive manager moderating and supervising the managing activity;
- ▶ The executive manager and the board of directors enjoy operational independence, which allows them more impartiality and absence of direct or indirect interventions from governmental bodies;
- ▶ Despite these agencies' management is described as independent, it is always supervised by a ministry, which is the key stakeholder for the adoption of budget, decisions on staff policy or approval of the operational plan;
- ▶ Managers are in general obliged to report to the competent ministry or to Parliament on all the issues relating to their competencies and tasks and, furthermore;
- ▶ Managers must cooperate with other administrative authorities exercising powers in specific related sectors of the national economy and must assist those authorities, sometimes ex-officio and at other times upon request, in the exercise of their functions;
- ▶ Very often the appointment and dismissal of the executive manager depends to a great extent on the ministry's decision, so the manager always has to work with several players, such as the board of directors, the ministry or the Parliament.
- ▶ The usual strong involvement of the ministry of labour in the selection of the executive manager and the board of directors, the contractual relationship between the ministry and the managers, coupled with the ministry's power to dictate the policy and strategic guidelines to the agency, most of the time lead to the top-down transfer of policy and operating patterns from the governmental body to the agency, thereby reassuring the desirable involvement of the agencies in the strategies, policies and priorities of the government.

1.3.4. Caveats on outsourcing and public-private partnership

The outsourcing of public services to independent agencies, in particular private institutions, has shown some advantages, but also entails **risks** among which are the weakening of labour ministries, the unclear relationship between policy makers and agencies and the very much discussed issue of comparison between employment conditions in public administration and in these agencies¹⁰. These are reasons enough so as to understand their indispensable **supervision by labour administration** through appropriate mechanisms and enforcement units, including the establishment of auditing structures or the periodical reporting to the line ministry.

¹⁰ Ludek Rychly, ILO Governance Department *Labour Administration: Trends, Challenges and Lessons; Arab Conference on Labour Market Governance in the Context of Changing Arab Societies*; Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt; available at <https://www.ilo.org/resource/presentation-1-labour-administration-trends-challenges-and-lessons>



The CEACR is of the view that public-private partnerships can be an efficient support for implementing the delivery of certain labour administration services, though at the same time emphasizes the importance of ensuring that labour administration maintains coordination and control of these initiatives and that the most representative organizations of employers and workers be involved and consulted in the design and application of these partnerships. Furthermore, the Committee recalls that these initiatives are meant to supplement and not substitute the role of governments, collective bargaining and industrial relations in the governance of labour as outlined in international labour standards, particularly in the ILO Convention No. 150 and Recommendation No. 158¹¹.

► **Box 3. Thailand: delegation employment tasks to private sector**

In Thailand, the Department of Employment at the Ministry of Labour has authorized a private recruitment company to act as a dispatcher of Thai workers to overseas employment and to bring foreign workers to work in the country. In addition, the Department of Skill Development has authorized private companies to engage in skill standards-testing activities¹².

1.4 Labour administration's function of monitoring compliance: private compliance initiatives

The adoption of **corporate social responsibility policies** by the private sector has bolstered the inclusion of labour rights in their sustainability portfolios. These policies have fuelled the outburst of a good many self-assessment compliance practices in private companies of several countries. These practices have made use of auditing, monitoring and certification tools and on occasions have developed by partnering with national inspection programmes (for example, the ready-made garment sector in Bangladesh). At this respect and in relation to labour inspection, the CEACR has emphasized in its 2017 General Survey on OSH instruments and its 2024 General Survey on Labour Administration in a changing world of work that forms of self-regulation, including auditing, monitoring and other compliance initiatives, can assist in improving compliance but they are **not meant to replace public labour inspection** and should not exempt governments from taking the necessary measures in this regard, nor should they take the place of labour inspection or be taken as a justification or an excuse for reducing the capacity and frequency of its inspection visits.

► **Box 4. Voluntary forms of self-regulation and private compliance initiatives**

Voluntary forms of self-regulation and private compliance initiatives are formulated through self-assessment models, partnerships and voluntary improvement programmes. In the United States are or have been voluntary compliance programmes in the area of occupational safety and health such as the VPP¹³, the Alliance Program, the OSPP¹⁴, the Challenge Program or the SHARP¹⁵, which began to be implemented in the State of California in 1979 and then spread throughout the country, being applied

¹¹ See the report *Labour administration in a changing world of work*, 302, page 100

¹² Taken from the report *Labour administration in a changing world of work*, 297, page 99

¹³ Voluntary Protection Programs

¹⁴ OSHA Strategic Partnership Program

¹⁵ On-site Consultation Program's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program

today with success in the reduction of occupational accidents in the federal OSHA area. In other countries such as the Republic of South Korea self-assessment programmes are conducted¹⁶. In the Philippines the KAPATIRAN WISE-TAV Program for 'big and small brothers' was launched some time ago¹⁷; in Mexico the online accreditation system works through *the Entidad Mexicana de Acreditación*¹⁸ or in Panama, where a joint venture between Ministry's safety inspectors-and private sector officers is held for inspecting construction sites¹⁹. In Spain, the 'Plan PREVEA' was a voluntary programme aimed at reducing accidents in companies with a high accident rate²⁰.

Hence, self-regulation or self-assessment compliance practices in the private sector for certain segments of labour administration should be considered as a viable option²¹, provided that labour administration retains its policymaking, oversight and monitoring functions with regard to private entities and service providers, as well as it also ensures proper coordination, as required under Articles 4 and 5 of the ILO Convention No. 150.

► Takeaways

The management leaders account for the well-functioning and effectiveness of labour administration and also must promote personal and professional ethics and integrity in the public services;

Traditionally, managers have been recruited from the public sector and they are senior civil servants who hold appropriate skills and training for the management position;

General management of labour administration also has to be guided by the governance principles associated with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

The New Public Management (NPM) has implied the introduction of private sector management concepts;

The NPM sought to foster competition and efficiency in the provision of public services through outsourcing tasks to external actors (either private or public);

Outsourcing of public services to independent agencies, in particular private institutions, entails risks such as the weakening of labour ministries or the unclear relationship between policy makers.

¹⁶ Art. 36.2, Law No. 10968; available at https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_service/lawView.do?hseq=43289&lang=ENG

¹⁷ Further info in "Kapatiran Work Improvement in Small Enterprises-Technical Assistance Visits", available info at [http://www.dole.gov.ph/files/Manual%20on%20the%20LLCS%209-12-14\(1\).pdf](http://www.dole.gov.ph/files/Manual%20on%20the%20LLCS%209-12-14(1).pdf);

¹⁸ See ILO report; *Utilización de tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación en las inspecciones del trabajo. Una visión comparada en torno a países seleccionados*; ILO, Informes Técnicos/2; available at <https://www.ilo.org/es/publications/utilizacion-de-tecnologias-de-la-informacion-y-de-la-comunicacion-en-las>

¹⁹ Law No. 68 of 26-10-2010

²⁰ More info at

https://www.mites.gob.es/itss/web/Documentos/plan_prevea/documentos/DocumentoPREVEA.pdf#:~:text=El%20programa%20preVea%20es%20un%20programa%20voluntario%20orientado.los%20accidentes%20de%20trabajo%20como%20las%20enfermedades%20profesionales.

²¹ See the report *Labour administration in a changing world of work*; 302, page 102.



B. PLANNING. STRATEGIC PLANNING, POLICY FORMULATION, SETTING OBJECTIVES AND COURSE OF ACTION. STRUCTURING THE LABOUR ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM TO IMPLEMENT PLANS. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND HIERARCHY WITHIN THE PUBLIC LABOUR ADMINISTRATION. PLANNING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

1.1 Strategic planning and policy formulation, setting objectives and course of action

To put it in a nutshell, the planning in public administration may take **two different forms**: a) substantive planning (also called development or operational planning); and b) fiscal planning. The former involves the organization of goals and result and the estimation of resources needed for their achievement. The fiscal planning is one of the instruments of substantive planning and entails the elaboration of current and future budgets, the financial implications and the methods of obtaining the necessary resources and allocating them in order to achieve the overall goals²².

Why plan at all? The main reason for planning is the belief that the market might become anarchic or chaotic, that it could not provide stability or full employment, that scarcities would be adversely exploited affecting the common interests of the community and that the goal of equity would not be reached without planning.

The activity of planning normally pursues a number of identified policy objectives and seeks to improve the services of labour administration. An institutional plan ought to be inclusive and sustainable, contain realistic, attainable and affordable programmes and projects, and be subject to evaluation of its results so citizens can see whether the different goals have been achieved.

The planning has not only to take account of the current challenges, but must also encompass a **strategic foresight** of future challenges so decision makers can anticipate measures addressed to prevent or solve those future problems. Strategic foresight entails the analysis of:

- ▶ Trends and drivers of possible future situations;
- ▶ Current trends that will continue over the time;
- ▶ Future interactions and time frame;
- ▶ Budgetary and operational implications;
- ▶ Necessary dialogues and relationships;
- ▶ Alternative scenarios and risks;
- ▶ Assets and capabilities that will underpin the achievement of desired outcomes;
- ▶ Good performance of the SDGs.

²² Following Premchand, A. (1989). "Chapter six Development Planning and Budgeting". In Government Budgeting and Expenditure Controls. USA: International Monetary Fund; page 176; retrieved Oct 30, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.5089/9780939934256.071.ch006> <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/display/book/9780939934256/ch006.xml>



Strategic foresight

Trends & drivers

Current trends

Future interactions

Operational budget

Dialogue

Risks

Assets

Good performance

Moreover, the strategic foresight (a strategy) ought to:

- ▶ Be integrated in the plan;
- ▶ Envisage the collaboration channels to be established between labour administration and other involved stakeholders who can contribute with synergies, catalysts, views and ideas at sectoral, national or local levels;
- ▶ Involve the largest possible number of participants as long as a broader participation makes the strategic planning more effective. The participation of elders and younger participants is essential to guarantee intergenerational equity and to leave no one behind;
- ▶ The strategic foresight also needs collecting statistical information on labour-related matters, gathering knowledge and undertaking research on subjects of interest.
- ▶ Finally, information, and the analysis of information, is a key prerequisite to programme properly, provided that collection of data and its management are consistent with national privacy and information protection policies and laws (*Guidelines on general principles of labour inspection -3.2.5-²³*).

²³https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_dialogue/%40lab_admin/documents/genericdocument/wcms_844153.pdf

1.2 Structuring the labour administration system to implement plans: scoping the strategy and planning, risk management, planning environment, planning schedule

The structuring of labour administration system in order to implement the plan highly depends on the country's needs, size, mandate, resources and so on. Hence, specific measures may be required for better achieving the goals of the plan. The shaping of the labour administration system may be determined by the scoping of the strategy and plan, the mobilization of resources, the partnering needs, the participation of stakeholders, the establishment of new cooperation structures, the need of new specific departments or new geographical organization, the need of statistics, the integration of SDGs in the planning, the risk management and so on.

► Box 5. ILO standards: study and research as necessary for planning

The ILO Convention No. 150, Article 6, paragraph 2(b), notes that competent authorities within the labour administration system shall *"study and keep under review the situation of employed, unemployed and underemployed persons, taking into account national laws and regulations and national practice concerning conditions of work and working life and terms of employment, draw attention to defects and abuses in such conditions and terms and submit proposals on means to overcome them"*.

This prescription is echoed by the ILO Recommendation No. 158, which stresses that any system of labour administration should carry out research as one of its central functions. Para No. 18 states that *"for the fulfilment of its social objectives, the system of labour administration should carry out research as one of its important functions and encourage research by others"*.

In the 2024 ILO's General Survey on Labour Administration contains examples of how to structure labour administration in order to implement the plans. Sometimes the competent Ministry is composed of different offices, which are responsible for planning and coordination, labour, employment or OSH (Republic of Korea). On some occasions the bodies and services of the ministry must collaborate and coordinate their respective activities in order to ensure an integrated performance in the implementation of public policies defined by the ministry. The bodies and services of the Ministry operate according to objectives established in duly approved annual or multi-annual activity plans, and follow-up and monitoring are carried out through the evaluation of performance indicators set annually by the minister. And the Ministry has a Directorate for Planning, Budget and Management with the task of studying, coordinating and providing technical support in the preparation of the annual plans and providing liaison with the other planning services in the process of preparing the national plans (Cabo Verde).

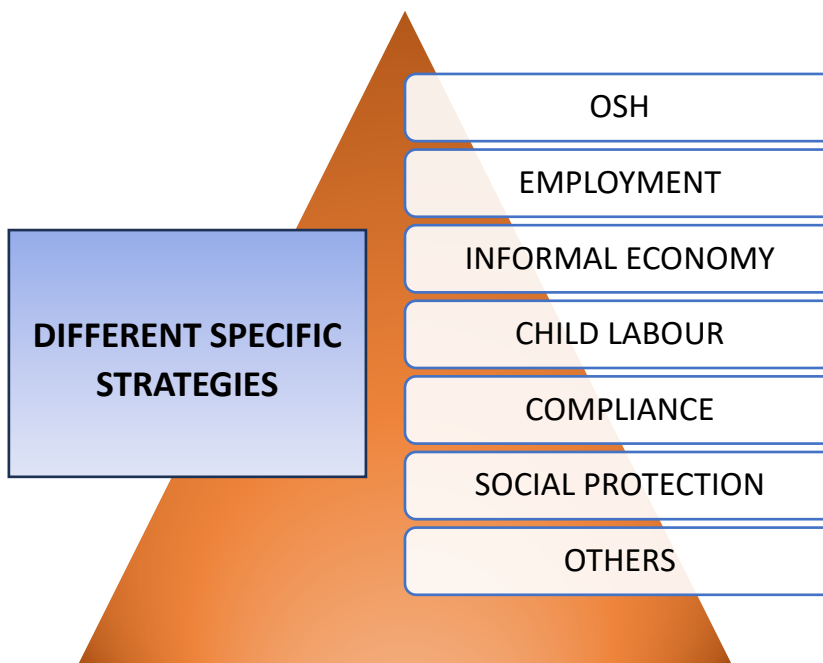
In other cases, the ministry is assisted by specialist divisions, departments or offices dealing with support services such as legal advice, planning, programming, research and statistics. The directorates under the competent Ministry of Labour also may send quarterly reports on their activities to a Directorate competent for planning for review, consolidation and preparation of the annual report (Dominican Republic).

1.2.1 Scoping the strategy and planning

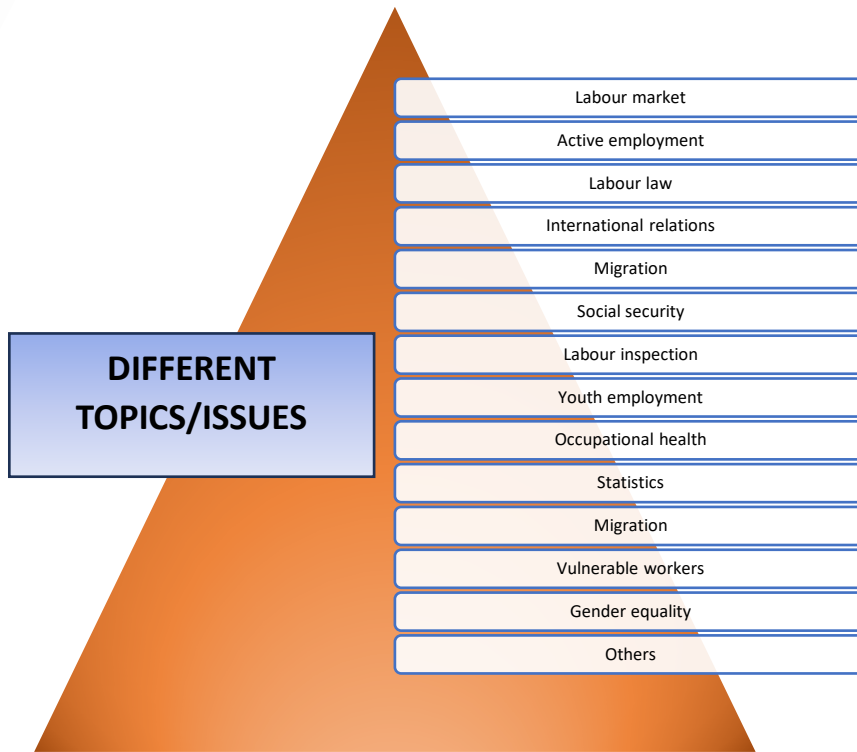
The scoping of labour administration policies may be guided by **different strategies** and labour ministries need to set the different units and departments that will work on those aspects of the strategy

and plan in which they have competencies. For instance, labour administrations may develop a strategy for health and safety at work, a strategy for employment, a strategy for fighting against undeclared work or child labour, a compliance strategy and so on. The labour administrations of most countries often project **different realms of planning**, grouping the issues in which the labour ministries or departments are competent, such as labour market and employment policies, labour law, migration issues, social security, unemployment benefits, gender equality, labour inspection, occupational health, youth employment and so on. The **range of topics** on which labour administration works varies from one country to another according to the competencies each ministry has been assigned, and may be of thematic nature, as those issues above-mentioned, or of **cross-cutting** nature, such as international relations, cooperation, improvement of services, increase of staff, saving costs, management, investment on ICT, institutional arrangements, social dialogue goals and so on. Finally, the objectives of the agencies hinging on the ministry are also embedded in the labour administration's general planning.

