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Improving decision making and policy development in Portugal

The role of PlanAPP

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This paper was authorised for publication by Elsa Pilichowski, Director, Public Governance Directorate.

This report summarises the results of collaborative work carried out by OECD and PlanAPP, the Competence Centre for Planning, Policy, and Foresight in Public Administration in Portugal. It presents the main findings and recommendations on four strategic priorities for the country: i) evidence-informed policymaking and trust, ii) public policy evaluation, iii) strategic foresight and iv) strategic planning.

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Foreword

Governments are increasingly faced with complex, multidimensional challenges and have to address a number of emergencies, particularly in the present context of polycrisis, while delivering on their priorities and longer-term commitments such as climate change. This requires robust whole-of-government strategic and coordination mechanisms and models to respond to the current challenges, achieve national strategic vision and objectives and ultimately reinforce public trust.

In this context, the setting up of PlanAPP, the Portuguese Competence Centre for Planning, Policy and Foresight in Public Administration is an ambitious and innovative institutional step taken by Portugal to steer and coordinate strategic planning processes, foresight and evaluation of public policies. It brings together different parts of the administration, academia and civil society, with the purpose to face the today's strategic planning challenges.

This report summarises the work carried by the OECD in close collaboration with PlanAPP, articulated around four interrelated topics: public trust, policy evaluation, foresight and strategic planning.

Portugal was among the 22 pioneering OECD countries that participated in the OECD Survey on the Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions launched in 2022. This Survey showed that trust in government during the COVID-19 pandemic was comparatively high in Portugal relative to other OECD countries. Over half of people reported trusting the government's capacity to protect them in the event of a new pandemic. However, as in other OECD countries, Portuguese institutions seem to be falling short of people's expectations on participation, representation, and responsiveness. The present report includes the findings of the OECD Trust Survey and provides a new evidence base for Portugal, to connect closely the Trust Survey's results with the strategic planning functions of PlanAPP. Indeed, government's capacity to deliver on crucial, long-term commitments and strategic objectives is a key driver of citizen's trust and stands at the core of PlanAPP's role.

Likewise, leveraging policy evaluations and strategic foresight will be critical to enable PlanApp to foster evidence-informed policymaking. Public policy evaluations can help ensure that policies improve outcomes for citizens by bringing an understanding of what works, why, for whom, and under what circumstances. Strategic foresight equips decision makers with the long-term vision required to design future-ready policy and institutional structures supportive of anticipation. Foresight capacities are at the heart of strategic planning to better anticipate and prepare for crisis and plan for future, long-term trends.

Finally, the report explores the role of PlanAPP in the strategic planning framework to connect foresight and policy evaluation and help reinforce trust in public institution. It looks at a number of key functions for PlanAPP to perform, as well as at related challenges, on strategic steering, coordination and networking. The analysis includes a major focus on strategic alignment as a way to achieve Portugal's ambitious strategic goals and priorities.

To fully play its role and develop its activities, PlanAPP will need to deploy the appropriate processes, instruments and tools best suited to its institutional and strategic setting, leveraging its Public Administration Planning and Foresight Services Network (RePLAN). Going forward, PlanAPP will need to operationalise these instruments in a coordinated and structured way across the administration, engage stakeholders, and expand its role on steering and monitoring high-level crosscutting priorities.

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1 Introduction: The strategic setting of PlanAPP as a Competence Centre

1.1. Fostering better policy development and planning at the centre of government with PlanAPP

The Centro de Competências de Planeamento, de Políticas e de Prospetiva da Administração Pública (PlanAPP) was created as a Competence Centre on 15 March 2021 by Decree-Law 21/2021 to act as a central service of the direct administration of the State, endowed with administrative autonomy, integrated in the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and under the Prime Minister's authority. Its mandate, within the scope of strategic planning, is to support the definition of the government's strategic orientations, priorities, and objectives of public policies, to develop prospective studies, to ensure the coherence of sectoral plans with whole-of-government planning documents, to monitor their progress, and, lastly, to evaluate the implementation of public policies, planning instruments and the results they generate.

PlanApp has requested the OECD's technical support to assess and strengthen the newly created body's institutional and administrative capacity to deliver its mandate. Through this collaborative effort, PlanApp aims to consolidate its position as a competence centre capable of supporting Portugal in defining, implementing, and monitoring strategic priorities effectively and coherently. This technical support is structured around four main axes of analysis of relevance to PlanApp's mission[1]:

- Trust and evidence-informed policymaking;
- Public policy evaluations;
- Strategic foresight;
- Strategic planning and collaborative work and networking.

The overall context for policy-making in Portugal is marked by multiple overlapping crises, declining levels of public trust, and economic volatility. In this context, the government's ability to take decisive and impactful action is under the spotlight. Now, more than ever, citizens and government alike feel the need for a more coherent and evidence-informed approach to decision making that addresses people's concerns and tackle long-term challenges. The four themes were thus selected by PlanApp as potential levers to achieve these goals.

Public trust for instance is crucial to harness public support towards the design and implementation of challenging reforms and policies which may have high up-front costs but generate intergenerational payoffs

[1] While PlanAPP's mandate includes additional activities pertaining to monitoring or *ex ante* and *ex post* impact assessments (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 2021[18]), these functions are not within the scope of the project and are not analysed in the present report.

(Brezzi et al., 2021[1]). In this sense, trust can be understood as a core asset of the strategic planning process, in that it has a reverberating impact on levels of ambition and feasibility. Public trust is an equally important *outcome* of effective public governance and can thus be used to gauge how the system is perceived by citizens.

Likewise, leveraging policy evaluations and strategic foresight will be capital to enable PlanApp to promote evidence-informed policymaking and strategic planning. Public policy evaluations can help ensure policies are improving outcomes by bringing an understanding of what works, why, for whom, and under what circumstances (OECD, 2020[2]). Strategic foresight on the other hand equips decision makers with the long-term vision required for designing future-ready policy and institutional structures supportive of anticipation.

To further play its role and develop its activities, PlanAPP will also need to deploy the appropriate instruments and tools best suited to its institutional mandate. OECD's support in that regard focuses on instruments and tools available to align and harmonise the strategic planning process in Portugal, and how to use PlanAPP and RePLAN[2] as tools for evidence-informed and inclusive strategic planning, harnessing evidence and insight beyond government from civil society, academia and other stakeholders.

This report will explore those themes in four chapters that correspond to the different Modules of the project: Module 1 on the lessons from the OECD Trust Survey in Portugal (Chapter 2), Module 2 on Promoting public policy evaluation to strengthen decision-making processes (Chapter 3), Module 3 on supporting decision making with strategic foresight (Chapter 4), Module 4 on the strategic setting and role of PlanAPP in the strategic planning framework (Chapter 5).