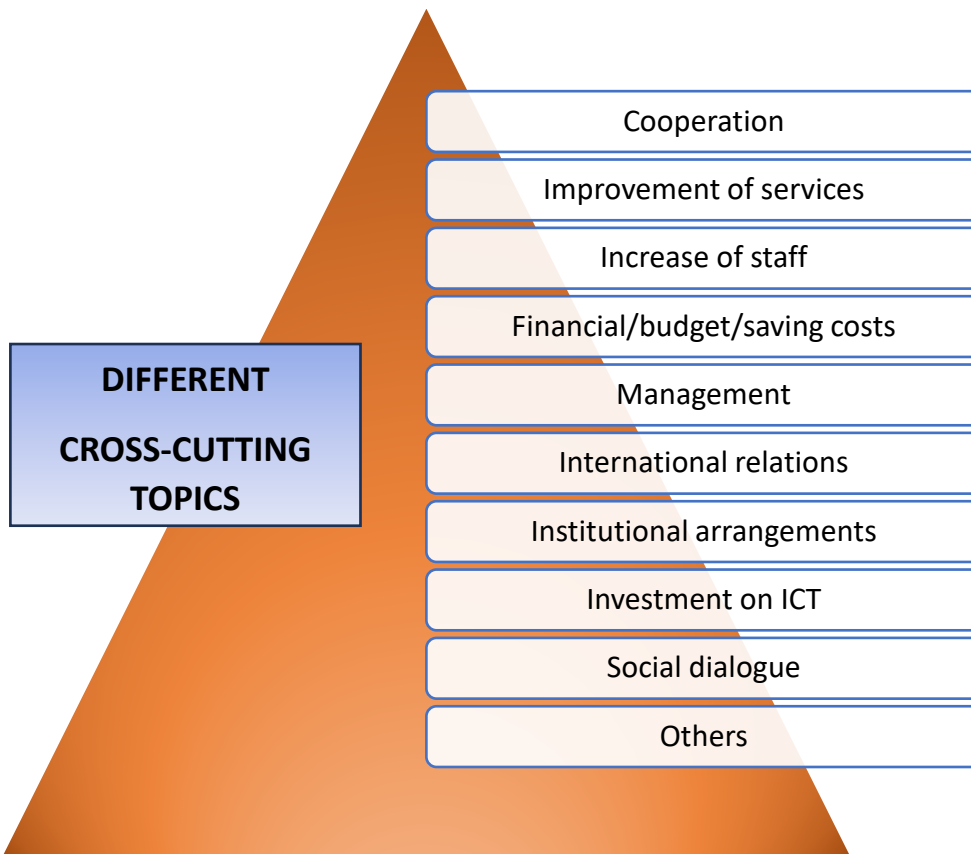
► **Figure 1. Illustration of specific strategies**




► Figure 2. Illustration of different topics/issues



► Figure 3. Illustration of different cross-cutting topics





On the other hand, the plan has to honour the mandate of each ministerial department and meet the **priorities of the general Government in the area of** labour policy. Planning usually requires the adoption of several strategic goals, management goals and specific and performance targets, all in order to ensure the achievement of the ministry's mission and the mandate of labour administration services. The plan of labour administration typically comprises **key goals** such as improving working conditions and welfare of workers, enforcing labour standards, building equal opportunities for all, promoting racial and gender equality, ensuring safe and healthful work places, supporting jobseekers, ensuring income support for unemployed people or safeguarding the income of old age or disabled pensioners, and so on. The different departments and units of labour administration must then put all their resources to work towards those key goals and all the system, structure, legislation, means, human and financial resources must be tailored to their achievement.

1.2.2 Planning process rules

The planning process may follow either a top-down or a bottom-up approach. In the top-down approach decisions cascade from the high-level management down through the organizational structure. The decision-making is concentrated at the higher level and allows quick and executive choices.

Some advantages of the **top-down planning** are:

- ▶ Useful in time-sensitive situations or emergencies that require immediate action;
- ▶ Hierarchy enables efficient coordination across different departments;
- ▶ Quick decisions, updates, and changes;
- ▶ Consistency in the decision-making;

The disadvantages of the top-down approach for planning are:

- ▶ Less employees' engagement in the departmental mission and strategic plan;
- ▶ Little motivation of the employees in the achievement of objectives;
- ▶ The experience and knowledge (local, day-to-day) of front-line professional render unusable;
- ▶ Creativity and innovation of employees may be thwarted;
- ▶ Unforeseen changes may cause disruptions due to reduced adaptability;


In the **bottom-up approach**, the feedback for the planning decision-making comes from employees at lower levels and front-line staff and influences the high-level managers and decision-making levels.

The advantages of the bottom-up approach for planning are:

- ▶ Consideration of individual values, expertise and diverse perspectives of employees;
- ▶ More open and dynamic exchange of ideas;
- ▶ Employees' engagement in the project and goals, experiencing a sort of buy-in and ownership conscience;
- ▶ Easy adaptability to potential changes and more room for innovation and creativity;
- ▶ Better identification of risks.

The disadvantages of the bottom-up approach are:

- ▶ More time-consuming process;

- 
- ▶ A long-term strategic vision is difficult and bottom-up suggestions focus on short-term goals and immediate needs;
 - ▶ Fragmentation of goals and needs;
 - ▶ Somewhat lack of information.

A wise conclusion might be that an optimal approach for planning would be based on an efficient combined use of elements of both approaches.

1.2.3 Partnering in planning

The labour administration strategic plan must build upon a **whole-of-government' approach**, which entails the need of collaboration with not only internal agencies but also external governmental departments and institutions, both at national, federal or state level, depending on the political organization of a given country.

Therefore, there are other external institutions which may have a say in the elaboration and implementation of the plan. These are in particular other ministries such as:

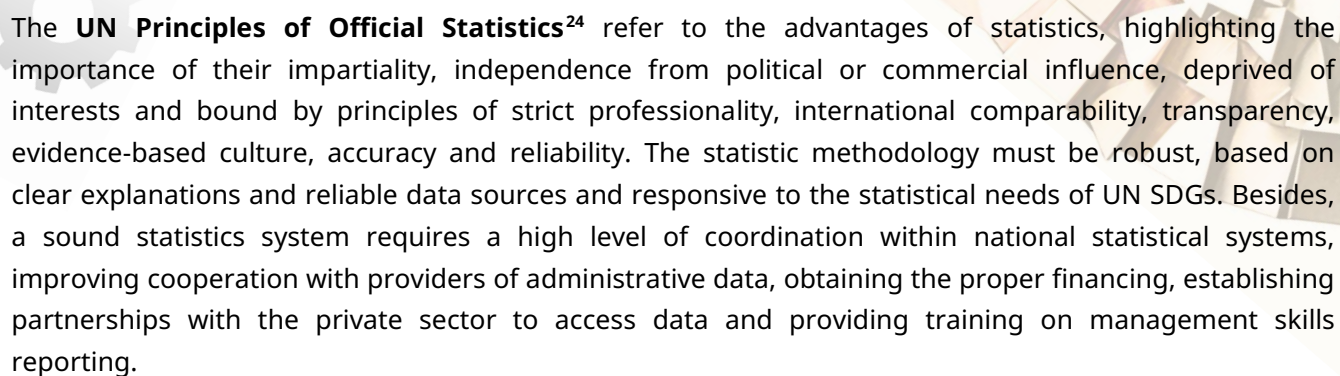
- ▶ the Ministry of Health, which could hold responsibilities related to the health of workers;
- ▶ the Ministry of Education on vocational training issues;
- ▶ the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning migrant labour force and the issuance of work permits;
- ▶ the Ministry of Finance, which has the leadership role on economic issues and structural reforms;
- ▶ the Ministry of Interior, for assisting labour inspection and immigrant workers issues;
- ▶ the Ministry of Social Security, in cases where social security and labour belong to different ministerial offices;
- ▶ other ministries which may result involved in the labour administration plan.

The strategic plan also ought to address the issue of **public-private partnership**, seeking feedback from the private organizations in order to walk on solid ground across an ever-changing environment, properly shaping policy changes, improving research initiatives and strengthening employers and workers engagement with labour administration policies.

1.2.4 The use of national statistics for planning

Labour administration should make use of its **relevant statistics department for planning** and also the national statistics system (NSS). Most countries produce official statistics on demographic, economic, social, environmental and technological issues, among others. The organization of the NSS may vary from one country to another, from a single **centralized statistic institution** or agency responsible for most of the official statistics to a decentralized system where different statistical agencies work on various statistical fields and take over the management of sectoral and geographical data.

In general, most labour administrations collect and store their **own statistics** (accidents at work, unemployment, wages and so on) although they usually can make use of the data provided by the national statistics office, which is entrusted with the elaboration of official national statistics, surveys and compilation of data. Most **common statistics** relevant to labour administration relate to issues such as: population, inflation, gross domestic product, labour-force, unemployment, occupational injuries, strikes, health, migration, per capita income, among other issues.



The **UN Principles of Official Statistics**²⁴ refer to the advantages of statistics, highlighting the importance of their impartiality, independence from political or commercial influence, deprived of interests and bound by principles of strict professionalism, international comparability, transparency, evidence-based culture, accuracy and reliability. The statistic methodology must be robust, based on clear explanations and reliable data sources and responsive to the statistical needs of UN SDGs. Besides, a sound statistics system requires a high level of coordination within national statistical systems, improving cooperation with providers of administrative data, obtaining the proper financing, establishing partnerships with the private sector to access data and providing training on management skills reporting.

However, full-wedged statistics remain as a major challenge for many countries and there is yet much left to do for making the national statistical systems really effective and trusted for their users. Many national statistics offices note they need to improve cooperation for developing appropriate statistics, in particular those related to labour-force and employment. The lack or shortfall of statistics is one of the causes of a poor planning of labour administration, as explained in the table below.

► **Box 6. Some European countries: poor statistics lead to difficulties in planning**

In some European countries, statistics on accidents at work and occupational diseases are difficult to collect due in most cases to the lack of adequate data sources, poor methodology for collection of data, insufficient coordination between competent institutions or absence of qualified staff providing and collecting data.

A sound data collection system of accidents at work and occupational diseases is a key element in any country's strategy to assess the efficiency of national policies on occupational health. The statistics and data reported must provide an accurate picture of the figures, rates, frequencies and trends of employment injuries, allowing both the planning and the adoption of preventive actions. A national map of occupational diseases, based on the data collected, is also necessary in order to acknowledge trends in causalities, risk exposure and medical consequences of the most recognized occupational diseases.

The information related to work accidents and occupational diseases should also be classified by sectors and by gender cases. For instance, it is essential to know the figures and evolution of the share of injured or ill workers who are female and analyse, where appropriate, underreporting of injured or ill women.

In this respect, the alignment and harmonization of statistics of these countries with the European Survey of Accidents at Work (ESAW) and European Occupational Diseases statistics (EODS) and data breakdown of variables, definitions and classifications are of prime priority²⁵. The conformity of accidents at work and occupational diseases surveys with ESAW and EODS methodology will drive to a more comprehensive and reliable information and statistics, reporting on outcomes and progress, adopting evidence-based preventive activities, and serving as a solid basis for the development of

²⁴ See at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx>

²⁵ Following the EU Framework Regulation No 1338/2008 , 16 December 2008 on statistics on public health and health and safety at work and the ESAW Implementing Commission Regulation (EU) No. 349/2011.

future National OSH strategies.

From the study of EUROGIP *“New estimates of the phenomenon of under-reporting of accidents at work in Europe”* ²⁶.

1.2.5 Integration of the SDGs into the planning

Although this is not as yet current international practice, the outcomes of labour administration **plans should be coherent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. The planned goals should be framed in the context of the SDGs and the planning ought to explain how, for example, goals related to gender, health or social inclusion are met in the planning programmes or activities.

1.2.6 Involving other actors and stakeholders

The structuring of the labour administration system should also make it possible to manage the general **impact of the policy actions and outcomes of the plan on stakeholders** and the public. This impact should be surveyed at and the related information shared with relevant stakeholders and citizens. The impact evaluations assess the changes, both intended and unintended that result from the plan implementation. Some of the measures included in labour administration plans are of legislative and/or policy nature, so the Regulatory Impact assessment (RIA) enables transparency and introduces mechanisms allowing those who are affected by new legislative initiatives to exercise their right to be informed and comment, thus contributing to public accountability.

According to **UN CEPA, the Regulatory Impact assessment (RIA)** is a systematic appraisal of how a proposed policy is likely to affect certain categories of stakeholders. RIA is mostly used in the course of policy formulation and requires a set of formal steps such as consultation processes. Impact assessment is not a substitute for political decision-making and rather helps decision makers with evidences and inputs from stakeholders²⁷. The impact assessment should cover both primary legislation and secondary (implementing) regulations and would concern central government departments as well as independent regulators, regional governments and local authorities. Stakeholders vary for each legislative initiative and may be citizens in general, national companies, foreign firms, investors, international donors, specific groups of citizens, social organizations, NGOs, professional bodies and so on.

► Box 7. European Commission: impact assessment practice

The European Commission has made of impact assessment the keystone of its legislative policy²⁸. In the EU impact assessments are carried out on initiatives expected to have significant economic, social or environmental impacts. These can be:

- Legislative proposals;
- Non-legislative initiatives (e.g. financial programmes or policy programmes);
- Implementing and delegated acts.

²⁶ August 2024, Ref. EUROGIP-191/E; available at

<https://eurogip.fr/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/EUROGIP-2023-Under-reporting-of-accidents-at-work-in-Europe.pdf>

²⁷ CEPA strategy guidance note on Regulatory impact assessment; February 2021; Page 1; available at

<https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/old-site/Strategy%20note%20regulatory%20impact%20assessment%20Feb%202021.pdf>

²⁸ Information taken from EU website https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/impact-assessments_en

Stakeholders are consulted on all key aspects through open public consultations. The findings of the impact assessment process are summarised in an assessment report. The quality of each report is checked by an independent body, the Regulatory Scrutiny Board, which issues opinions.

The impact assessment report must include a description of:

- The environmental, social and economic impacts, including impacts on small and medium enterprises and competitiveness, and an explicit statement if any of these are not considered significant;
- Who will be affected by the initiative and how;
- The consultation strategy and the results obtained from it.

The impact assessment reports are published with the proposals or with acts adopted by the Commission. They are also sent to the EU lawmakers, the Parliament and Council, to consider as they decide on whether to adopt the proposed law.

1.2.7 Risk management when planning

One of the last steps in structuring labour administration for planning is the assessment of risks. The **OECD has defined different types of risks** which are the result of a combination of two factors:

- ▶ Probability of occurrence of a potentially harmful event which might itself be influenced by various factors;
- ▶ Vulnerability, which reflects the potential damage inflicted by the occurrence of a hazard in terms of both direct and indirect consequences; vulnerability is a measure of the exposure of human life, health, assets or environment to hazards.

Risks can cause a disruptive shock and serious damage to human welfare, the economy, the natural environment or the national and/or international security. A serious damage may be defined as:

- ▶ Loss of human life, illness or injury;
- ▶ Homelessness;
- ▶ Business interruption (health, transport, water, energy, communication);
- ▶ Disruption of property or infrastructure or in the supply of money, food or fuel;
- ▶ Contamination or destruction of the natural environment;

When the risk has not been prevented, **resilience comes into play**, absorbs disturbance and reorganizes the system so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity and feedbacks, despite the changes brought by the disruption²⁹. For example, situations as the COVID-19 pandemic constitute very serious risks that can bring harsh consequences if a poor or inappropriate risk management is conducted.

The plan, therefore, must reflect the risks and challenges that the labour administration faces or is going to face during the period of planning execution. An important part of the strategic planning is how to tackle and manage the risks that may appear and impair the achievement of the planned outcomes.

²⁹ OECD (2014), *Boosting Resilience through Innovative Risk Governance*, OECD Publishing; page 23.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264209114-en>

Following the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA), the **risk management can be defined** as the identification, measurement, monitoring and evaluation of diverse risks (hazards, disasters, shocks) followed by a coordinated and cost-effective application of resources (prevention, mitigation, preparedness, resilience) to minimize and control the probability and impact of exposure³⁰. The risk management process identifies, assesses and mitigates threats or uncertainties that can affect a public institution. It involves analysing their likelihood and impact, and developing strategies to counteract potential harms³¹.

Risk management frameworks (RMFs) in the public sector entails the integration of effective risk management strategies into the *modus operandi* of public institutions and governments³².

► **Box 8. Kenya: risk management legal framework**

The Kenya government realized the importance of risk management for its entities and consequently issued a directive through Treasury Circular No. 3/2009 of 23rd February, 2009, which provided a policy framework for developing and implementing customized risk management strategies in public institutions. The Circular required all heads of public institutions to develop and implement a risk management framework as a fundamental step to establishing proactive, accountable and innovative public service.

Come 2012, the Public Finance Management Act and its accompanying regulations were enacted, requiring that accounting officers ensure that government entities develop:

- a) Risk management strategies which include fraud prevention mechanisms;
- b) A system of risk management and internal control that builds robust business operations.

In addition, the Mwongozo Code of Governance for state Corporations requires, among others, the following risk management measures:

- (a) The development of a policy on risk management which should take into account sustainability ethics;
- (b) Review the implementation of the risk management framework in a quarterly basis;
- (c) Establish a risk management function within the entity³³.


Finally, the risks management should be based on a holistic approach, taking on board all the possible consequences across sectors and levels of government as far as they can intersect and affect different public branches. For instance, the COVID-19 very much affected the health public sector, but also employment and labour areas, transport, migration, production, financial markets and so on. Furthermore, the pandemic also brought consequences for most countries such as the increase of public debt and fiscal expansion, growing consumption during recovery or ex post inflation, all in all making interest rates climb up and the US dollar edge higher, which all negatively impacted on the public debt

³⁰ United Nations; department of Economic and Social Affairs; Committee of Experts on Public Administration; *CEPA strategy guidance note on Risk management frameworks*; February 2021, page 1
<https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/intergovernmental-support/cepa/strategy-guidance-notes>

³¹ Harvard Business School On line; Free E-Book: *How to Formulate a Successful Business Strategy*; available at <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/risk-management>

³² *CEPA strategy guidance note on Risk management frameworks*; February 2021, page 1; available at https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/old-site/Strategy%20note%20risk%20management%20frameworks%20Feb%202021_1.pdf

³³ *The National Treasury and Economic Planning*; Public Financial Management Reforms Secretariat; info available at <https://www.pfmr.go.ke/risk-management-in-the-public-sector/>



service (denominated in US dollar) of developing countries. The COVID-19 pandemic was a very clear example of how a given risk may end up affecting different public and private branches from health to economy and why risk management should always follow an integrated, intersectoral and holistic approach.

▶ **Box 9. ISO 31000: risk management principles**

The ISO 31000 is an international standard that provides principles and guidelines for risk management. It outlines a comprehensive approach to identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating, monitoring, and communicating risks across an organization. The key principles of ISO 31000 include:

- ▶ Integrated risk management is not separated from the main activities and processes of the organization;
- ▶ Structured and comprehensive approach;
- ▶ Customized and dynamic risk management;
- ▶ Inclusive decision-making;
- ▶ Use of the best available information;
- ▶ Consideration of human and cultural factors;
- ▶ Continual improvement³⁴.

1.2.8 The planning environment

The strategic plan should not overlook the **fiscal and economic environment** and whether an economic growth or recession is expected and how any of these might impact on employment or on compliance by employers with labour and social security standards. Furthermore, if the fiscal environment is constrained or there are high public debt levels, the labour administration plans ought not to be so ambitious. Labour administration managers sometimes face difficulties in reconciling fiscal constraints with the need of increasing budgets to meet the growing costs derived from ageing population growth, shrinking employment or rising health and social care expenses.

Structural trends that may have influence on labour and employment should also be monitored. Globalization, supply chains disruptions, outsourcing needs, manufacturing-service equation, gig economy, technological changes, all may provide insights on the world of work and point at specific planning needs. Likewise, unemployment rate, public health shortcomings, high rates of work accident, trade unions affiliation levels, functioning of social dialogue and so on may provide leads on how to conduct the planning and select priorities.

On the other hand, labour administration must not lose sight of the specific **priorities and goals of the agencies working under the umbrella of the ministry**. These should be consulted during the process of planning with a view to taking into account their views and needs. Labour administration should also participate in the planning carried out by other entities whose action plans have an impact on labour administration areas such as employment, pensions, guaranteed minimum income and so on. For instance, employment planning should be coordinated with general economic plans in so far both issues are usually interconnected.

³⁴ ISO 31000 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines; <https://pecb.com/whitepaper/iso-31000-risk-management-principles-and-guidelines>

Finally, planning should always take account of the insights provided by the **social partners**, representing workers and employers.

► **Box 10. ILO Recommendations on manpower planning**

Section 14 of the ILO Recommendation on Administration, 1978 (No. 158)³⁵ states that:

(1) The competent bodies within the system of labour administration should be responsible for manpower planning or where this is not possible should participate in the functioning of manpower planning bodies through both institutional representation and the provision of technical information and advice.

(2) They should participate in the co-ordination and integration of manpower plans with economic plans.

(3) They should promote joint action of employers and workers, with the assistance as appropriate of public authorities and bodies, regarding both short-and long-term employment policies.

1.2.9 Planning schedule: long-term and short-term goals

The strategic goals of labour administration do not reflect the full scope of its mission but represent its core priorities and envisages different speeds of implementation. Hence, labour administration in its planning often **identifies long-term strategic**, core priorities and **short-term goals**, all addressed to obtain improvements in outcomes, services to citizens and progress in efficiencies. The plan must also include a time schedule for implementation of the different goals and the monitoring of progress (for example, annually, quarterly) as well as the resources allotted to each programmed activity.

► **Box 11. United States Department of Labour: near term and long-term strategic goals**

The United States Department of Labour (DoL) in 2023 identified the *Agency Priority Goals* (APGs) such as near-term improvements in outcomes, customer service or efficiencies that advance progress towards longer-term strategic goals. Two annual goals were adopted and reflected the top implementation-focused and performance improvement priorities of the agency (although not including the full scope of the agency mission):

1. An economy for all workers: by September 30, 2023, DoL programmes would prioritize the advancement of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, to better support underserved communities through a series of measures and milestones across agencies that demonstrate concrete and sustained progress.

2. Strengthening America's safety net for workers: by September 30, 2023, the Department would: 1) increase intrastate first payments of unemployment benefits made within 21 days by at least 10 per cent towards the regulatory target of 87 per cent and; 2) reduce the estimated improper payment rate of unemployment benefits.

*U.S. Department of Labour; FY 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan*³⁶

³⁵

https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID,P12100_LANG_CODE:312496,en:NO

³⁶ See at <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASAM/pmc/FY2022-2026-Strategic-Plan.pdf>



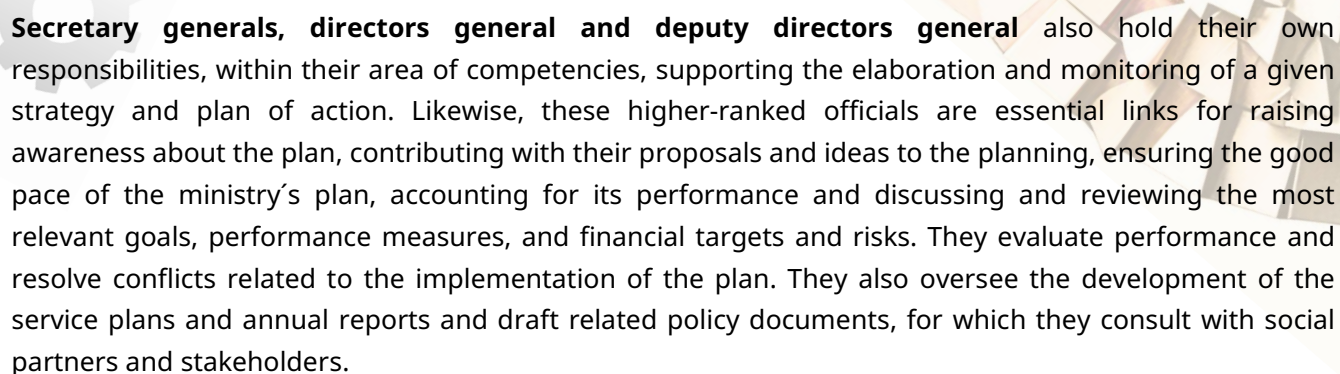
1.3 Roles, responsibilities, and hierarchy in the planning process

Insofar as planning has somehow to strike the balance between the well-functioning of labour market and the implementation and enforcement of labour and social policies (for example, on wages, job protection, health and safety at work and so on), labour administration must not only bank on the contributions to the plan made in-house but also on those coming from diverse institutions and stakeholders. Actually, each ministerial unit or department and each institution or agency make their own contributions to the accomplishment of the goals from their specific positions and roles as follows.

The planning process in labour administration usually follows a **top-down and hierarchical approach** rather than a flat organization of labour administration. Therefore, the planning is in most cases organized in a hierarchical manner, which entails having different levels of authority and a stringent chain of command. The higher authorities such as the minister or secretaries of state are responsible for liaison with the different levels within the organization and external institutions, in particular other ministries. The decision-making process flows from top to down and there are clear lines of responsibility. The elaboration of the plan cascades through the pyramidal organisation of the ministry, from the top authorities to the rest of senior and middle managers and officials. The hierarchical structure allows **clear understanding of each one's roles and responsibilities** and ensures accountability for actions and/or decisions at different management levels. On the contrary, hierarchy implies complex chains of command and less flexibility to adapt to environmental changes, as well as it may put pressure and strain on the employee-manager relationship

Although there is a great diversity of labour administration systems in the world according to the degree of economic and social development, some features are commonplace in most countries. For instance, while the political profile of the high-ranking official instils **political direction in the plan**, the ministry's middle managers and senior civil servants shape the plan from a **technical perspective**; while the higher-ranked authorities embed **political aspects** in the plan, the technical-profile-officials introduce **legal and financial aspects**. This description should be coherent with a picture of public administration where directors and deputy directors and the posts above are politically-appointed or where the line between political and non-political appointments is drawn from director downwards, depending on the country. According to the 2024 General Survey on Labour Administration, in the majority of countries, the structure of the ministry reflects one or more political positions between the minister and the civil service administration. These positions, which are part of the ministerial cabinet, report directly to the minister and generally bear the title of deputy minister or permanent, state or principal secretary.

Turning back to the roles during the planning process, at ministry level the **ministers, deputy ministers and secretaries of state** direct the staff for collecting information regarding the planning and are responsible for the government's labour and social policy direction. They negotiate the departmental budget, take key policy decisions and present the strategy/plan to the parliament. The ministers discuss and review with other ministries and stakeholders the social policy goals, the performance measures, the financial targets and the risks involved. They also review and approve the organization's service plans and annual reports. The **deputy ministers** are the main advisors to the minister and one of their main tasks is to ensure the engagement and commitment of the officials with the plan and the ministry's liaison with other stakeholders, promoting awareness on the new policies and objectives planned. The **ministry's senior staff and ministry's cabinets** are responsible for reviewing and advising on the annual plan and ensure the financial consistency in the implementation of the plan.



Secretary generals, directors general and deputy directors general also hold their own responsibilities, within their area of competencies, supporting the elaboration and monitoring of a given strategy and plan of action. Likewise, these higher-ranked officials are essential links for raising awareness about the plan, contributing with their proposals and ideas to the planning, ensuring the good pace of the ministry's plan, accounting for its performance and discussing and reviewing the most relevant goals, performance measures, and financial targets and risks. They evaluate performance and resolve conflicts related to the implementation of the plan. They also oversee the development of the service plans and annual reports and draft related policy documents, for which they consult with social partners and stakeholders.

1.4 Planning and resources allocation

In the 2024 Labour Administration General Survey, the CEACR emphasizes that ministries of labour and other agencies involved in research and studies on labour matters should have the necessary financial, human and technical resources, including statistical, research and planning services, to make correct diagnoses and to contribute effectively to the formulation of clear policy options.

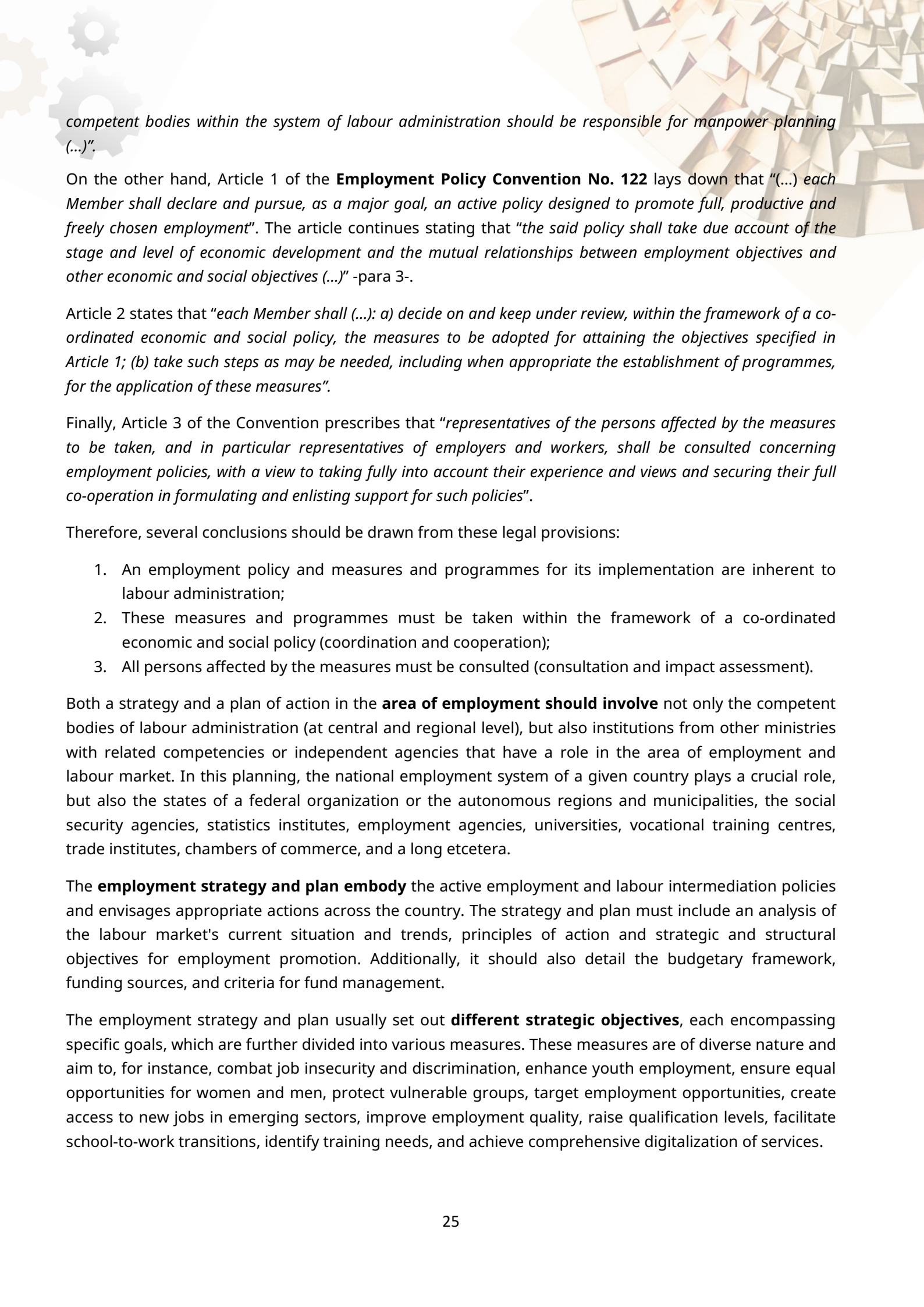
Therefore, in the ministry the plan must allocate **resources and related responsibilities**. The **financial aspects** of the plan have to be taken care by the budgetary units of the ministry, while other ministerial departments must get involved in the planned specific programmes where:

- **Staff resources** have been allocated (thematic area departments, human resources or finance departments);
- The planned activities require specific **training** -refresh, upgrade and update training- (normally human resources department);
- Adequate **premises, offices** and accommodation are needed (infrastructure department);
- **Technological equipment**, software and hardware investment is foreseen (ITC office);
- **Transport** facilities are required (logistical office).
- The planned activity requires external contracting (those units dealing with engagement for **public procurement**);
- Planning is related to **international affairs** and the plan envisages any type of international activity -participation in international events, exchange of information, participation in international training meetings and so on- (the competent ministry's units)
- The plan contemplates legislative initiatives (the Ministry's **legal department**);
- **Enforcement units** must be reinforced, collaboration mechanisms established or inspection activities and/or resources increased -for example, number of inspectors- (labour inspection department).
- Specific actions related to **documentation, data, statistics and research** are planned (those units responsible for the implementation of documentation, statistics or research initiatives).

1.5 Strategy and planning on specific relevant areas

1.5.1 Strategy and planning on employment

One of the key areas for planning in labour administration is employment and labour market. As seen above, section 14 of the **ILO Recommendation on Administration, 1978 (No. 158)** provides that *"the*



competent bodies within the system of labour administration should be responsible for manpower planning (...)".

On the other hand, Article 1 of the **Employment Policy Convention No. 122** lays down that "(...) *each Member shall declare and pursue, as a major goal, an active policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment*". The article continues stating that "*the said policy shall take due account of the stage and level of economic development and the mutual relationships between employment objectives and other economic and social objectives (...)*" -para 3-

Article 2 states that "*each Member shall (...): a) decide on and keep under review, within the framework of a co-ordinated economic and social policy, the measures to be adopted for attaining the objectives specified in Article 1; (b) take such steps as may be needed, including when appropriate the establishment of programmes, for the application of these measures*".

Finally, Article 3 of the Convention prescribes that "*representatives of the persons affected by the measures to be taken, and in particular representatives of employers and workers, shall be consulted concerning employment policies, with a view to taking fully into account their experience and views and securing their full co-operation in formulating and enlisting support for such policies*".

Therefore, several conclusions should be drawn from these legal provisions:

1. An employment policy and measures and programmes for its implementation are inherent to labour administration;
2. These measures and programmes must be taken within the framework of a co-ordinated economic and social policy (coordination and cooperation);
3. All persons affected by the measures must be consulted (consultation and impact assessment).

Both a strategy and a plan of action in the **area of employment should involve** not only the competent bodies of labour administration (at central and regional level), but also institutions from other ministries with related competencies or independent agencies that have a role in the area of employment and labour market. In this planning, the national employment system of a given country plays a crucial role, but also the states of a federal organization or the autonomous regions and municipalities, the social security agencies, statistics institutes, employment agencies, universities, vocational training centres, trade institutes, chambers of commerce, and a long etcetera.