1.2. The context in Portugal: Reinforcing trust and addressing complex, crosscutting policy challenges

Governments throughout the world now face interdependent and overlapping crises, exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. This volatile context requires public administrations to be resilient and agile, responsive to citizens while managing pressing challenges. In times of crisis which call for collective efforts, these imperatives can be at odds and require careful tradeoffs, highlighting public administrations' value added in designing and implementing policies in the public interest.

After the 2020 recession triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, Portugal, is experiencing a slower economic recovery, like many other OECD countries due to the effects of the war on Ukraine with forecasted growth rate at 2.5% in 2023 and 1.5% in 2024 after recording 6.7% in 2022 (OECD, 2021[3]; OECD, 2023[4]). While the country has benefited from an effective vaccine rollout, the economic fallout of the recession has nevertheless deepened poverty and inequality (OECD, 2021[3]). In an attempt to remedy the social and economic consequences of the pandemic, temporary support measures were adopted and set out in the Economic and Social Stabilisation Programme and Portugal's Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP), helping to cushion the inflation shock (OECD, 2023[4]).

While the recovery had gained speed, the country's economy was hit by high inflation and supply disruptions and has also had to contend with strong pressure placed on its human and financial resources due to the global context and the war in Ukraine. Portugal's efforts to mitigate the impact of Europe's

[2] RePLAN, "the Public Administration Planning and Foresight Services Network", has been established as the inter-ministerial network for planning and foresight services across the public administration (Government of Portugal, 2021[23]).

energy crisis, and the compounding effects of the drought affecting much of the continent, have primarily focused on keeping down energy prices and extending temporary fiscal support.

While the budget balance has recently improved, a sustainable recovery in Portugal is also made more challenging due to the country's structural mid-term financial and fiscal risks. Public debt levels in Portugal reached 136% of GDP in 2019 (OECD, 2021[5]), one of the highest among OECD members, and increased to 155% of GDP in 2020 (OECD, 2021[3]). Government gross debt has been declining since, reaching 114% of GDP in 2022 and a forecasted 102.9% in 2024 due to surging prices and the rebound in activities that led to stronger government revenues in the recovery period (OECD, 2023[4]). Despite these recent positive developments on the budget balance, public debt levels are high and government effectiveness and spending efficiency remain important to delivering on government priorities. Public policy evaluations are critical tools to help reaching these goals, as they support governments in spending better and promote transparency and accountability of tax-payer money. Evaluations also increase public sector effectiveness by ensuring that policies reach their goals and help improve the performance of public services.

In recent years, in an effort to improve its performance, the government has placed an emphasis on public administration reform in particular through the Strategy for Innovation and Modernisation of the State and Public Administration 2020-2023. The Strategy is structured around four axes of transformation: investing in people, developing management, leveraging technology, and strengthening proximity (European Commission, 2022[6]). Measures to modernise public administration, through information and communication technologies, decentralization and more effective retention of civil servants' talents are also included in the National Reform Programme 2016-2023. In addition, a number of measures to modernize the public sector and increase its effectiveness are included in the RRP. Lastly, the Major Options 2020-2023 which typically sets out government reform priorities also includes commitments to improve the quality of public services and public infrastructure.

These strategies are also expected to strengthen trust in government to deliver on key priorities. The pandemic highlighted the crucial relationship between public trust and compliance with policies requiring the cooperation of a large share of the population. This is all the more crucial at a time when public trust had been put to the test by the pandemic and undermined by a variety of factors, from the proliferation of misinformation, increased polarization within societies, declining participation, and widening inequalities. Beyond its effect on compliance, public trust also helps nurture political participation and strengthen social cohesion. It is therefore central to enable governments to respond competently to global challenges requiring public support for intergenerational reforms and policies such as climate action.

In an effort to better understand these dynamics, Portugal was one of 22 pioneering OECD countries which volunteered to participate in the OECD's first cross-national Survey on the Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions (the OECD Trust Survey), moved by a desire to better understand public confidence in government, based on genuine and direct citizen feedback (OECD, 2022[7]). The OECD Trust Survey 2022 showed OECD countries overall performed quite well in terms of government reliability, service provision and data openness. Notwithstanding these positive results, trust in the national government and in public institutions is still low with 4 people out of 10 not trusting their national government on average (OECD, 2022[7]). The survey also pointed out that the capacity of governments to tackle long-term challenges such as climate greatly affect citizens' trust (OECD, 2022[8]).

The emergence of complex, crosscutting policy challenges and the rapid succession of disruptive crises require access to robust evidence that can be trusted for governments to take action. Governments' difficulties in anticipating crises and reacting to their urgency and in addressing horizontal, multidimensional challenges, has also made strategic planning noticeably more challenging while becoming exceedingly important. In view of this, Portugal has decided to strengthen capacities at the centre of government to better support effective anticipation, policy development and strategic planning. By mandate, PlanAPP's functions cover a number of areas including strategic planning, evaluation and foresight which are reflected in its internal structure around different multidisciplinary teams and units on

strategic and foresight, monitoring and evaluation, and partnerships and innovation (including RePLAN) (PlanAPP, 2023[9]).

With this structure, PlanAPP can gather evidence through policy evaluation and foresight, that can support better strategic planning and decision making. Foresight capacities can help better anticipate and plan for crisis, identify and explore emerging opportunities and threats, and prepare for future, long-term trends. Strategic foresight goes beyond, providing the ability to perceive and act in the present on the possible changes and scenarios shaping the future. Adopting such capacities enable governments to move towards more prospective and proactive policymaking and allow for meaningful dialogues around societal challenges and strategic priorities.

1.3. The institutional setting for strategic planning, foresight and evaluation in Portugal: The competence centre model in Portugal

To better tackle these complex policy challenges, Portugal aims to strengthen a number of key functions related to strategic planning, foresight and policy evaluation to better steer those functions from the centre, harmonize and align approaches and documents and increase whole-of-government capabilities. With that objective in mind, the country has designed a new institution with PlanAPP located in the centre of government (CoG), bringing together these functions into one institution. By opting for this competence model, Portugal's CoG can benefit from the complementarities that they offer. Specifically, foresight can help inform and structure strategic planning thinking on the longer-term, for instance by taking into account future trends and scenarios into long-term vision, and policy evaluation will help inform, reassess and modify on-going and future strategies and policies.