The **employment strategy and plan embody** the active employment and labour intermediation policies and envisages appropriate actions across the country. The strategy and plan must include an analysis of the labour market's current situation and trends, principles of action and strategic and structural objectives for employment promotion. Additionally, it should also detail the budgetary framework, funding sources, and criteria for fund management.

The employment strategy and plan usually set out **different strategic objectives**, each encompassing specific goals, which are further divided into various measures. These measures are of diverse nature and aim to, for instance, combat job insecurity and discrimination, enhance youth employment, ensure equal opportunities for women and men, protect vulnerable groups, target employment opportunities, create access to new jobs in emerging sectors, improve employment quality, raise qualification levels, facilitate school-to-work transitions, identify training needs, and achieve comprehensive digitalization of services.

► **Box 12. Two examples of manpower planning: 1. Employment strategy (Albania); 2. Employment plan (Spain)**

Albania: National EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS STRATEGY 2023-2030³⁷

I. Strategic framework

- 1.1. Economic background and labour market
- 1.2. 2030 Strategic background and sustainable development goals

II. The key sector and institutional challenges for the future development of the country and eu membership process

- 2.1. The skills and labour market challenges; 2.1.1. Skills development; 2.1.2. Labour market functioning; 2.1.3. Work quality
- 2.2 CURRENT LABOUR MARKET POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES: 2.2.1 Employment services; 2.2.2 Employment promotion programmes; 2.2.3 Vocational education and training; 2.2.4 Labour inspection; 2.2.5 Social partnership; 2.2.6 Employment protection legislation; 2.2.7 Minimum wage; 2.2.8 Labour market passive policies; 2.2.9. Labour taxation

III. Vision, pillars or strategic areas and policy objectives

- 3.1. VISION;
- 3.2. POLICY GOALS: 3.2.1. Policy goal 1: skills development and better matching of demand with supply in the labour market for more employment; Policy goal 2: enabling decent employment for women and men through the implementation of inclusive labour market policies.

IV. Accountability, monitoring and evaluation analyses

- 4.1. Implementation and coordination mechanisms
- 4.2. Monitoring and evaluation

V. Financial resources for the implementation of the strategy

VI. Annexes

- Annex 1: Action plan for the implementation of the national employment and skills strategy 2023-2030
- Annex 2: Monitored indicators
- Annex 3: Youth guarantee plan

Spain: Annual employment policy plan (2023)³⁸

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Context Analysis: Current Labour Market Situation
- 3. Strategic Framework
- 4. Structure and Objectives
- 5. Criteria for Elaboration

³⁷ See at <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASAM/pmc/FY2022-2026-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

³⁸ https://arkiva.financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/National-Employment-and-Skills-Strategy-2030_EN.pdf

- 6. Services and Programmes of Activation Policies for Employment
- 7. Financing
- 8. Evaluation

Annexes:

Annex I. Programmes and Services by Axes

Annex II. General Summary by Autonomous Community: Services and Programmes to be Implemented

Annex III. Budget Allocation

Annex IV. Document of Indicators

Annex V. Common Programme PC00038 - Integrating Gender Equality into Active Employment Policies

1.6.2 Planning on occupational health

Another relevant field on which labour administrations generally work in the production of a national strategy and plan of action is occupational health and safety. A safe and healthy working environment is a **fundamental principle and right at work**, following the historic inclusion of a safe and healthy working environment as a fundamental principle and right at work at the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference (June 2022).

The **Occupational Safety and Health Convention No. 155** in its Article 4 lays down that *"each Member shall (...), in consultation with the most representative organizations of employers and workers, formulate, implement and periodically review a coherent national policy on occupational safety, occupational health and the working environment. The aim of the policy shall be to prevent accidents and injury to health arising out of, linked with or occurring in the course of work, by minimizing, so far as is reasonably practicable, the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment"*.

In addition, Article 5 of the **Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention No. 187** states that *"each Member shall formulate, implement, monitor, evaluate and periodically review a national programme on occupational safety and health in consultation with the most representative organizations of employers and workers"*. According to this article, the national programme shall promote a safety and health culture, contribute to eliminating, minimizing or preventing occupational injuries, be formulated and reviewed on the basis of analysis of the national situation, include objectives, targets and indicators of progress; and be supported by other complementary national programmes and plans which will assist in achieving progressively a safe and healthy working environment.

Despite this important decision and the general progress that countries have made in occupational safety and health and in the reduction of work-related accidents and diseases, the number of them are still high in many countries and desolate the world of work. The ILO has prepared a revised **Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health 2024-2030** and plan of action for its implementation, as requested by the ILO Governing Body in its 347th Session (March 2023). This strategy seeks to implement OSH as a fundamental principle and right at work, promote social protection and ensure an effective protection at work for all³⁹. The European Union also periodically issues a strategy on health and safety at work (last

³⁹See at https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2023-13520

one for 2021-2027⁴⁰). Below is an example of how to develop a clear and practical strategy on occupational health.

► **Box 13. New Zealand: health and safety at work strategy 2018-2028⁴¹ (summary)**

- 1. The Strategy sets the direction for improving health and safety at work in New Zealand**
- 2. Work must be healthy and safe for everyone in New Zealand**
- 3. We need to focus on what will make the biggest impact**
- 4. Each priority is linked to the others**
- 5. Everyone plays their part to manage health and safety risks effectively and proportionately by:**
 - Focusing on what will make the biggest impact to reduce harm;
 - Work-related health, including mental health;
 - Businesses with greater need: sectors with highest harm and small businesses;
 - Workers with greater need: Māori and other workers at greatest risk.
- 6. Building everyone's capability to do this well**
 - Encourage leaders at all levels to integrate health and safety;
 - Develop and share better data and insights to improve decision making;
 - Enable workers to be represented, engaged and to participate;
 - Lift capability of health and safety practitioners.
- 7. Key things that contribute to good health and safety at work**
 - Good and effective legislation;
 - Capable regulators that enforce legislation;
 - Clear vision and direction for everyone to work towards;
 - Practical things that businesses and workers need to have in place to ensure that risks are managed well and workers are healthy and safe at work;
 - Identifying the key capabilities needed to develop the things in the centre.
- 8. Everyone involved in work in New Zealand has a role in achieving the Strategy's vision.**
 - Unions and worker representatives;
 - Educators and practitioners;
 - Sectors;
 - Workers;
 - Māori;
 - Businesses;
 - Research institutions;
 - Government.
- 9. The Strategy is for everyone. This means we all need to work on the goals and priorities together**
 - Leadership (owners and directors of businesses, supply chain management, workers and workers' representatives and unions, sector groups supporting their businesses, māori and

⁴⁰ Available at:

https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_protect/%40protrav/%40safework/documents/policy/wcms_897539.pdf

⁴¹ Available at

<https://osha.europa.eu/en/safety-and-health-legislation/eu-strategic-framework-health-and-safety-work-2021-2027>

community organisations, Government, educators and practitioners, community groups);

10. Measuring how well we are doing

- Overall indicator: a measure capturing the overall outcomes (of prevention) of work-related harm across New Zealand;
- Key work-related injury and health indicators: tracking rates of types of work-related harms, including fatal and serious non-fatal injuries as well as exposure to work-related health risks;
- Indicators broken down by sector and demographic groups (e.g. age, gender and ethnicity);
- Capability indicators: the things that we need to do well in order to improve the rates of harm (such as leadership, worker engagement, representation and participation, health and safety practitioner capability);

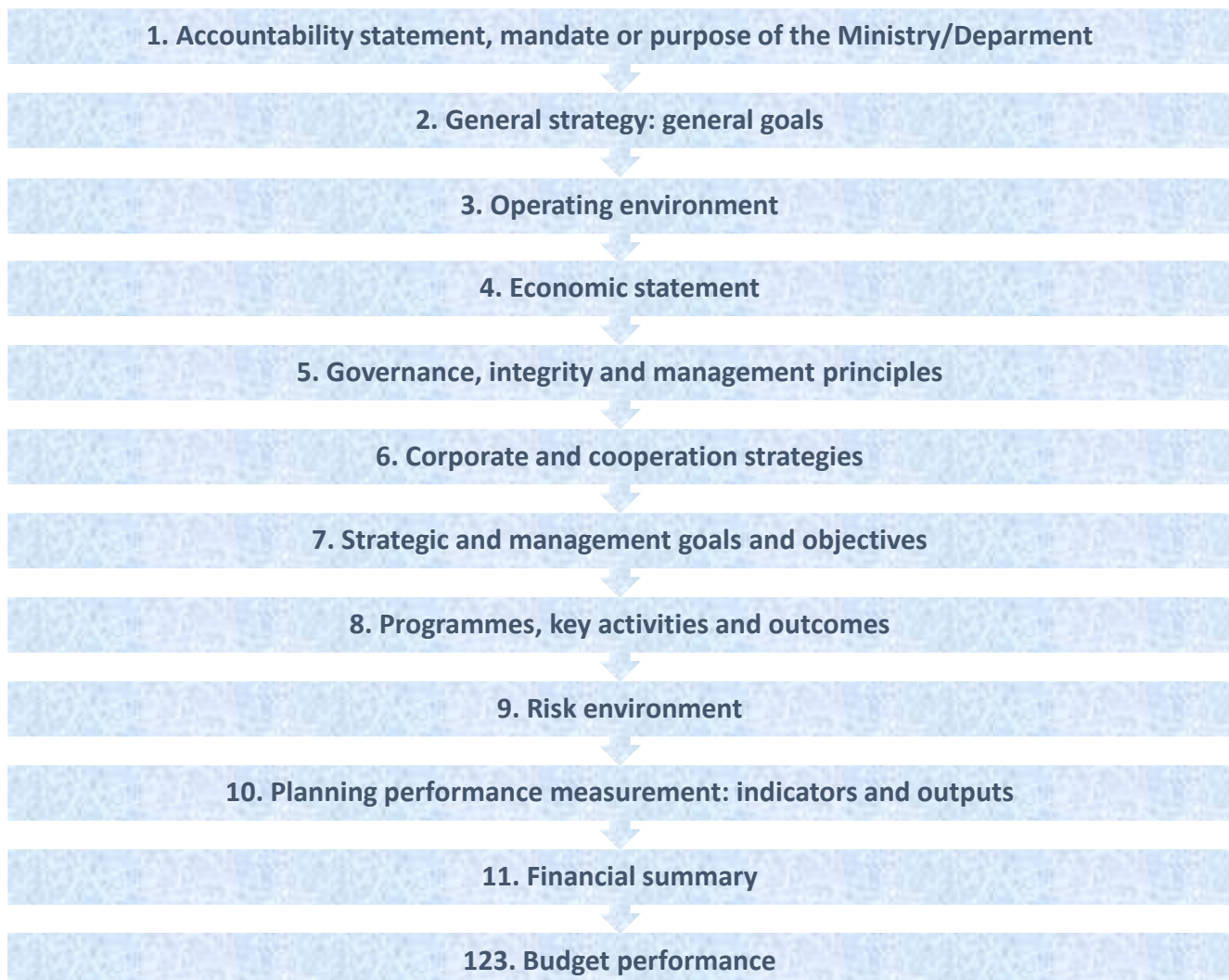
12. Data & insights

- Types of data ;
- Key agencies for data.

1.7 Structure of the plan

The steps to draft a strategic plan could be summarized as reflected in the figure below.

► Box 14. Outline of labour department plan and budget





1.8 Preparation of a labour administration plan

As explained above, planning requires a **previous scoping of the situation** and environment, as well as of the strengths and shortcomings, using evidence-based methods for analysing the current and actual problems, their causes and future challenges.

Countries often try to address too many problems through their strategic documents, endangering the successful achievement of some of the objectives set in the plan. Objectives must be rational, realistic and bound to the frequently scarce resources. **Objectives also ought to be SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) and organized in terms of more or less priority or urgency. This requires the previous prioritization of activities and objectives, which of course entails setting aside those objectives that are not deemed crucial or indispensable against a backdrop of scarce resources. This approach often demands a little dose of *"the art of saying no"*. When planning a strategy, labour administration officials should decide, among others, on the following aspects:

- ▶ Data to be collected and used;
- ▶ Analysis methods;
- ▶ Tools to be used: activities, indicators, baselines, outputs, outcomes;
- ▶ Execution time-line;
- ▶ Human, material and financial resources needed (internal and external);
- ▶ Use of outsourcing, if need be;
- ▶ Institutional structures involved;
- ▶ Consultation with external stakeholders (both extra-governmental and cross-institutional);
- ▶ Citizen engagement.

All aspects referred to above may as well determine the timeframe of the plan, either shortening it or extending it. It may be also useful to draft a **concept paper or a framework strategic document** containing the key milestones, the priorities, the involved stakeholders, the composition of working parties, the overall timeframe of the entire process, the resources needed for all parties of the strategy.

The formulation of a strategy and action plan should not only be fulfilled in-house but relying on the partnership of involved stakeholders. These should give their opinion and validate the initial strategy and planned main reforms or activities. It is of paramount importance that the relevant stakeholders, such as for instance social partners, back the strategy and plan, know the reasons behind them and recognize their value. As far as the strategy and reforms are agreed, the better the chances for the stakeholders to get involved in their implementation. As dealt with above, the impact assessment is the tool to accomplish this approach.

Takeaways:

- ▶ Planning encompasses different strategies, different issues, thematic and cross-cutting matters;
- ▶ Prioritisation is vital to ensure that the planned reforms are realistic and can be implemented;
- ▶ Prioritisation should be supported by decision and policy makers; lack of prioritisation may lead to an unrealistic strategy that may not be implementable;
- ▶ It is recommended to involve stakeholders and make them participate in the planning process;
- ▶ Information and sound statistics are key in any country's strategy to assess the efficiency of

national policies and plans;

- ▶ Objectives ought to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) and organised in terms of urgency and priority;
- ▶ Countries often try to address too many problems through their strategic documents, endangering the successful achievement of some of the objectives set in the plan;
- ▶ General labour administration strategy and planning does not exclude specific topic-focused strategy and planning.

* Toolkit for planning

*(OECD-SIGMA's "Toolkit for the preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of public administration reform and sector strategies"; Guidance for SIGMA partners; *includes examples for labour administration)*

The OECD published in 2018 a toolkit for planning in public administration. The elaboration of this toolkit was led by SIGMA (*Support for Improvement in Governance and Management*), a joint initiative of the OECD and the European Union for strengthening the foundations for improved public governance⁴². The summarized outline of the toolkit presented below reproduces its contents and incorporates some few additional instances for better exemplifying it from the perspective of labour administration⁴³. In the first place, the cycle of the strategy process, according to the toolkit, breaks down into the following stages:

- 1. Problem analysis** – Analysis of the current state of affairs (achievements, challenges, and opportunities)
- 2. Prioritisation of problems and objectives** – Based on their urgency, importance or scale, in accordance with government priorities, available resources and views of affected institutions and stakeholders;
- 3. Objective setting** – Determined by the level of ambition of change;
- 4. Definition of indicators with baselines, milestones and targets** – Direction of change envisaged and the expected level of performance;
- 5. Action planning** – Objectives and targets, and key activities, timeline and implementation responsibilities
- 6. Costing of planned activities and reforms** – Calculation of financial and non-monetary costs and identifying the sources of financing;
- 7. Monitoring and reporting** – Regular assessment of implementation progress;
- 8. Evaluation** – Assess the attainment of the envisaged goals against the defined problems

⁴² Available at

<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/3453-health-safety-at-work-strategy-2018-2028-pdf>

⁴³ OECD (2018) *Toolkit for the preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of public administration reform and sector strategies*; Guidance for SIGMA partners; SIGMA PAPER No. 57; toolkit available at available at: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/37e212e6-en.pdf?expires=1734249764&id=id&accname=quest&checksum=C79EBEE1C5FB55AD154F1B797B733C1B>

The figure below represents a scheme of the planning cycle and strategy.

► **Figure 4. Consultations**



► **Box 15. OECD-SIGMA´s TOOLKIT(adapted): PLANNING STAGES**

1. Problems and challenges: how to identify and analyse them.

OPTION 1: In-house civil servants in the ministries and agencies carry out the analysis.

- A working group composed of civil servants from the key institutions with complimentary skills and expertise, and potentially also external experts, led by the head institution, can be established to lead the analysis process;
- The WG carries out analysis, defines questions and information sources to have an unbiased picture;
- Benefits: better internal insights of the problems or gaps;
- Limitations: more time consuming (civil servants usually have other tasks to fulfil alongside the analysis), fewer opportunities to apply sophisticated analysis methods, lack of internal self-censoring, greater risk of bias.

OPTION 2: Outsourced to another public body, private-sector service provider or NGO is procured to carry out the analysis.

- The lead institution has to develop the Terms of Reference (TOR) to properly target the scope and define the methodology; this requires expertise;
- Benefits: an opportunity to use more sophisticated or complex methodological approaches; analysis can be faster than with in-house methods;
- Limitations: less in-house ownership; limited information on acute problems, less visibility to and from an external analyst; additional financial resources;

OPTION 3: Combination of both

- Benefits and limitations of both methods.

2. Questions for problem analysis

1. What are the key challenges and problems?

- Challenges and problems still not addressed or unsuccessfully addressed?
- New challenges arisen since the start of the implementation of previous strategies?
- What are the issues that institutions implementing the reform measures complain about the most?
- What are the views of the stakeholders on the implementation of the previous strategies?

2. Where are the biggest performance gaps and shortcomings of the previous plans and reforms?

3. What are the main causes of the problems and gaps according to available data (from external and internal assessments):

- Why were objectives and performance targets not achieved?
- Why were activities not implemented?
- What unplanned activities were undertaken and why?

4. What are the views of the implementing institutions and key stakeholders (and beneficiaries) on the causes of the problems and gaps?

5. How significant is the problem or gap based on the available data and complaints of the implementing institutions or stakeholders, including beneficiaries?

6. How is the country performing in the various areas of public administration or in the particular sector in comparison to others (similar countries, the region and international best performers)?

7. What are the systemic reasons behind the difference in performance compared to other countries?

8. What reforms or actions can be adapted from other country reforms or from good performers and what are the limitations of such adaptation?

3. Analysis of Political, Economic, Social, Technological and Legal factors (PESTL)

Political

- What is the impact of the political agenda (for example, elections, government programmes and political priorities) on the policy?
- Are there any (new) political commitments that should be addressed by the policy?
- How might other policy areas (for example, health, taxation, competition and regional development) affect the policy?

Economic

- How might current macroeconomic development (public debt, public deficit, consumption, employment, inflation, income levels, etc.) affect the policy and its target group?

Social

- How might demographics, cultural limitations, levels of education and health affect the policy and its target group?
- What changes and solutions should be sought?

Technological

- How might technology impact the policy and its target group, either positively or negatively?
- Are there any new technologies that could be used to make the policy more effective and efficient?

Legal

- Are there any legal bottlenecks that are delaying the implementation of envisaged activities and reforms?
- Is there any legislative initiative that would tackle these bottlenecks?
- Does the application of current legal provisions entail burdens that should be addressed?

Environmental

- Is there any environmental factor (e.g. climate change or pollution) that might affect the policy and its target group? What changes and solutions should be sought?

4. SWOT= S (strengths); W (weaknesses); O (opportunities) and T (threats)

(example for a specific item)

S	W
<p>Strong institutions functioning adequately (e.g. Institute of Public Health, Labour inspection, National Statistic)</p>	<p>Underreporting of occupational diseases and accidents at work;</p> <p>Poor cooperation between competent bodies (Labour inspection, Institute of Public Health)</p> <p>Health surveillance system and system for notification, diagnostics and registration of occupational diseases is not working adequately and lacks well trained occupational</p>

	<p>physicians</p> <p>Shortage of occupational disease</p> <p>OSH services require legislative updating</p>
O	T
<p>Donor financing the elaboration of practical guidelines on how to report accidents at work and occupational diseases and assessment of legislative changes necessary to improve the system of accident notification and registration;</p> <p>Harness initial agreement for entrusting the collection and management of data related to employment injuries to a single institution, without prejudice of collaboration among the involved institutions;</p> <p>Agreement among policy makers for developing a national register of occupational accidents.</p>	<p>Persistent lack of coordination among competent institutions, in particular between the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and the National Statistics Agency</p> <p>Absence of interoperability between the two sources of collection of accidents at work and occupational diseases: labour inspection and social security; continuation of incomplete and fragmented information.</p>

5. Scoping and Prioritisation

- Defining the exact scope of the strategy;
- Prioritising problems in accordance with their importance and urgency;
- Consultation with stakeholders in order to validate the strategy and within the participatory discussion among high-ranking officials.

** OECD's SIGMA has developed a scoping and prioritisation tool to facilitate the process of prioritisation. This tool is based on the use of a simple self-assessment questionnaire covering all areas⁴⁴.*

6. Vision statement

- The (Ministry of Labour) is functioning to professionally and efficiently serve the citizens, ensuring democratic values and the rule of law;
- The Ministry is trustworthy, transparent and delivering efficiently for citizens and businesses;
- The services (of the Ministry) are seamless and efficient, using the best available technology to generate citizen satisfaction and ensure trust;

⁴⁴ This is an adaptation of an original work by the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed in this adaptation should not be reported as representing the official views of the OECD or of its Member countries

7. Objectives		
Principle	Objective	
Policy Development and co-ordination	Enhance coherence, efficiency, predictability and transparency of decision-making processes in public administration;	
Human Resources, management and civil Service	Adjust human resources management system to the objectives and the requirements of a modern administration;	
Accountability	Strengthen accountability of administrative authorities, public institutions and state-owned enterprises by improving their management;	
Service delivery	Improve access, efficiency and effectiveness of public services at central and local level by reducing unnecessary administrative burdens, minimising the cost and taking into account the beneficiaries' needs;	
Public financial management	Ensure financial stability and effective distribution of state finances in accordance with government priorities;	
8. Developing indicators (only one example per each indicator is included)		
Input indicators	Number of staff/working days;	
Output indicators	Number of public employees who have successfully completed training courses;	
Outcome indicators	Percentage of draft laws/by-laws preceded by evidence-based discussion (e.g. impact assessment);	
Impact indicators	Percentage of citizens/users satisfied with service delivery;	
9. Setting baseline and target values		
Baseline	Target	Level of performance
*Collection of data/calculation of a value *Baseline for a new objective=0 *Baseline could be not possible if lack of historical data		

*** Outline of an action plan**

The above explained toolkit is set to become a very good reference for the general strategy and planning process in the labour administrations of many countries. As regards the action plan itself, two of most used layouts of how to draft an action plan including objectives, responsible institution, timeline, financial resources, environment or targets are presented below.

► **Box 16. Ministry of labour: example of general planning**

- **Organization chart**
- **Strategic plan overview**
 - *Mission*
 - *Background*
 - *Strategy*
- **Ministry/department priorities**
 - *Responsible units*
- **Strategic goals and specific objectives**
- **Partners and stake-holders outreach**
 - *Partner agencies and stakeholders*
- **Impact, environment and risks**
- **Performance goals and indicators**

- **Performance goal 1**

→ Performance measures/indicators; results, targets:

Goal: safe and healthful working conditions for workers				
Performance measures/indicators	Result 2023	Result 2024	Target 2023	Target 2024
OSH inspections				
Number of people trained				
Average days to solve complaints				
.../...				
.../...				
.../...				
.../...				

- **Performance goal 2**

→ Performance measures/indicators; results, targets:

Goal				
Performance measures/indicators	Result 2023	Result 2024	Target 2023	Target 2024
.../...				
.../...				
.../...				
.../...				
.../...				
.../...				
.../...				

- **Performance goal 3**

→ Performance measures/indicators; results, targets:

Goal				
Performance measures/indicators	Result 2023	Result 2024	Target 2023	Target 2024
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				

- **Performance goal 4**

→ Performance measures/indicators; results, targets:

Goal				
Performance measures/indicators	Result 2023	Result 2024	Target 2023	Target 2024
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				

- **Performance goal 5**

→ Performance measures/indicators; results, targets:

Goal				
Performance measures/indicators	Result 2023	Result 2024	Target 2023	Target 2024
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				
..../....				

► **Box 17. Ministry of labour: example of action plan**

Objective	Responsible institution	Timeline	Financial source	Environment	Short-term/medium-term target
Strategic objective 1: Increase cooperation and partnerships					
Specific objective 1.1: Establishment of coordination channels					
Establishment of inter-institutional body	Ministry of Labour Ministry of Finance Ministry of Health Ministry of Social Protection	Q 3 2025		Failure to establish effective cooperation mechanisms	Legislative initiative regulating a new inter-institutional body; Establishment of a permanent cooperation body;
Specific objective 1.2: Further development of a system for investigating and reporting accidents at work:					
Set up a mechanism for collecting data on accidents at work	OSH Institute Ministry of Labour Labour Inspection Health Ministry Social Protection Ministry Social Security Institute	Q2 2025		Current reporting and registration system not working properly; Improvement necessary in registration procedure; Coding of accidents, etc.	Setting up an inter-institutional WG; Legislative amendments published;
Strategic Objective 2 - Strengthening the governance and management of OSH institutions for decent working conditions.					
Specific Objective 2.1: Increased capacities of labour inspection					
Recruiting and training of	Ministry of Labour	2025		Currently training lacking necessary	Training modules elaborated;

inspectors based on skills' needs assessment	Labour Inspection Public Administration School			resources: New criteria for recruitment; Description of skills; Minimum training necessary; Permanent training requirements;	Training of labour inspectors started; Number of inspectors trained;
Strategic Objective/.....					
Specific objective/.....					

C. Labour administration and e-government

1.1 Overview

E-government is a term that encloses **several meanings**: it means automatic exchange of information and services with citizens, it also stands for open government data, but it as well means electronic administration using IC technologies to innovate management and governance. E-Government for labour administration implies the development of integrated computerized management and information systems for all its departments and services.

Every labour administration should run an **e-government agenda** identifying the potentials of ICT and the status quo in respect of what areas of manual labour administration can be replaced and automatized and what tasks are not replaceable. The e-government agenda should as well enshrine the advantages and progress expected from new technologies and how can this progress be measured (that is, how do we know that the benefits exist)⁴⁵. In the implementation of this agenda, it should always be considered that there are labour administration services which can progress more rapidly than others in their unrelenting efforts of rising to the challenge of technological modernization (for example, labour inspection in many countries has become one of the most computerized components of labour administration).

While e-government has for years involved the utilization of computers, cell phones, tablets and internet, today it entails the use of **Artificial Intelligence** (AI), big data management or cloud computing. With these latest technological developments e-government has proved to be a powerful tool in the hands of labour administration in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of public services.

⁴⁵Toolkit for the preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of public administration reform and sector strategies; Guidance for SIGMA partners; SIGMA PAPER No. 57 Page 33; available at https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2018/10/toolkit-for-the-preparation-implementation-monitoring-reporting-and-evaluation-of-public-administration-reform-and-sector-strategies_1df34185/37e212e6-en.pdf



► **Box 18. The Ministry of Labour of Qatar embarks on a first of its kind Cloud Transformation Journey as part of its strategy to digitally transform the labour sector; October 25, 2022⁴⁶**

The Ministry of Labour held a ceremony to inaugurate the cloud computing process which falls within the second phase of the digital transformation scheme, as part of the ministry's strategy aimed at accelerating the development of services in line with future requirements and best technological practices that conform to the broader objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030.

The Ministry seeks to take advantage of cloud technology in order to develop services provided to the public, raise the level of information security controls, make data-based decisions, improve business flexibility, reduce operational costs, and increase employees' productivity. The Ministry has launched approximately 55% of services electronically to contribute to achieving excellence in performance, expediting the completion of transactions and streamlining procedures. The Ministry is working at a steady pace and diligent effort to develop, modernize and launch nearly 80 new electronic services and transactions by March 2023.

The launch of the cloud computing process in the Ministry accelerates the pace of innovation indicating that a central data centre will be established so the Ministry can use it to facilitate the direct access to data and extracting reports on demand, in this way taking advantage of artificial intelligence in the decision-making process. The cloud computing process has come in partnership with the firms Microsoft and Oracle, which develop a plan based on cloud interoperability, the first of its kind to move to a cloud environment in line with the national computing policy.

On the other hand, citizens may today easily access to e-government, what makes administration more transparent, accountable and inclusive than some decades ago and improves the trust of the citizens in their administrations. Nonetheless, of no little importance is the fact that e-government not always reaches all citizens and there are cases where people living in **remote or marginalized geographical areas** have little or no access to internet technology, so labour administration managers must decide about what departmental institutions or units should still rely on more traditional technologies such as telephone hot lines or call centres.

► **Box 19. Argentina: geographical areas are not reached by e-government**

In Argentina labour inspection have used mobile units for inspections, which consist of vans designed and used to reach any geographical location where inspections are not easy or usual due to different circumstances. The vans have capacity for three workstations and are equipped with personal computers, printers, and satellite internet connection for cases where there is no internet coverage, for example in certain rural areas.

Thanks to these mobile units, it is possible to reach workers in these areas where coverage and access are difficult to reach. The mobile units make it possible to detect irregularities during inspections and, if necessary, to issue a notification and to call employers to a hearing enabling them to discharge or exercise their right of defence without having to travel long distances to reach fixed labour inspection offices⁴⁷.

⁴⁶ This sentence following the idea of Anna Milena Galazka; *Understanding ICT use in labour administration: taking stock; The Governance of Labour Administration Reforms, Innovations and Challenges*© International Labour Organization 2021; page 69.

⁴⁷ See <https://www.qatar-tribune.com/article/27127/nation/ministry-of-labour-embarks-on-cloud-computing-process-to-boost-e-services>

The United Nations *Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations* includes in its annexes the **Global Digital Compact**. This document contains some principles and commitments in relation to digital technologies, among which the following should be highlighted:

- ▶ Pivotal role of universal and meaningful connectivity;
- ▶ Digital literacy, skills capacity and importance of digital skills and lifelong access to digital learning opportunities;
- ▶ Digital public goods and digital public infrastructure as empowerment of societies;
- ▶ Equitable and affordable access to digital technologies;
- ▶ Protection and promotion of human rights in the digital space;
- ▶ Internet governance;
- ▶ Digital trust and safety;
- ▶ Information integrity;
- ▶ Data privacy and security;
- ▶ Data exchange and common data standards;
- ▶ Data for the Sustainable Development Goals;
- ▶ Interoperability between national, regional and international data;
- ▶ Cross-border data flows as a critical driver for digital economy;
- ▶ Balanced, inclusive and risk-based approach to the governance of AI⁴⁸.

Concerning the relationship between **e-government and the SDGs**, a first task should be to frame e-government and ICT against the principles of effective governance for sustainable development in the global Sustainable Development Goals. The table below summarizes possible different strategies that could be undertaken for each principle.

Principle	Strategy
<p><u>Effectiveness</u></p> <p>Competence, sound policymaking and cooperation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility of electronic records of labour administration procedures; • Use of big data management and AI for planning; • Smart allocation of labour administration tasks; • Training of labour administration practitioners in the use of electronic systems (basic training modules and specialised courses): • Monitoring of working conditions; • Electronic self-compliance reporting; • Interoperability and automatic exchange of information with other bodies
<p><u>Accountability</u></p> <p>Integrity, transparency and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of email communication for all work-related transactions; • Electronic registration of the payment of wages and other items;

⁴⁸ *Utilización de tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación en las inspecciones del trabajo. Una visión comparada en torno a países seleccionados*; OIT Cono Sur • Informes Técnicos /2, page. 73; available at: https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40americas/%40oro-lima/%40sro-santiago/documents/publication/wcms_614905.pdf

independent oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic files stored in a secure way; • Mail box for complaints and enquiries from citizens; • Use of social network for interacting with citizens;
<p><u>Inclusiveness</u> Leaving no one behind, non-discrimination, participation, subsidiarity and intergenerational equity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of horizontal and vertical electronic communication among labour administration practitioners; • Electronic registers for migrant workers; • Electronic facilitation of jobseekers' access to information on vacancies; • Electronic dissemination of information and training materials to labour market participants; • Provision of confidential advice, workplace laws and consultation online; • Provision of online spaces of conflict resolution;

1.2 Benefits and potentials of e-government and the use of ICT in labour administration

Following the Report of the CEACR entitled *Labour administration in a changing world of work*, the placement of new technologies on the public sector has significantly changed the way in which many labour administration institutions manage and deliver their services.

The ICT in labour administration has progressed at **different speeds** as the countries incorporate new technologies in their administrations at unequal levels and pace depending on the political, social and economic situation. Developing nations are already benefiting from still modest and cost-effective systems adapted to their own level of technological advance. The variety of online, mobile and networking technologies are quickly spreading across the world and simplifying administrative steps and reducing red tape. New technologies have also had the virtue of increasing efficiency, reducing costs and improving productivity of labour administration employees. Today it is not necessary to print and disseminate tons of paper and the costs linked to out-of-date practices are progressively narrowing.

On the other hand, transparency and citizens participation are exponentially growing with ICT tools, which allow the swift dissemination of accessible information about labour standards and social policies. To sum up, ICT has made information and services much more accessible to workers, employers and other stakeholders and has cut down many existing obstacles to accessing labour administration services. Furthermore, apps and online platforms are providing new information resources about employment rights and benefits and allowing workers, for instance, to present complaints if those rights are not observed.

Communication with the general public through mobile telephony, websites, social media, digital TV and radio spots, electronic billboards or QR codes is paving the way to a wider horizontal participation. The websites today include the choice of different languages, which is really useful for the information to migrants, multinational companies and so on. Thereby, ICT are being very effective in building the online presence of workers and employers through websites.



▶ **Box 20. Australia: procedures in labour administration that can be completed online**

In Australia, legal procedures can be completed online at the national authority for work health and safety, and workers' compensation (COMCARE), whose website allows employers to report accidents at work electronically since January 2012⁴⁹.

The use of e-government and ICT tools in labour administration have also enabled the establishment of **solid communication channels** between civil servants both at horizontal level (within divisions, units or departments in the same institution) and at vertical level (between hierarchized officials). The knowledge that yesteryear mostly belonged to the leaders of civil service is today shared by all civil servants thanks to the new information technologies, the intranet webs or e-mail messaging. This information is also shared by the agencies dependant on the labour ministries while the cross-institutional interaction is shaping the direction of social policies.

ICT and e-government in labour administration have also eased the collection and analysis of labour statistics, allowing better **quality statistics** which are essential for evidence-based decision-making. They have attained the automation of repetitive administrative tasks and have streamlined **administrative processes**, curbing their length, making them less expensive and minimizing errors that were common in manual management.

But e-government **potentials** are not limited to those above described, for new ICT capabilities are continuously showing up, such as the use of blogs, professional internet and email domains, digital latest news release or forthcoming events, articles and file electronic libraries or resources, potent search and translation machines, RSS feeds and quick links to other labour institutions, expert profile search, videos and photos, contact and FAQ information, obligations and rights information, application forms, video calls like Zoom or Teams, and a large and so on.