As per the OECD definition, the centre of government refers to "the body or group of bodies that provide direct support and advice to the Head of Government and the Council of Ministries". The CoG typically refers to government entities such as the Chancellery, Cabinet Office, Office of the President or Prime Minister, General Secretariat of the Presidency, or the Ministry of Finance and Planning depending on countries' institutional setting, that play five key functions: preparations of Cabinet meetings, policy coordination, strategic planning, communications of government messages, and monitoring of the implementation of government programmes and strategies. In Portugal, a number of entities play these different functions and can be considered as part of the CoG, including but not limited to: the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of the Presidency, the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, as well as the different institutions located under them (PlanAPP, JurisAPP, etc) and the Ministry of Finance.

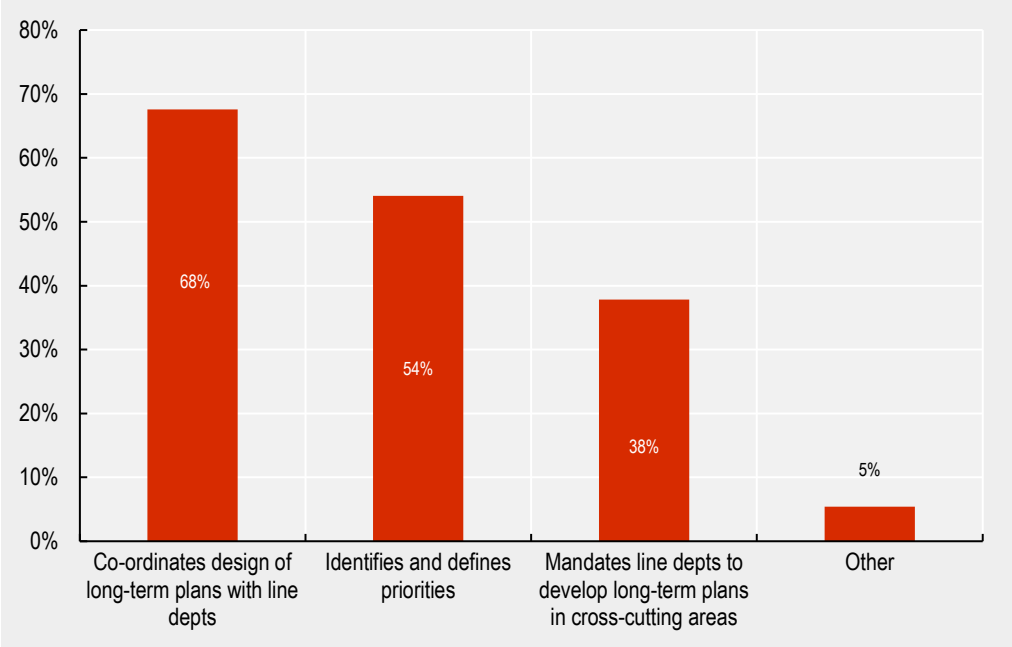
This section will introduce and discuss the position and role of PlanAPP in the institutional landscape for strategic planning, foresight and evaluation in Portugal, comparing it with different setting in OECD member countries, and the benefits and challenges associated with the competence centre model.

1.3.1. Strategic planning

Strategic planning is one of the core functions devoted to PlanAPP, and involves a number of CoG and non-CoG entities (Ministry of Finance, line Ministries, other public agencies and non-government stakeholders) in Portugal. Through this setting, the strategic planning process in Portugal is steered from the centre, in line with most OECD member countries, even though different institutional models and roles exist. Centres of government traditionally spearhead whole-of-government planning activities. According to the OECD CoG Survey, planning has indeed emerged as a key responsibility of the CoG in a majority of OECD countries due to their proximity to the locus of power, perceived impartiality vis-à-vis sectoral interest, and historic role coordinating cross-cutting priorities (OECD, 2018[10]). However, their role is far from monolithic: in 68% of cases the CoG plays more of a co-ordination and oversight role than identifying

and defining priorities (54%). In 38% of the cases, their responsibilities involve ensuring or mandating line ministries to develop long-term plans (Figure 1.1) (OECD, 2018[10]).

Figure 1.1. Role of the CoG in priority setting and strategic alignment

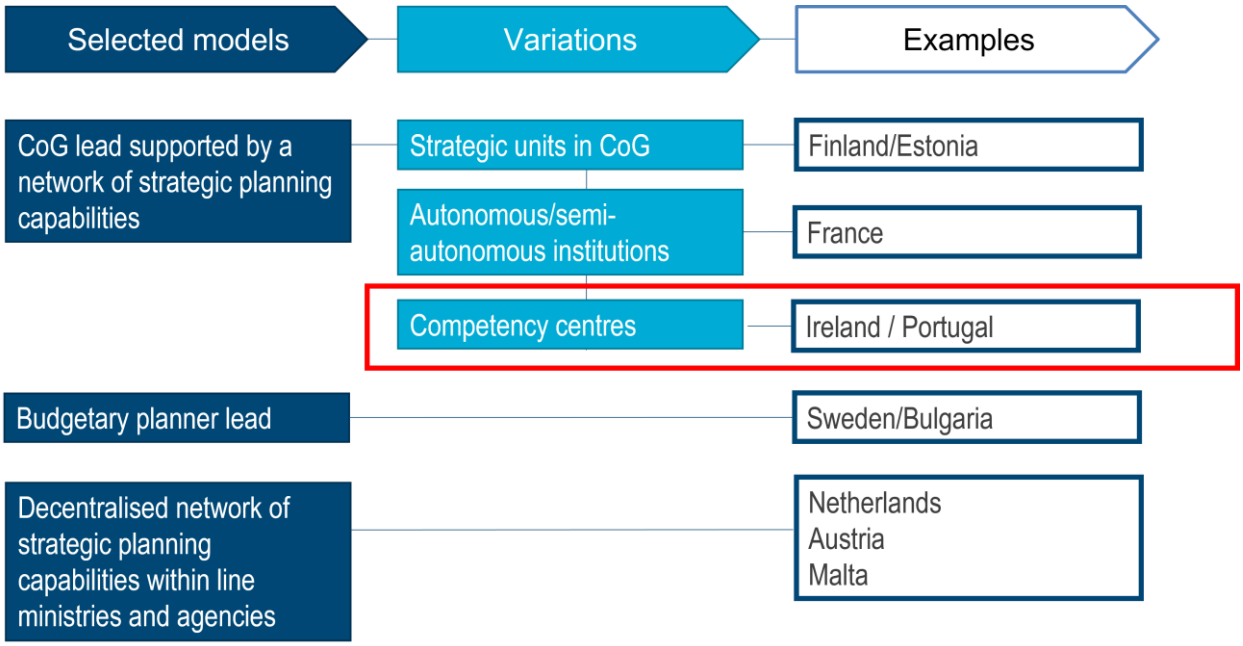


Source: (OECD, 2018[10])

The institutional context underpinning strategic planning at the centre of government is subject to frequent reconfigurations. CoGs throughout OECD countries undergo recurring institutional reforms, mergers, divisions, etc. Between 2012 and 2017, 70% of surveyed countries experienced a change in the number and 64% in the type of units within the CoG (OECD, 2018[10]). Portugal is no different, with for instance the overhaul of the Ministry of Planning, now a Secretary of State, and the reallocation of some of its functions to the Ministry of Presidency. Change and flexibility are thus part of the regular institutional life of CoGs in most OECD countries and underpin strategic planning activities and outcomes. This reality must be taken into account when designing and reforming strategic planning tools and routines, to ensure they are agile and resilient enough to possible changes in the institutional structure of the CoG.

Despite ongoing evolutions, it is nevertheless possible to distinguish four institutional archetypes for strategic planning across OECD countries, with their pros and cons to enhance the quality and effectiveness of planning (see Figure 1.2 and Table 1.1). The archetypes presented below are “ideal types” and countries might find themselves somewhere on the spectrum with attributes from different archetypes.

Figure 1.2. Different models and institutional settings to steer and coordinate strategic planning



Source: Based on (OECD, 2018[10])

Table 1.1. Typology of institutional settings for strategic planning

Archetype	Unified CoG Lead	Constellation CoG lead	Budgetary planner lead	Decentralised network of planning
Features	Strategic planning framework overseen and coordinated by a single unit/primary unit at the CoG Typically characterized by a more top-down approach to planning Typically leads the operationalisation of the Government Programme	Strategic planning framework overseen and coordinated by multiple distinct units at the CoG Fragmentation of the CoG typically the result of institutional layering, political considerations under coalition governments and/or external drivers to the planning process	Budgetary and planning function seen as intrinsically linked and carried out by the same institution	Locus of power for strategic planning and legislative efforts resides in line ministries CoG might play a more limited role linked to prospective studies or coordination
Benefits	Lower risk of fragmentation and duplication Clear lines of accountability Lower transaction costs for coordination	Development of specific expertise /specialisation in various CoG units Agility of the system in case of unforeseen crisis Can generate more inclusive decision making	De facto linkages between planning and budgeting Increased "feasibility" of proposals More systematic costing of strategic plans	Strong buy-in from line ministries Enhanced strategic planning capacity at line ministry level
Risks	Lack of buy-in from implementing partners Difficulties securing the financial and human resources necessary to fulfil this mandate	Duplication of efforts, gaps and overlaps in case of unclear mandates Risks of parallel planning system disconnected from implementation Requires accrued levels of coordination within the CoG Difficulties for line ministries to identify a single point of contact	Focus on efficiency concerns at the expense of underfunded policy priorities Difficulties reconciling election manifesto/coalition agreement with efficiency considerations	Lack of coherence in government action Difficulties delivering on cross-cutting priorities Asymmetry of performance across ministries

Examples	**Finland** – Prime Minister's Office, Government Strategy Department **Estonia** –Strategy Unit, Government Office	**United –Kingdom** – Strategy Delivery and Private Office Unit; Civil Service and Modernisation Reform Unit in the Cabinet Office; Delivery Unit in the Prime Minister's Office **Brazil** – Special Secretariat for Strategic Affairs; Civil Cabinet of the Presidency; General Secretariat of the Presidency; Office of the Comptroller General; Secretariat of Government	**Norway** – Ministry of Finance is responsible for long-term planning **Türkiye** – Strategy and Budget Department affiliated with the Presidential Office	**Austria** – Federal Chancellery; strategic planning units and bodies consist of units within the individual Ministries **Belgium** – planning is largely driven by each minister/secretary of state; Federal Planning Bureau provides longer planning options

Source: Based on (OECD, 2018[10])

With its new CoG model, Portugal would likely best fit the "Constellation CoG lead" archetype on strategic planning, with multiple entities involved in CoG and beyond. Indeed, responsibilities for strategic planning activities are shared across several units at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Finance and a number of line ministries:

- The Prime Minister's Office coordinates government action, providing whole-of-government strategic orientations and priorities and ensuring that they are delivered.
- The Minister of the Presidency has a direct responsibility over national planning, regional planning and public administration.
- The Secretary of State for Planning supports the Minister of Presidency in her planning roles and is part of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The Secretary of State was previously a Ministry and led the elaboration of the Portugal 2030 strategy.
- The Secretary of State for Budget supports the Minister of Finances in his planning roles;
- PlanAPP, located under the Minister of the Presidency and responding to the Prime Minister is mandated to ensure macro-coordination on strategic planning; reinforce the consistency and readability of national strategies; shape and steer the overall strategic planning process; reinforce and coordinate sectoral efforts; support and develop the line capabilities of line Ministries;
- The Agency for Development and Cohesion under the supervision of the Minister for the Presidency manages EU funds;
- The Ministry of Finance, in particular GPEARI (Planning, Strategy, Evaluation and International Relations office)ensures support to policy formulation and strategic and operational planning, in articulation with financial programming, and monitors and evaluates the implementation of planning instruments. .
- Dedicated units in certain line ministries: GEP (Strategy and Planning Office) – Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security; GEE (Strategy and Studies Office) – Ministry of Economy and the Sea; GPP (Planning, Policies and General Administration Office) – Ministry of Agriculture and Food; GEPAC (Strategy, Planning and Assessment Office for Culture) – Ministry of Culture.

This "constellation" model of CoG in Portugal and the resulting fragmentation of strategic planning activities call for a broad role for a central player to facilitate coordination. PlanAPP, together with its associated inter-ministerial network, RePLAN (the Public Administration Planning and Foresight Services Network), is ideally placed to fulfil such role, which include: steering the strategic process, aligning strategies at different levels and coordinating with the different CoG and non-CoG entities involved in strategic planning. This role will be further studied in Chapter 5.

1.3.2. Foresight activities

The institutionalisation of foresight raises important questions for governments, especially given its implications in the transformation of existing short-term planning and reactive stances into strategic foresight's long-term, agile and proactive approaches. CoGs play a role in strategic foresight in a number of OECD member countries, but this role is often shared with other line Ministries or agencies (OECD, 2018[10]). However, it should be noted that there are indications that an effective foresight ecosystem builds on structures that "sit in or near the heart of Government" (SOIF 2021).

A number of examples of institutionalisation of strategic foresight activities at the centre can provide useful insights for PlanAPP. Finland's Prime Minister's Office has responsibility for strategic foresight for the whole of government and facilitates an interministerial network on the matter (OECD 2022). In Lithuania, the Government Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA) aims to strengthen evidence-based policymaking with foresight activities at the centre of government and to link it with national strategic planning initiatives such as the *State Progress Strategy 2050* and the *National Progress Plan 2030* (OECD 2021). In 2020, Spain created the *Oficina Nacional de Prospectiva y Estrategia* (National Foresight and Strategy Office) in the Cabinet of the Presidency of the Government of Spain.