New ICT equipment have expelled from offices old communication means such as landline telephony and fax and **cloud computing** has removed desktop towers from public offices. Meanwhile, **Artificial Intelligence** is making its way using algorithms for management solutions, for smart planning and for delivering services. **Data mining** is revolutionizing the way labour administrations can identify high-risk sectors and improve labour inspection (for example, data-driven targeted labour inspections).

▶ **Box 21. Information from the European Labour Authority: alert mechanism based on artificial intelligence**

In some countries, new alert mechanisms to identify changes in undeclared work patterns such as advanced methods of data mining, expertise in predictive modelling or use of complex and broad data sources.

The management of databases and data-driven approach employed by artificial intelligence provides opportunities to create alert mechanisms based on the efficient detection of patterns and signals of undeclared work. These alert mechanisms are developed by specialised analytical units and integrate

⁴⁹*Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations*; Summit of the future: outcome documents; September 2024; Global Digital Compact (Annex I), pages 37 and following; available at <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/soft-pact-for-the-future-adopted.pdf>

various databases but also help uncover various types of fraud, not only limited to undeclared work. This requires a joined-up governmental approach⁵⁰.

In a nutshell, ICT in labour administration facilitates, among other things, the practice of:


- ▶ Information integrated systems;
- ▶ Optimization of labour productivity;
- ▶ Simplification of administrative procedures;
- ▶ Risk assessment-based planning;
- ▶ Big data management-based planning;
- ▶ Tele-working and use of conferencing functionalities;
- ▶ Use of mobile app for different tasks (for example, information campaigns);
- ▶ Use of app for interpretation issues;
- ▶ E-services (complaints and so on);
- ▶ Use of drones for surveillance or inspection activities;
- ▶ Use of online 'name and shame' lists;

1.3 Things to consider in the development and maintenance of e-government

The use of ICT in labour administration involves other key factors to be taken account of and carefully considered when developing and maintaining e-government. The following items should be looked upon:

- The success of the e-government deployment relies to a great extent on the **openness and willingness of public employees**. Moreover, the lower the ICT culture of employees is the harder the ICT project implementation will be. Managers should fight employees' reluctance or disinterest by means of **managing the change**, staging the transition to ICT, providing adequate training and promoting an environment favourable to ICT and to the acceptance of new technologies. In point of fact, e-government progress calls for a clear **leadership** to steer ICT project, **specific units** to advise and educate employees and accessible **experts** providing technical and educational assistance to employees and showing how new technologies can optimize their everyday work.
- Labour administration can develop and/or maintain technological tools either by institution's **own human and financial resources** or by external sources and means. In the selection of internal or **external resources**, managers will need to take into account and compare costs of in-house ICT development in relation to the costs of outsourcing and contracting out the development project or maintenance;
- In any ICT development project, the web technology is of utmost importance. Creating an **interactive website** demands technical solutions for features such as comments and suggesting areas, message boards and/or internet forums, real-time chat rooms, facility for downloading and uploading documents, internet banners, downloadable logos, animated banners for websites or wallpapers, personal account registration, personalized website sections, online payment, digital signature/online authentication, recorded audio and/or video clips, live broadcasts and so on;

⁵⁰ Information available at <https://www.comcare.gov.au/safe-healthy-work/responding-to-an-incident#notify>

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- Labour administration must as well ensure that **accountability tools** are in place. This means that public labour institutions must provide information about their organizational chart, the mission and financial statement, the strategy and business action plans, the annual reports or the disclaimer and security and privacy policies. Conversely, citizens must be authorized to participate and give their opinion through polls/surveys, have access to free publications, know the institution's contact details, make use of searchable databases and know the dates of last updates.

1.4 Technology in public employment services (PES)

In their efforts of matching workers with employment vacancies available in the labour market, the public employment services harness new technologies that can contribute to the quick management of the services and sharing of information. These new technologies have allowed in recent years to **automatize paper-based documents**, gaining proximity between the labour market and its jobseekers by a better and quicker information dissemination and broadcasting of vacancies.

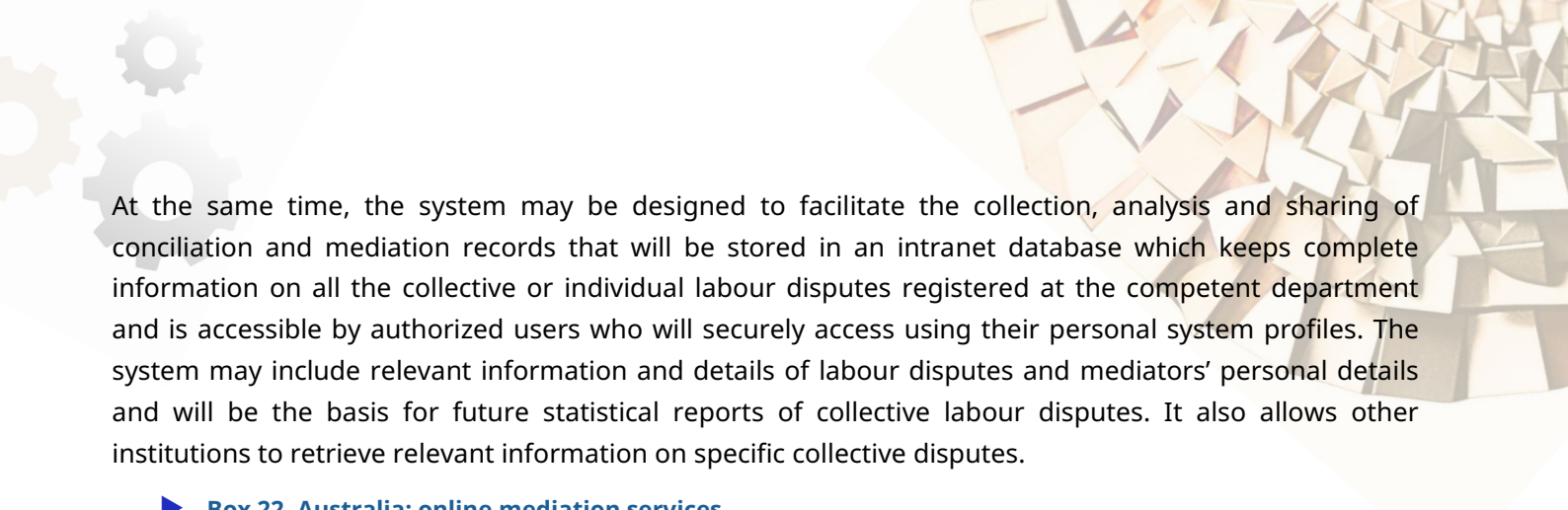
Most of **employment public services and tasks are now carried out through online domains** and computerized systems where jobseekers and employers can register online and seek and find job vacancies. Tasks such as job matching and selection, career coaching, issuance of work permits, self-employment assessment, tests, tax and labour law advice or application for unemployment benefits can today be made through online services.

Furthermore, new technologies help **reach out to certain specific groups of jobseekers** such as young, the elderly, pregnant women, informal and foreign workers, first-time labour market workers, disabled workers or temporary workers who some decades ago were more difficult to access to.

Employment **information is accessible via websites** where the citizens may find different materials (employment, wages or leaves by sectors, collective agreements by sectors or regions, working time regulations, issues related to medical examination, social security, occupational safety and health, employment contracts). The automation and internet services have spread the possibility of automatic registering or downloading and uploading documents, have downsized the number of in-person contacts and have increased online interface with citizens in matters such as unemployment insurance claims, job matching services, notifications to employers and jobseekers or job applications. Of course, the level of computerization of PES is different in each country depending on the level of their economic development.

1.5 Technology in dispute prevention and resolution

The prevention and resolution of labour disputes are in many cases handled by specific bodies or agencies specialized on conflicts at work. And, challenging though it may sound, ICT can also be used for settling labour disputes. As a matter of fact, some labour administrations have recently come to use **online services** by means of video calls and other computer-based toolkits. New technologies in this area are not used in all countries and labour administration systems, and there are few examples where online arrangements are used for resolving labour disputes, keeping the competent institutions electronic records of those disputes for statistics. This practice includes the use of Short Message Service (SMS) to notify parties of hearings and both the application for a mediation and the communication of the date, time and location of the hearings is usually made by telephone or electronic mail. For instance, enterprises are allowed to electronically request a mediator going through a special computer tutorial.



At the same time, the system may be designed to facilitate the collection, analysis and sharing of conciliation and mediation records that will be stored in an intranet database which keeps complete information on all the collective or individual labour disputes registered at the competent department and is accessible by authorized users who will securely access using their personal system profiles. The system may include relevant information and details of labour disputes and mediators' personal details and will be the basis for future statistical reports of collective labour disputes. It also allows other institutions to retrieve relevant information on specific collective disputes.

► **Box 22. Australia: online mediation services**

The website of Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) allows employees to calculate their salaries, tax and social security deductions⁵¹. Of particular interest is the on-line Dispute Assistance service, where workers can learn on the web, before requesting it, the necessary steps to process and solve a problem at work. Workers can ask for help with their dispute and one of FWO's officers will contact them to discuss the issue and confirm the details of the request for assistance. Based on the information the workers provide, FWO's officials will guide them through the Dispute Assistance service. Workers can nominate a third party to act on their behalf, such as a parent or a bookkeeper, but most cases are resolved quickest when workers speak directly. The FWO Officers will help both parties choose how they will handle the dispute. If the parties cannot resolve their dispute, or if they do not want to accept FWO's assistance, the officer will provide advice on potential options outside of the FWO⁵².

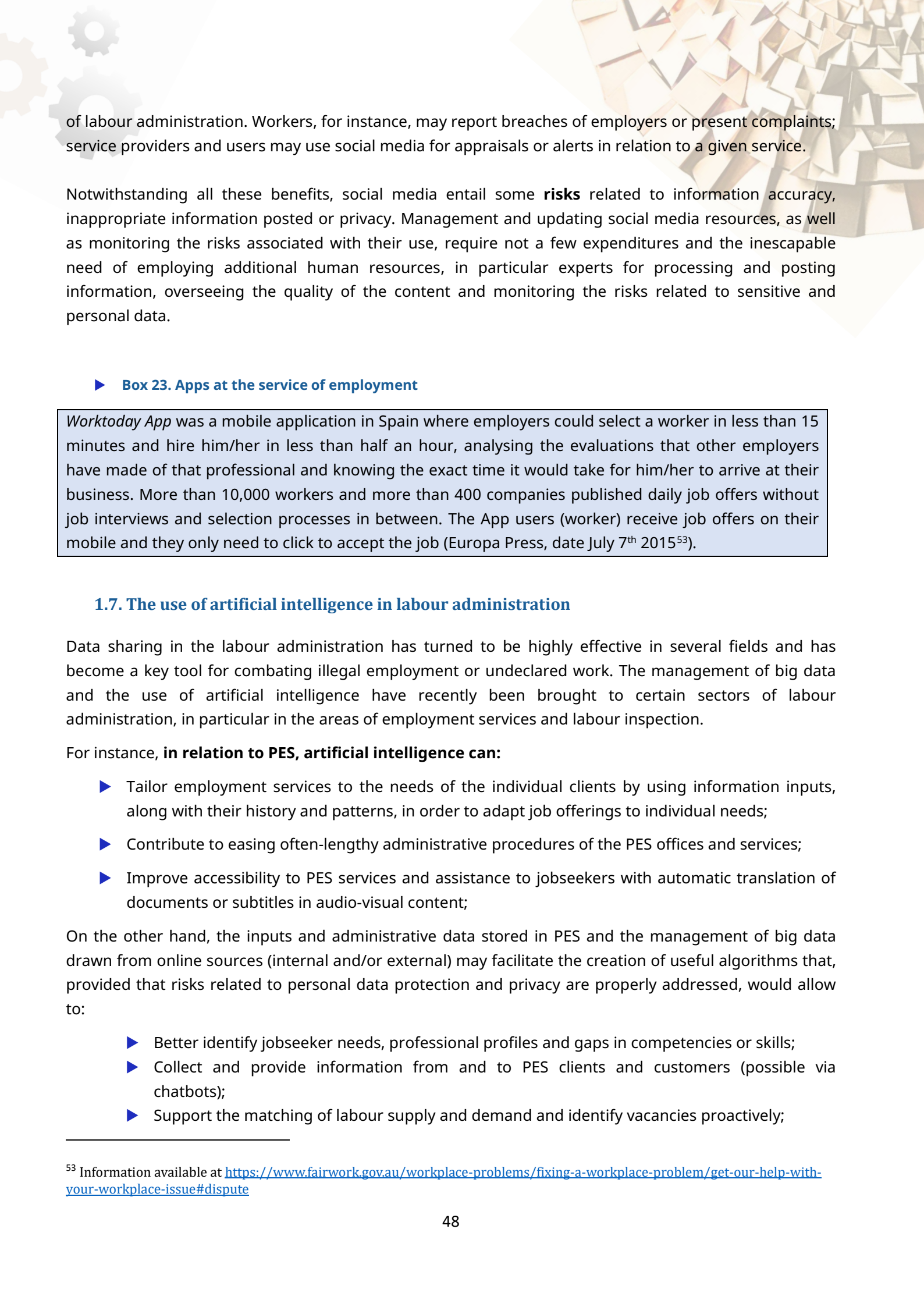
1.6 The use of social media in labour administration

But today the spotlight is focused on the use of social media, which allows labour administration to **disseminate information** about the public institutions (ministries, agencies and so on) and the initiatives they take over as, for example, substantial legislative changes. The rise of social media translates into more transparency and the so-called electronical democracy, a forum where diverse involved institutions interact with the public. Social media besides reflect a game of opposing forces, for they permit the general public to provide feedback and suggestions for the improvement of the quality of public services. They also have the power to engage citizens in platforms for **sharing opinions**, comments and questions and they bring together citizens and public administration. Apps such as Facebook, X, Youtube, Instagram or WhasApp are extremely effective in gathering groups in order to exchange ideas and feedback with site owners on their activities and policies, may also play a role in emergency communications and are low-cost tools.

Social media are based on **bidirectional communication** channels that, in the field of labour administration, may be a highly effective means of interaction between workers, employers and public services. Through social media both employers and workers may at once provide feedback and display satisfaction or frustration, social support or political engagement to the different activities and initiatives

⁵¹ European Labour Authority, *Subgroup on Alert Mechanisms to Identify Undeclared Work at an Early Stage*, Output Paper, December, 2022, page 2; available at <https://www.ela.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-02/Output-paper-subgroup-on-alert-mechanisms-to-identify-undeclared-work-at-an-early-stage-%282023%29.pdf>

⁵² Information available at <http://www.fairwork.gov.au/>;



of labour administration. Workers, for instance, may report breaches of employers or present complaints; service providers and users may use social media for appraisals or alerts in relation to a given service.

Notwithstanding all these benefits, social media entail some **risks** related to information accuracy, inappropriate information posted or privacy. Management and updating social media resources, as well as monitoring the risks associated with their use, require not a few expenditures and the inescapable need of employing additional human resources, in particular experts for processing and posting information, overseeing the quality of the content and monitoring the risks related to sensitive and personal data.

► **Box 23. Apps at the service of employment**

Worktoday App was a mobile application in Spain where employers could select a worker in less than 15 minutes and hire him/her in less than half an hour, analysing the evaluations that other employers have made of that professional and knowing the exact time it would take for him/her to arrive at their business. More than 10,000 workers and more than 400 companies published daily job offers without job interviews and selection processes in between. The App users (worker) receive job offers on their mobile and they only need to click to accept the job (Europa Press, date July 7th 2015⁵³).

1.7. The use of artificial intelligence in labour administration

Data sharing in the labour administration has turned to be highly effective in several fields and has become a key tool for combating illegal employment or undeclared work. The management of big data and the use of artificial intelligence have recently been brought to certain sectors of labour administration, in particular in the areas of employment services and labour inspection.