Through strategic foresight, Governments can improve their ability to anticipate potential threats and opportunities, adopt policy making frameworks and processes that are flexible enough to embrace uncertainty, and define desired visions for the future and act to accomplish them in the present. Units and teams positioned at the centre of Government can improve these proactive and prospective approaches by addressing challenges of embedding strategic foresight in Government. First, these units can help to close the gap between strategic foresight deliverables and policy action, streamlining the use of foresight in policy and strategy making at the centre of Government. Second, positioning and steering strategic foresight at the centre, particularly through a competence centre, can help to develop a whole of Government strategy, improve the exchanges and collaborations among strategic foresight practitioners and experts (e.g. communities of practice or cross-sectoral networks), and generate shared understandings and future visions across Government sectors and organisations. Finally, given the mandates and legitimacy associated with centre-of-Government, these units and teams can enable and foster the transformation and adaptation of government functions to effectively institutionalise and apply strategic foresight, namely through their potential role to lead by example and to disseminate capabilities and knowledge across the administration.

As explained later in this report, the support requested by PlanAPP on this subject was for the OECD to ensure knowledge transfer on strategic foresight approaches and tools for decision making, and share good practice guidelines and international case studies to support policymaking and process design in Portugal. The OECD has provided support to PlanAPP along these lines organising a series of collaborative activities and peer-exchange meetings, providing relevant advice and methodological support, creating a specific working paper that is being prepared for publication (Monteiro and Dal Borgo, forthcoming), and identifying opportunities for improvement for PlanAPP to strengthen decision making through strategic foresight. These elements will be further analysed in Chapter 4.

1.3.3. Evaluation

Institutionalising policy evaluation is essential to ensure a whole-of-government and systematic approach to evaluation. The creation of PlanAPP at the centre of government with its policy evaluation mandate is a key step in further institutionalising the function in Portugal. In addition, the dedicated policy evaluation capabilities within the Agency for Development and Cohesion which coordinates the evaluation of EU-funded programmes is another asset that Portugal can build on in this area. the Court of Accounts and the Parliament are also core actors of the policy evaluation ecosystem.

In OECD member countries, CoGs play a crucial and systematic role in policy evaluations in 23 out of 26 surveyed countries, so do Ministries of Finance. Usually, the role of these institutions differs, with CoGs being in charge of coordinating and managing the evaluation eco-system, defining evaluation methodologies, providing guidelines and incentives for evaluation and promoting its use. The close proximity to the strategic planning function located in CoG also provides a sign of political commitment, leverages the coordination role of the CoG, and helps ensuring that the results of evaluation are taken into account in strategy and policymaking.

Ministries of Finance are usually tasked with undertaking policy evaluations, including spending reviews. They also sometimes provide guidance, follow up on the evaluation results, and supervision to evaluation activities of other institutions. Ministries of Planning or public reform may also have competencies on evaluation in a narrower number of countries, and other line Ministries usually carry out evaluations on their own sector and programmes. A number of actors and institutions outside the executive have a crucial role in policy evaluation and its institutionalisation, including Supreme Audit Institutions and Parliaments (OECD, 2020[2]).

Based on the activities and role played by CoG institutions in OECD member countries, the use of the competence centre model and the development of the networking function associated with RePLAN provide significant opportunities for PlanAPP to develop a whole-of-government evaluation agenda and support its implementation, develop and disseminate guidelines and foster an intergovernmental network on policy evaluation. These aspects will be further studied in Chapter 3.

1.3.4. Enabling conditions for success of the competence centre model

To mitigate the risks and challenges linked to the fragmentation of policy planning capacities, Portugal has used the “competence centres” model within its CoG for strategic planning, foresight and monitoring and evaluation. This is similar with the approach taken with other functional areas such as legal support. Competence centres are specialised services in domains which correspond to transversal needs, and which are equipped with a technical and even scientific dimension requiring highly skilled staff. Such model should enable better support and capacity development across the administration coupled with a high quality of service delivered by specialists.

The following competence centres were created to cover key transversal functions of the administration:

- State Centre for Legal Skills - JurisAPP;
- Digital Competence Centre for Public Administration - TicAPP;
- Competence Centre for Planning, Policy and Prospective in Public Administration – PlanAPP.

These competence centres, and PlanApp in particular, address several underlying challenges that this project and previous OECD work on JurisAPP have highlighted: building and maintaining in-house capacity and expertise, bolstering the public administration’s agility and resilience, enhancing coordination in a fragmented and sometimes siloed administration, and increasing the quality and harmonisation of services.

Indeed, PlanApp has the ability to endow the Public Administration with mechanisms needed to recover and bolster its capacity to carry out highly technical activities related to strategic planning across multiple sectors. The competence centre model enables bringing together experts and specialists on certain topics across the administration into one horizontal structure that will associate skills and expertise for better quality specialised services. The competence centre can be conducive to attract and retain staff, that can work, learn and share among peers. In addition, PlanAPP has potentially greater flexibility in terms of staff and skills management. Organized into multidisciplinary teams, PlanAPP staff include both civil servants and consultants hired on a commission basis, without being connected to the Public Administration, and therefore without the need for public competition or exclusivity or abiding by public salary grids. In addition to encourage the gathering and recruitment of skilled experts, PlanApp collaborative Network of Planning

and Foresight Services for the Public Administration (RePLAN) promotes inter-ministerial cooperation, resource and knowledge sharing in the areas of strategic planning, public policy and foresight, and the development of collaborative work.

Beyond the competence centre's ability to harness expertise internally, and disseminate that knowledge across the administration, PlanAPP's structure could also help bolster the system's resilience. Indeed, continuity in a context of frequent institutional changes can be achieved by leveraging informal practices aiming to build a collective '*esprit de corps*' among policy professionals (e.g. "groups of collaboration" for best practice exchange, training and informal exchanges among policy planners, "champions" etc. from line ministries and relevant CoG bodies). This constituted one of the benefits associated with the creation of JurisAPP on legal services. In that regard, the creation of RePLAN in Portugal will be a crucial lever for PlanApp to foster this "*esprit de corps*" and strengthen the agility of its planning framework.

Lastly, and crucially, the competence centre model applied to strategic planning has the potential to mitigate one of the most important risks associated with a constellation CoG approach to planning: siloed work leading to incoherent objectives and policies. The logic of horizontal cooperation which sits at the core of the competence centre model stands in stark contrast to the traditional vertical siloed bureaucracy which characterises many public administrations. Competence centres were designed intentionally with the aim of concentrating resources and increasing their effectiveness by transferring and grouping certain functions to the centre. PlanApp for instance integrated the resources already existing in the UTAIL (Technical Unit for Legislative Impact Assessment). Two aspects of PlanAPP's mandate echo this mission in particular: the search for coherence between sectoral and whole-of-government planning documents, and the development of resources and methodological support for line ministries.

1.3.5. The ambitions, expectations and potential pitfalls associated with the Competence Centre model for PlanAPP

The recent establishment of PlanAPP as a competence centre represents an ambitious and innovative institutional reform to steer and coordinate the strategic planning process in Portugal as well as foresight, monitoring and evaluation activities. To succeed in this mission, a number of enabling conditions nevertheless are necessary: PlanAPP needs the appropriate level of convening powers, legitimacy, capabilities, and instruments to lead the strategic planning, foresight and evaluation processes and coordinate with line ministries and agencies.

While the creation of a competence centre dedicated to strategic planning, foresight and monitoring and evaluation in part aimed to fill an identified leadership gap with regards to these different processes and activities, PlanAPP's legitimacy to lead needs to be recognised and accepted by the administration as a whole. This issue of legitimacy is particularly crucial for PlanAPP's ability to develop national strategies inhouse which will ultimately be implemented by line ministries and agencies, and for its ambition to review and challenge certain sectoral and horizontal plans. Legitimacy is also essential for PlanAPP to play a key role in the foresight and evaluation institutional setting. In that regard, a clear mandate has been given to PlanAPP on the strategic planning, evaluation and foresight activities that needs to be operationalized and acknowledged by all entities with strategic planning activities across the administration.

To deliver on its stated objectives, competence centres also require robust coordination mechanisms and instruments to truly embody the horizontal spirit with which they were created. The newly established RePLAN will be crucial to establish structured coordination mechanisms and facilitate frequent formal and informal exchanges in the communities of strategic planning, foresight and evaluation units and experts. Success will require being intentional about the underpinning mechanisms and tools used by the centre for information and data sharing, gathering and synthetizing inputs in order to inform and coordinate strategic policy making.

Lastly, as competence centres partly aim to bring highly technical and skilled experts back into the administration's fold, particular attention will need to be given to the recruitment, training and retention strategies used to allow Competence Centres to perform their functions on strategy, evaluation and foresight. The attraction, retention and quality of staff and expertise in the public administration was a key driver behind the establishment of JurisAPP and also appear instrumental for PlanAPP.

The competence centre model also comes with several risks. This approach *de facto* entails that line ministries will relinquish certain powers and/or accept a higher degree of oversight from the centre. The Competence Center model relies on the assumption that the quality and value added by the centre will supersede the quality and effectiveness of independent activities implemented by Ministries on strategies, evaluation or foresight. In this sense, PlanAPP will need to ensure it is perceived first and foremost as a *resource* for line ministries, and showcase its value added to their work and priority areas. This entails that PlanAPP communicate clearly how collaborating with them can benefit sectoral interests and priorities and to develop activities that support Ministries, including disseminating guidelines, templates and resources and providing advice. Moreover, while PlanApp benefits from greater recruitment flexibility, favouring generalist profiles with expertise related to strategic planning, foresight or evaluation, could come at the expense of "sectoral" expertise. A network approach, with points of contact within line ministries harnessing sectoral expertise could effectively mitigate this risk. Finally, the flexibility in recruitment intrinsically generates a distinct labour regime that might be diversly perceived across the administration.

This report will explore those themes in four chapters: Trust and evidence-informed policymaking based on the lessons from the OECD Trust Survey in Portugal (Chapter 2), Public policy evaluation (Chapter 3), Supporting decision making with strategic foresight (Chapter 4) the strategic setting and role of PlanAPP in the strategic planning framework (Chapter 5). It will conclude with a way forward indicating policy recommendations and options for consideration by PlanAPP in its future developments.

This report through its four chapters will explore the core functions of PlanAPP to support its establishment and development and ensure that it fulfills the ambitions expressed at its creation and make the best use of the Competence Centre model in order to support the design, coordination and implementation of better evidence-based strategies and policies, and ultimately tackle the strategic and long-term challenges that the country is facing and reinforce trust in its public administration.

2 Lessons from the OECD Trust Survey in Portugal

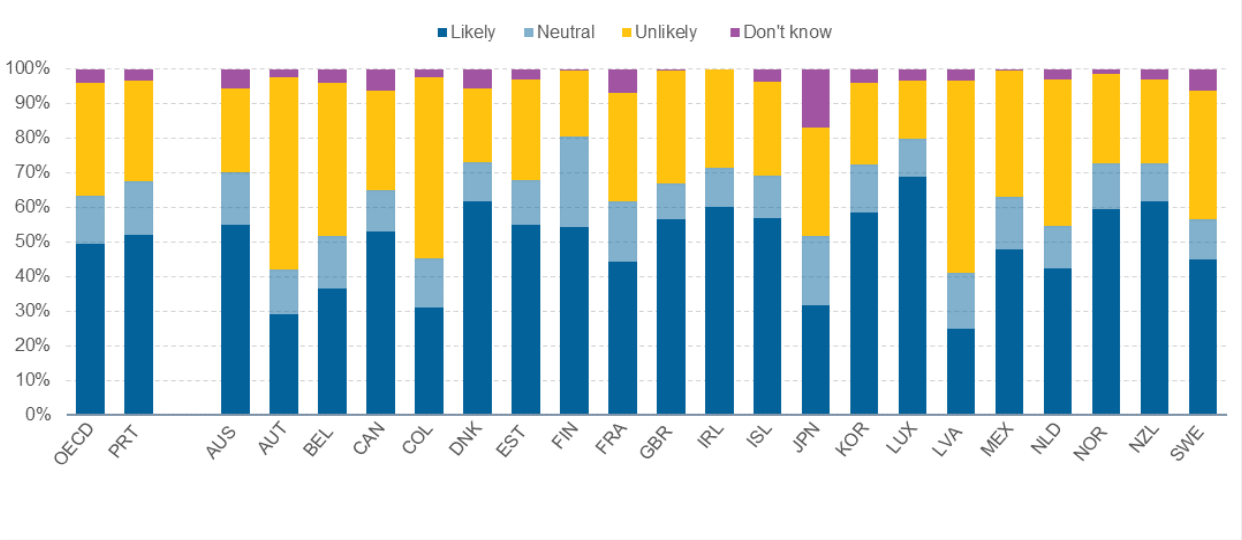
Public trust improves compliance with public policies, nurtures political participation, strengthens social cohesion, and builds legitimacy to the political system. Aiming to better understand what drives public trust so as to support countries in reinforcing it, the OECD implemented the OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions (OECD Trust Survey) in 22 OECD countries, including Portugal in 2021-2022. Data collected through the survey provides a thorough assessment on people's perceptions and evaluations of the government's reliability, responsiveness, openness, fairness and integrity, as well as evidence on the relationship between these variables with levels of trust in public institutions.