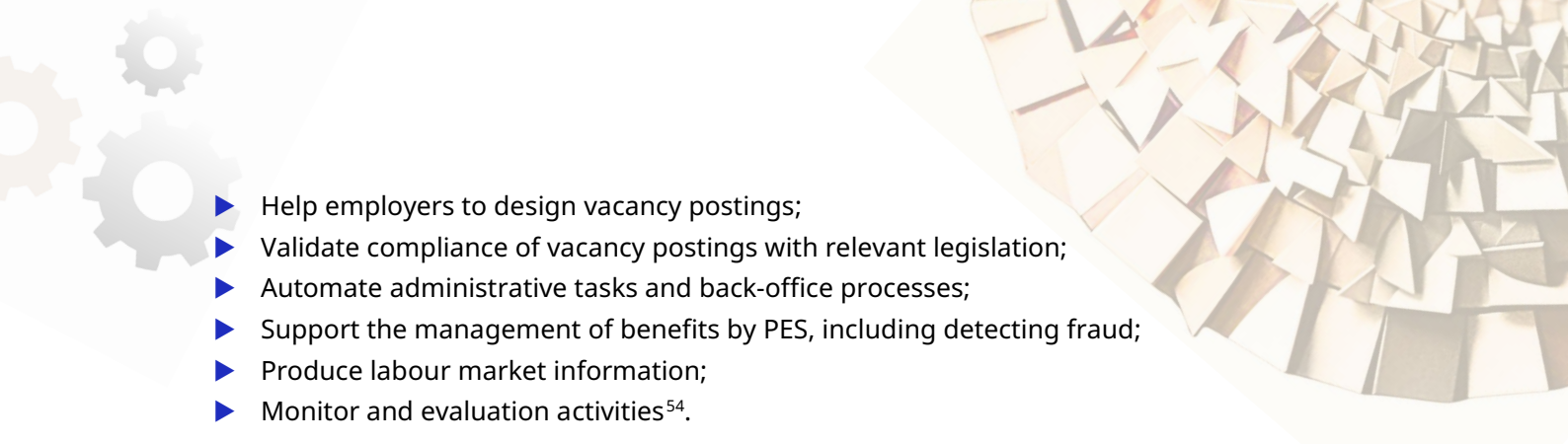
For instance, **in relation to PES, artificial intelligence can:**

- Tailor employment services to the needs of the individual clients by using information inputs, along with their history and patterns, in order to adapt job offerings to individual needs;
- Contribute to easing often-lengthy administrative procedures of the PES offices and services;
- Improve accessibility to PES services and assistance to jobseekers with automatic translation of documents or subtitles in audio-visual content;

On the other hand, the inputs and administrative data stored in PES and the management of big data drawn from online sources (internal and/or external) may facilitate the creation of useful algorithms that, provided that risks related to personal data protection and privacy are properly addressed, would allow to:

- Better identify jobseeker needs, professional profiles and gaps in competencies or skills;
- Collect and provide information from and to PES clients and customers (possible via chatbots);
- Support the matching of labour supply and demand and identify vacancies proactively;

⁵³ Information available at <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/workplace-problems/fixing-a-workplace-problem/get-our-help-with-your-workplace-issue#dispute>

- 
- ▶ Help employers to design vacancy postings;
 - ▶ Validate compliance of vacancy postings with relevant legislation;
 - ▶ Automate administrative tasks and back-office processes;
 - ▶ Support the management of benefits by PES, including detecting fraud;
 - ▶ Produce labour market information;
 - ▶ Monitor and evaluation activities⁵⁴.

In summary, the use of data sharing, interoperability and AI presents the potential for a more efficient and effective use of PES resources and it can help them boost administrative capacity and promote a more efficient use of human and financial resources, replacing human resources in administratively heavy or repetitive tasks.

As far as labour inspection is concerned, this institution has already started to work on exploiting stored and shared data with a view to leveraging the potential of the so-called big data (management of large data bases) and to using the analytical capacity of artificial intelligence. The management of big data, the use of artificial intelligence and new sophisticated machine learning methods are a reality in the departments of labour inspection in a growing number of countries and are considered for planning actions to combat undeclared work, accidents at work and labour law offences. Data on onsite inspection visits performed during past years and data from other agencies allow building data mining models used for developing effective prediction tools, for classifying risky employers and for planning inspection targets.

▶ **Box 24. Albania: example of new approaches to data mining and machine learning for supporting labour inspectorates to address undeclared work**

A research⁵⁵ was carried out on around 12,600 onsite inspection visits performed across the country between 2021 and 2022. Data mining models were used in two ways: first, as an effective prediction tool for classifying risky employers, hence contributing to scheduling targeted onsite visits to deal with specific labour law violations; second, as a knowledge provision tool that explains to users how the predictions are made and reveals the most usual employers' patterns associated with various labour law violations, thus enhancing the ability of inspectors to identify these violations. Classification outputs, prediction assessment metrics and paradigms of extracted knowledge are used to prove that the proposed methodology using data mining and machine learning approaches is much more effective than the current inspection selection methods using red-flag indicators employed by the authority.

▶ **Box 25. Spain: the Tool for detecting undeclared work**

In other countries such as **Spain** labour inspection has begun to use algorithms and artificial intelligence (AI) to handle a large volume of data and information. This has involved increased efforts to analyse data from a growing number of public institutions (Social Security, Tax Agency, Notaries,

⁵⁴ Information available at <https://www.europapress.es/portaltic/software/noticia-worktoday-app-te-ayuda-encontrar-trabajo-horas-navidad-20151203122932.html> and <https://tecnomagazine.net/worktoday-una-app-para-encontrar-trabajo-por-horas-en-cinco-minutos/>

⁵⁵ For more information, see OECD's study *A new dawn for public employment services service delivery in the age of artificial intelligence*; OECD artificial intelligence papers; June 2024 No. 19; pages 31 and following; available at https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/a-new-dawn-for-public-employment-services_5dc3eb8e-en

etc.) with the purpose of identifying undeclared work practices and other fraudulent and irregular situations. Data analysis has evolved into the creation of an Anti-fraud Tool Unit, which serves to identify companies with a high risk of carrying out irregular employment practices. In order to increase the efficiency of the Labour Inspectorate, companies identified with the use of the tool are sent letters prior to a potential inspection, and, when the business managers regularise the situation, the inspection is no longer needed⁵⁶.

1.8 Pre-requisites for successful e-government and ITC implementation in labour administration

Successful e-government in labour administration requires the prior identification of the needs and rationale behind the implementation of ICT. It is also necessary to evaluate the country's socio-economic readiness for its development and the extent of alignment of ICT with the level of the country's technological development. Besides, e-government must meet some other key requirements without which the technological development could be at risk. These pre-requisites could be summarized as follows:

- ▶ Careful scrutiny of political and institutional factors;
- ▶ Thorough evaluation of the potential gains within a given timeframe;
- ▶ Importance of not rushing into complex ICT reforms without first planning an overall strategy;
- ▶ Short-term operative plans, medium-term goals and long-term vision;
- ▶ Estimation of direct in-house and outsourcing costs (new hardware and software) and indirect costs (training)
- ▶ Determination of financial available resources;
- ▶ Transparent communication regarding the availability and allocation of funds;
- ▶ Stimulation of ICT culture and sense of commitment to technological transformation;
- ▶ Changes at the organizational or structural level and accessibility to ICT departments or units;
- ▶ Verification that public employees have the necessary ICT skills and knowledge to competently perform their work and integrate technologies into their daily duties (job structures redesigned);
- ▶ Strengthening information communication and data exchange among different departments, both within and outside of labour agencies;
- ▶ Analysis of existing or potential incompatibilities between the technological infrastructures of institutions and difficulties of secure interface interoperability between the different authorities;
- ▶ Implementation and maintenance of security controls for the management and protection of confidential information by means of appropriate regulatory frameworks (for example, application of anti-virus and security programmes);

The table below includes not only detailed critical specific requirements and examples of how an e-government system should be implemented in labour administration but also the benefits brought by e-government development.


⁵⁶ Huibregtse, Ada and Eleni Alogogianni. 2023. *Data mining and machine learning: Supporting labour inspectorates to address undeclared work*; page 4; available at <https://www.ilo.org/publications/data-mining-and-machine-learning-supporting-labour-inspectorates-address>

► **Box 26. Critical requirements for successful e-government and ICT implementation in labour administration**

1. Sufficient financial resources;	2. Identification of material resources (physical space, office, technological environment, basic and specific software).
3. Establishment of a clear leadership in the project	4. Creation/deployment of a project technical office with full-time experts who supervise the project and its deviations (both ITC experts and officials)
5. Determination of required user profiles;	6. Identification of training needs;
<i>Other requirements needed for implementing e-government and ITC in labour administration</i>	
1. Web technology	2. Scalable both quantitatively (number of users) and qualitatively (new services)
3. Capabilities of data analysis and reporting	4. Big data management/data intelligence to facilitate information management
5. Future maintenance	6. Online transactions
7. Improving reporting activity and management of reports and statistics	8. Automated exchange of information with other data bases (Tax agency, Commercial or Property Registers, other Ministries, etc.);
<i>General benefits of ICT systems</i>	
1. Better image of labour administration	2. Better use of the available information allowing operational and management synergies
3. Complete, reliable and accessible information system	4. More standardization, automation of management and administrative procedures
5. More administrative efficiency and better detection and control of non-compliance cases	6. Profitability of the investment in the medium/long term (saving costs by cutting out inefficiencies)

1.9 The challenges of e-government

The digital transformation of labour administration often encompasses the creation of specific departments or offices responsible for the development and maintenance of digital systems and e-labour governance services and platforms. Such a situation demands the allocation of a good deal of financial, material and human resources.



New technologies and artificial intelligence are rising not few concerns in relation to protection of personal data and potential **risks for privacy** , whereas in the case of labour administration would particularly affect workers and employers. For instance, the computerization and digitization of employment services have increased the frequency of identity theft and fraudulent benefit provisions probably as a consequence of the elimination of in-person contact.

The prevention of these risks requires contracting expensive **cybersecurity** measures in so far labour administration, as other public sectors, suffer from shortages of ICT skilled staff and limited availability of funds to upskill appropriate and specialized staff.

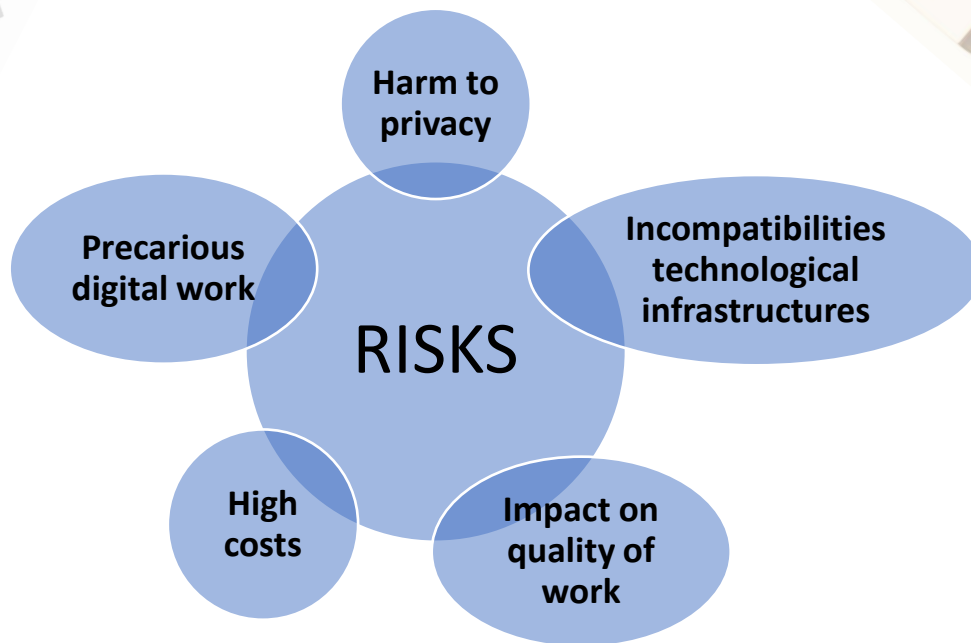
On the other hand, labour administration faces difficulties for adapting ICT tools to the swift pace of changes and the continuous **reshaping of labour relations** and labour markets such as those coming from automation of work and **digital labour platforms**.

Interoperability also faces the difficulties linked to **incompatibilities between technological infrastructures or architecture**, which prevent information sharing and access to data from being successfully implemented. These difficulties normally account for the use of different identifying codes, software/hardware systems, operating/information systems and their purposes or different use of sensitive information.

By no means less important is the **huge costs and financial resources** that require the investments necessary to improve the access and interoperability of data as well as the increase of the speed of procedures and operations. These investments are, in truth, very costly and it takes time to reap the expected dividends in terms of improvement of management and productivity. In point of fact, the high ICT investment costs invite to carry out a **sound assessment of expenditure plan** covering not only the initial investment for the development of technological infrastructure (hardware and software), but also the subsequent maintenance and upgrading costs, as well as costs linked to training of employees and the possibilities for optimizing the investment.

One last concern is related to the **quality of work**. It should not be arguable that manual work cannot in some cases be replaced, for instance, by Artificial Intelligence, but labour administration managers should remain vigilant whenever the use of ICT in labour administration might in certain cases jeopardize the **quality of work** as a consequence of an increase of work intensity, a worsening of social environment, a closer surveillance of workers or digital nudging workers to continue working when it is time to rest and so on.

▶ Figure 5. Illustration of risks



1.10 Security and privacy of data

Special mention should be made on the security and privacy of data. Labour administration may manage a **huge volume of labour market-related data**, so the risk of misplacing or misusing personal data is high. Digital information may drain away due to an array of different reasons such as computer failures, cyberattacks, network crashes, faults in data systems and so on. In order to offset these risks a first measure should be to establish security systems and to prevent unauthorized access to information networks. It is so advisable to put in place **effective security controls**, compliance audits, security plans and tracking security incidents and their solutions.

In some cases, labour administrations appoints a **security manager**, who coordinates and monitors security policies, performs risk assessments, organizes training on information security for ICT users and provides information to Data Protection Authorities.

The achievement of appropriate levels of security and privacy requires to take different steps:

- ▶ Prevention of disclosure and misuse of confidential information of the citizens;
- ▶ Informing citizens about their data collected;
- ▶ Obtaining their consent regarding the intended use of the data they provide.

The websites usually contain **visible privacy statements** prohibiting the use of visitor's information for commercial marketing, informing visitors about the use of 'cookies', forbidding the sharing of personal information without consent or notifying visitors about sharing their information with law enforcement agencies or, in the case of mobile communications, with network providers.

Finally, **data sharing** also entails risks of which the most serious one is the threat to the security and privacy of personal data, which calls for an effort that should be made by the public administration in

order to instil trust and security among the citizens and across agencies and the whole society. These risks will have to be duly addressed avoiding non desirable results or harmful effects on citizens privacy and data consistency. Privacy and confidentiality laws may represent barriers for administrative data sharing – especially when data refer to personal information. However, many laws allow users to share some data for specified purposes, such as performing the assigned oversight public duties or for research activities, just to mention two examples. Indeed, concerns related to security and privacy may rise in the context **of data sharing among several labour agencies**, although national regulations often include provisions that permit transfer of personal data between public institutions if it pursues compliance with a legal obligation, the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested by law or is based on research or statistical purposes.

At all events, interoperability and data sharing among public services and bodies must be made following secure rules and should be restricted to pre-defined access profiles that guarantee privacy and confidentiality for the data affecting individuals. For instance, in relation to data sharing the efforts to create common identifiers and the establishment of a “*Legal Entity Identifier*” (a unique global identifier for legal entities), similar to Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) in internet governance, represent decisive steps towards the enhancement of security of national and international transactions.

Of course, the use of AI by PES, labour inspection or bodies competent in other strategic areas within labour administration also entails other risks related to accountability, transparency, bias within AI systems, resistance and lack of skills among public employees and clients⁵⁷. The UN CEPA Data Sharing Guidance refers to a useful framework for public agencies to consider in managing the risks of sharing data as the “*Five-Safes*” framework.

- ▶ Safe data: can the data disclose identity?
- ▶ Safe people: can the users of the data be trusted?
- ▶ Safe setting: does the access environment prevent unauthorized use?
- ▶ Safe outputs: are the project results likely to disclose identity?
- ▶ Safe project: is the purpose of use appropriate?⁵⁸

The EU Directive on open data and the re-use of public sector information (*Open Data Directive Directive (EU) 2019/1024*) also lays down the rules and conditions under which Member States may reuse data and documents filed and stored in the different administrative units.