High trust in public institutions is not a necessary outcome of democratic governance, of course. Indeed, low levels of trust measured in democracies are only possible because citizens in democratic systems have much greater freedom to report that they do not trust their government, than in other systems. Critical views and constructive feedback can even be a sign of a healthy democracy. Yet trust remains an important indicator to measure how people perceive the quality of, and how they associate with, government institutions in democratic countries.

The Portuguese government's response to the COVID-19 crisis drew on lessons learned from previous crises, notably the plunge in public trust following the 2008 financial crisis and the subsequent economic austerity measures, which shook the political system and considerably impacted economic and social well-being. As such, trust in government during the COVID-19 pandemic was comparatively high in Portugal relative to other OECD countries, with over half of people reporting confidence in their government's capacity to protect them in the event of a new contagious disease (Figure 2.1). As in many countries, the pandemic triggered a deep recession, but clear and open political leadership, coupled with appropriate public governance instruments, allowed the country to steer the economy towards a rapid recovery.

Figure 2.1. 52% of Portuguese respondents think the government would be prepared for future health crises

Share of respondents reporting different levels of perceived likelihood that their government would be prepared to protect people's lives in the event of a new serious contagious illness (on a 0-10 scale), 2021

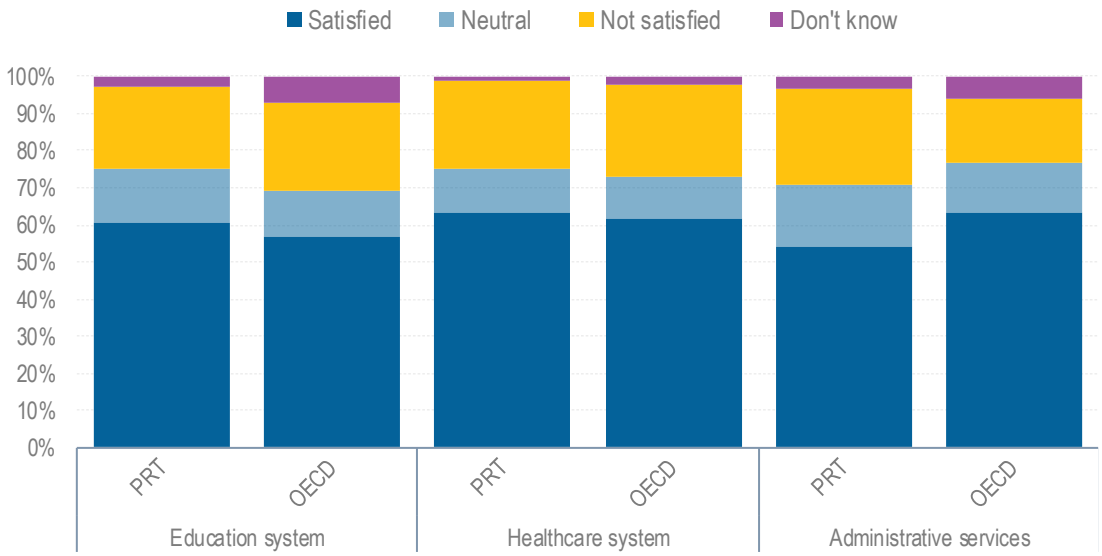


Note: Figure presents the within-Portugal distribution of responses to the questions "If a new serious contagious disease spreads, how likely or unlikely do you think is it that government institutions will be prepared to protect people's life?". The "likely" proportion is the aggregation of responses from 6-10 on the scale; "neutral" is equal to a response of 5; "unlikely" is the aggregation of responses from 1-4; and "Don't know" was a separate answer choice. "OECD" presents the unweighted average of responses across 22 countries. For more detailed information please find the survey method document at http://oe.cd/trust. Source: : OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

Indeed, according to the OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions (OECD Trust Survey), carried out as part of this project, Portuguese respondents are reasonably confident they can rely on their government to deliver public services such as education and health (Figure 2.2), and to tackle major intergenerational challenges, such as climate change and future epidemics – all significant determinants of trust in the national government.

Figure 2.2. Portuguese people are relatively satisfied with the education and healthcare systems

Share of respondents who indicate satisfaction with education, healthcare system and administrative services in Portugal and OECD average, 2021

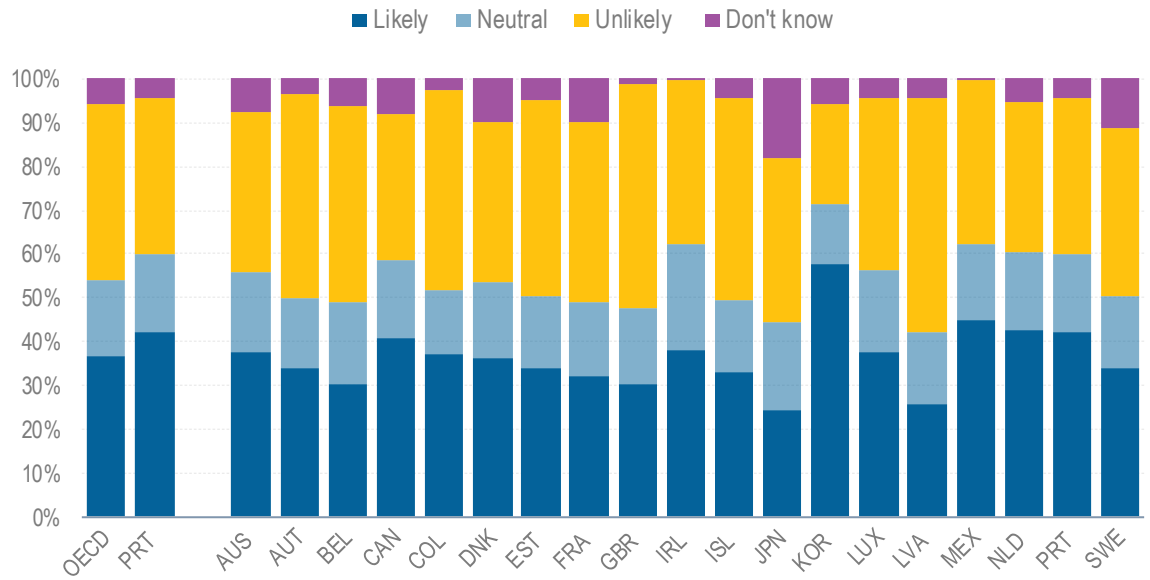


Note: Figure presents the distribution of responses to the questions "On a scale of 0 to 10 [where 0 is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied'], how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the healthcare system in [country] as a whole?", "On a scale of 0 to 10 [where 0 is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied'], how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the education system in [country] as a whole?" and "On a scale of 0 to 10, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of administrative services (e.g. applying for an ID or a certificate of birth, death, marriage or divorce)". The "satisfied" proportion is the aggregation of responses from 6-10 on the scale; "neutral" is equal to a response of 5; "unlikely" is the aggregation of responses from 0-4; and "Don't know" was a separate answer choice. "OECD" presents the unweighted average across 22 countries. For more detailed information please find the survey method document at http://oe.cd/trust.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