Takeaways

- ▶ *E-government makes administration more transparent, accountable and inclusive than some decades ago;*
- ▶ *A first task should be to frame e-government and ICT against the principles of effective governance for sustainable development in the global Sustainable Development Goals;*
- ▶ *New technologies have the virtue of increasing efficiency, reducing costs and improving productivity*

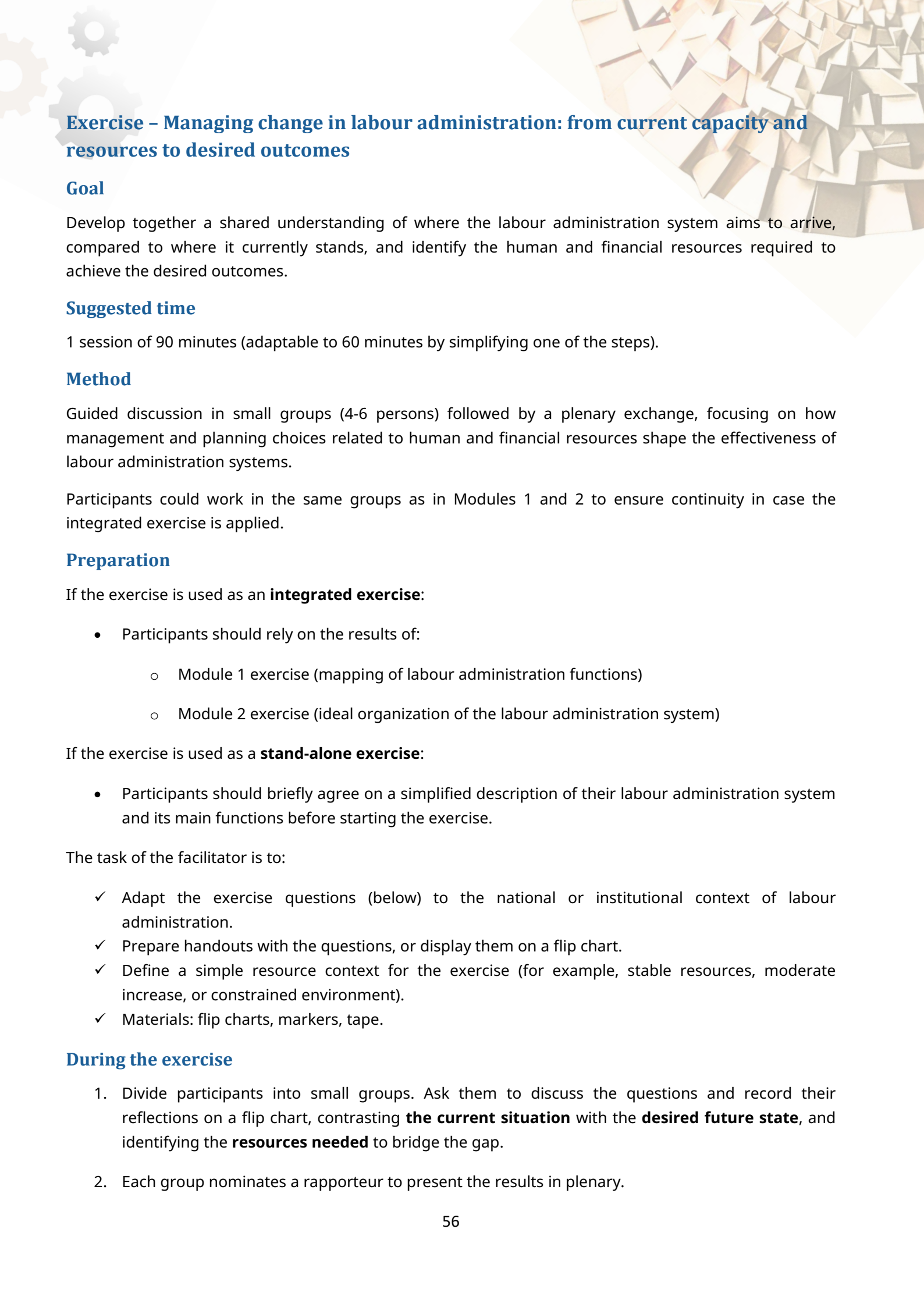
⁵⁷ Source fiche *Notification Letter, Spain*; ELA European Labour Authority; available at <https://www.ela.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-09/ES%20-%20Notification%20Letters.pdf>

⁵⁸ OECD 2024, *A new dawn for public employment services service delivery in the age of artificial intelligence; OECD artificial intelligence papers*; June 2024 No. 19 (Ailbhe Brioscú, Anne Lauringson, Anne Saint-Martin and Theodora Xenogiani); page 1 and following; available at https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/a-new-dawn-for-public-employment-services_5dc3eb8e-en.html

of labour administration employees;

- ▶ *Apps and online platforms are useful for providing information resources about employment rights and benefits;*
- ▶ *Managers should fight employees' reluctance or disinterest by means of "managing the change" and staging the transition to ICT;*
- ▶ *Providing adequate training and promoting an environment favourable to ICT are essential;*
- ▶ *E-government progress requires a clear leadership to steer ICT project and specific units;*
- ▶ *Social media entail risks related to information accuracy, inappropriate information posted or privacy.*

According to the Committee of Experts in Public Administration, the "Five-Safes" for exchange of data are 1) Safe data; 2) Safe people; 3) Safe setting; 4) Safe outputs; and 5) Safe project.



Exercise – Managing change in labour administration: from current capacity and resources to desired outcomes

Goal

Develop together a shared understanding of where the labour administration system aims to arrive, compared to where it currently stands, and identify the human and financial resources required to achieve the desired outcomes.

Suggested time

1 session of 90 minutes (adaptable to 60 minutes by simplifying one of the steps).

Method

Guided discussion in small groups (4-6 persons) followed by a plenary exchange, focusing on how management and planning choices related to human and financial resources shape the effectiveness of labour administration systems.

Participants could work in the same groups as in Modules 1 and 2 to ensure continuity in case the integrated exercise is applied.

Preparation

If the exercise is used as an **integrated exercise**:

- Participants should rely on the results of:
 - Module 1 exercise (mapping of labour administration functions)
 - Module 2 exercise (ideal organization of the labour administration system)

If the exercise is used as a **stand-alone exercise**:

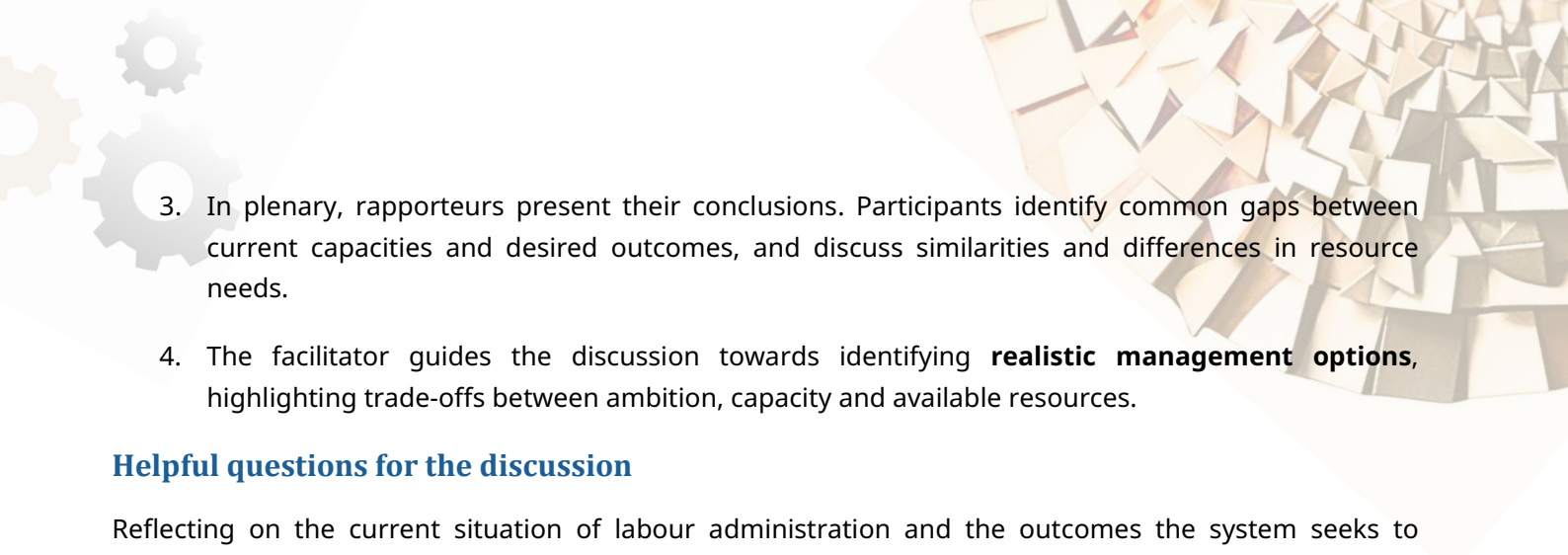
- Participants should briefly agree on a simplified description of their labour administration system and its main functions before starting the exercise.

The task of the facilitator is to:

- ✓ Adapt the exercise questions (below) to the national or institutional context of labour administration.
- ✓ Prepare handouts with the questions, or display them on a flip chart.
- ✓ Define a simple resource context for the exercise (for example, stable resources, moderate increase, or constrained environment).
- ✓ Materials: flip charts, markers, tape.

During the exercise

1. Divide participants into small groups. Ask them to discuss the questions and record their reflections on a flip chart, contrasting **the current situation** with the **desired future state**, and identifying the **resources needed** to bridge the gap.
2. Each group nominates a rapporteur to present the results in plenary.

- 
3. In plenary, rapporteurs present their conclusions. Participants identify common gaps between current capacities and desired outcomes, and discuss similarities and differences in resource needs.
 4. The facilitator guides the discussion towards identifying **realistic management options**, highlighting trade-offs between ambition, capacity and available resources.

Helpful questions for the discussion

Reflecting on the current situation of labour administration and the outcomes the system seeks to achieve:

- What key outcomes should the labour administration system be able to deliver more effectively in the future?
- In which areas does the current system fall short of these outcomes?
- What types of human resources and competencies are required to reach the desired level of performance?
- Which capacities need to be strengthened at central, regional and local levels?
- What financial resources are required to support these changes, and how should they be prioritized?
- Which constraints are most likely to limit progress (staffing, skills, budget, systems)?
- What risks arise if the necessary resources are not mobilized or aligned with objectives?
- What management choices are essential to move from the current situation to the desired future state?

Expected outcome

The discussion should clarify the gap between current capacities and desired outcomes in labour administration, identify priority human and financial resource needs, and generate practical directions for management and planning.

Tips for trainers

This exercise can be conducted as a stand-alone activity focusing on management and planning in labour administration. It can also be used as part of an integrated sequence, building on the analysis of labour administration functions (Module 1) and organizational arrangements (Module 2). In this case, it provides a bridge towards subsequent modules addressing leadership, performance measurement, indicators of effectiveness and social dialogue.



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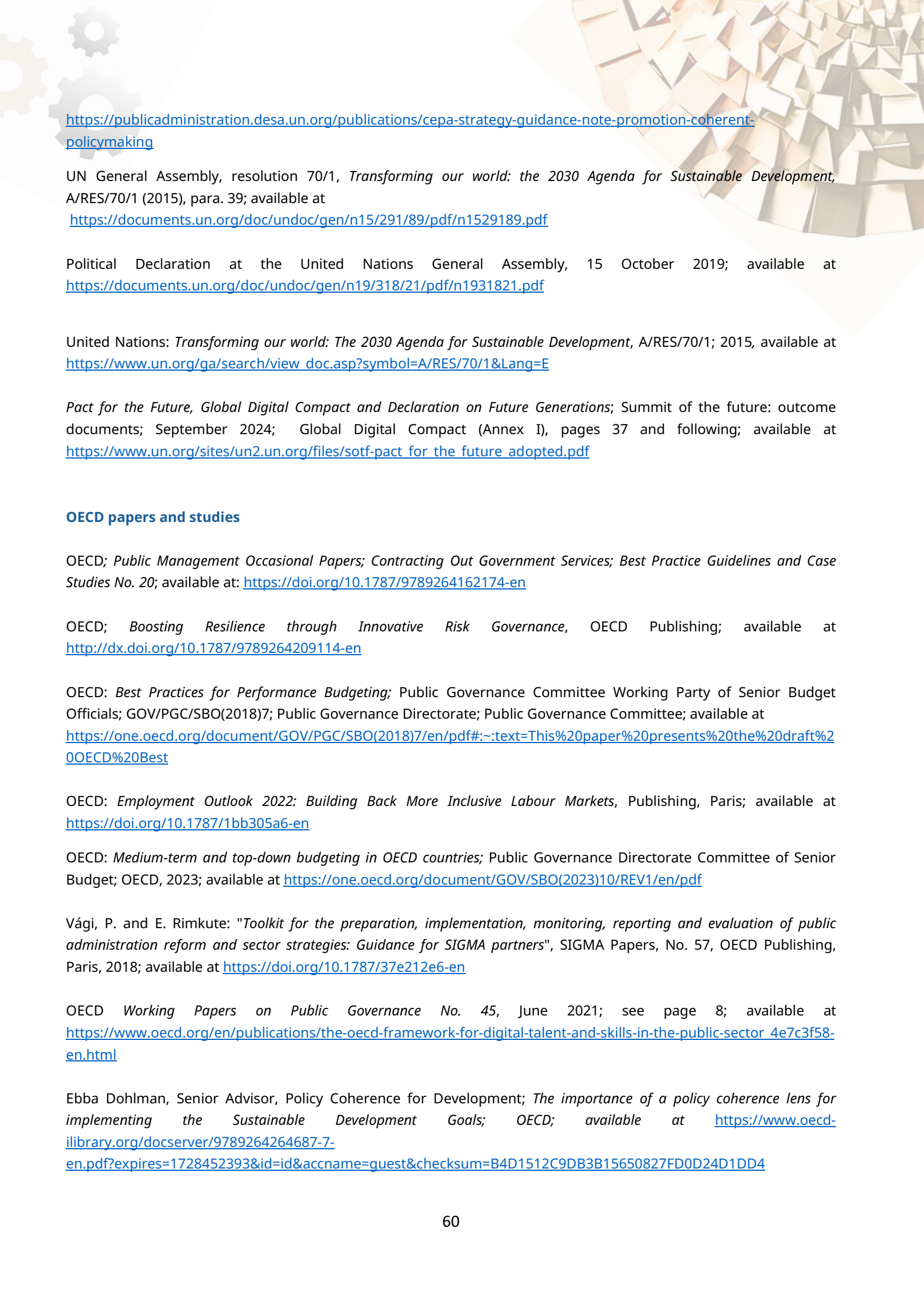
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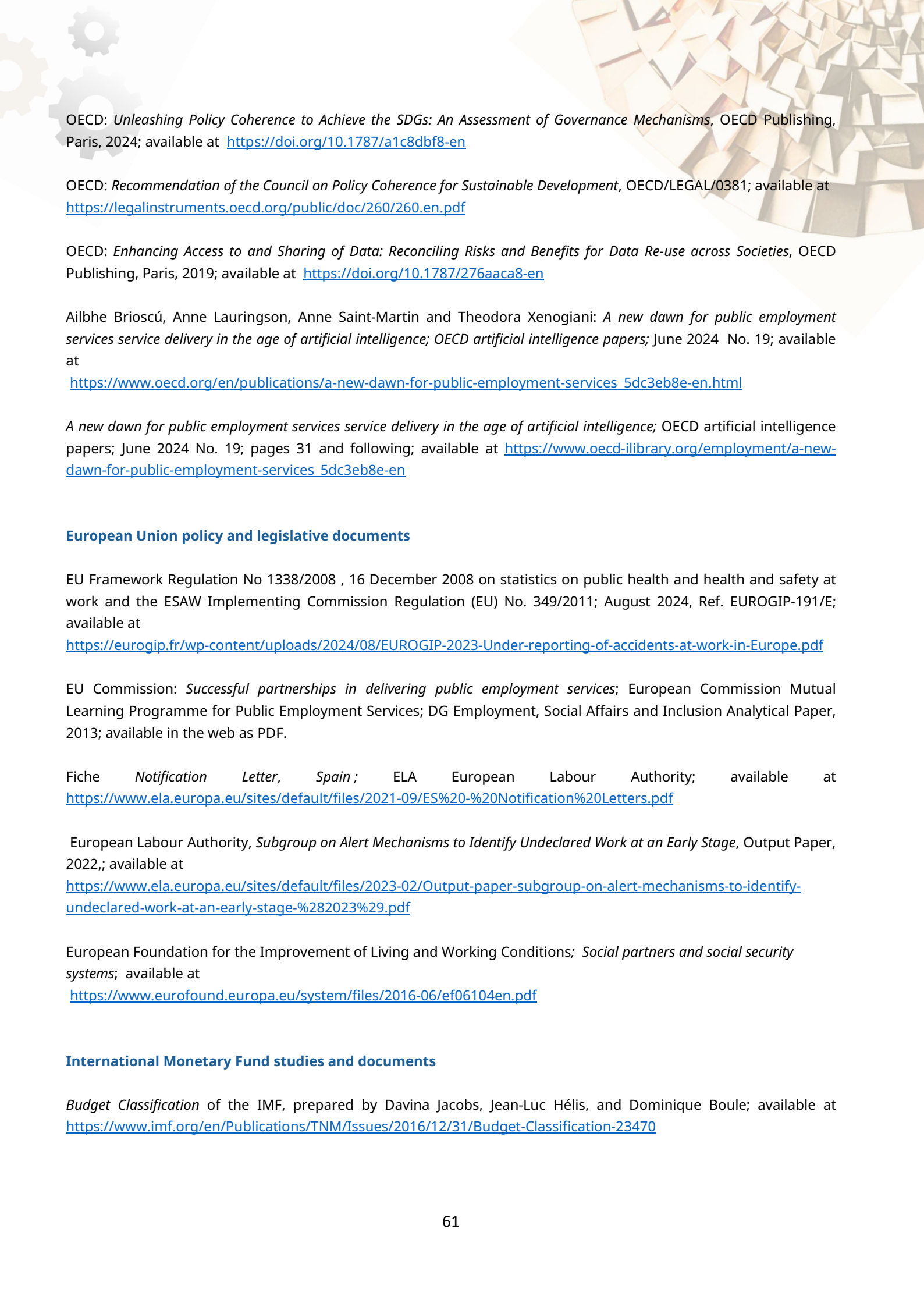
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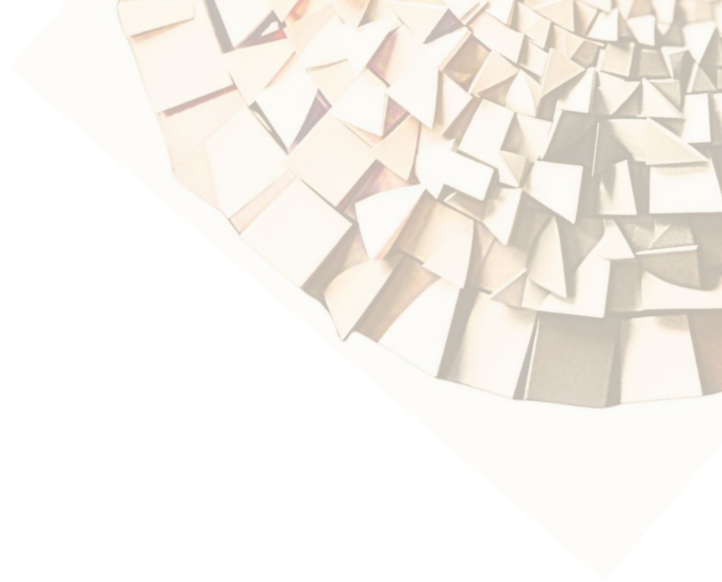
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