However, in line with many other OECD countries, Portuguese institutions seem to be falling short of people's expectations on participation, representation, and responsiveness (Figure 2.3). Only three in ten Portuguese respondents are confident that views shared in a public consultation would be taken into account in policy making, and even fewer feel they have a say in what the government does. This feeling of having a lack of a voice coincides with perceptions of unfairness: half of the Portuguese respondents believe that civil servants would not treat rich and poor people equally. Widespread perceptions of institutions' lack of integrity complete governance's challenges Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.3. Slightly over four in ten Portuguese respondents are confident that national policies would adapt to public views, and more than 3 in ten are sceptical

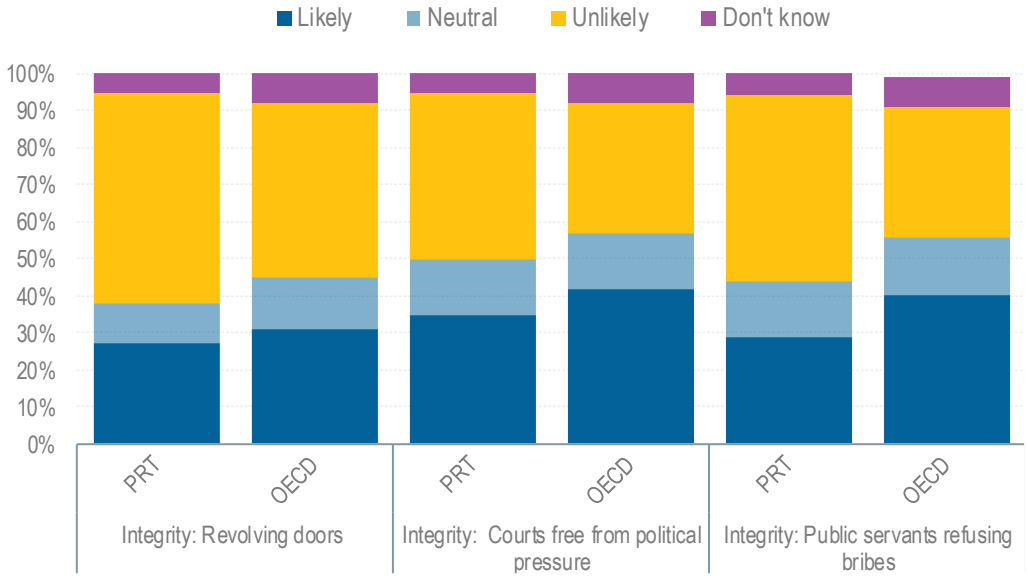
Share of respondents reporting different levels of perceived likelihood that a national policy would be changed if a majority of people expressed a view against it (on a 0-10 scale), 2021



Note: Figure presents the within-country distributions of responses to the question "If over half of the people clearly express a view against a national policy, how likely or unlikely do you think it is that would be changed?" The "likely" proportion is the aggregation of responses from 6-10 on the scale; "neutral" is equal to a response of 5; "unlikely" is the aggregation of responses from 1-4; and "Don't know" was a separate answer choice. Finland, New Zealand and Norway are excluded from this figure as question was not asked. "OECD" presents the unweighted cross-national average. For more detailed information please find the survey method document at http://oe.cd/trust.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

Figure 2.4. A majority of Portuguese respondents perceive public integrity as being low

Share of respondents in Portugal and OECD average reporting different levels of integrity, 2021

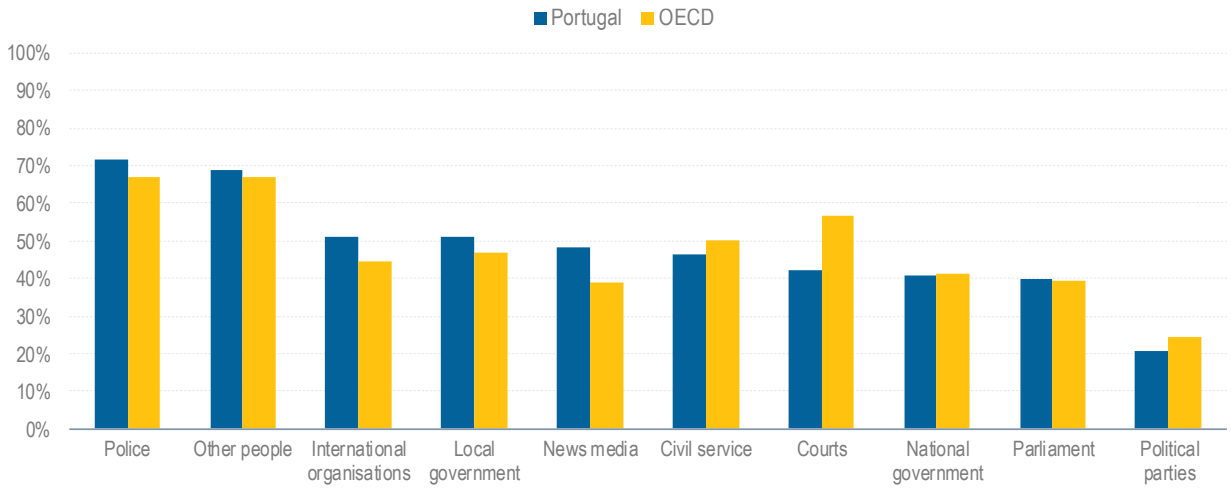


Note: Figure presents the within-country distributions of responses to the questions "If a high-level politician was offered the prospect of a well-paid job in the private sector in exchange for a political favour, how likely or unlikely do you think it is that they would refuse it?", "If a court is about to make a decision that could negatively impact on the government's image, how likely or unlikely do you think it is that the court would make the decision free from political influence?" and "If a public employee were offered money by a citizen or a firm for speeding up access to a public service, how likely or unlikely do you think it is that they would refuse it?". The "likely" proportion is the aggregation of responses from 6-10 on the scale; "neutral" is equal to a response of 5; "unlikely" is the aggregation of responses from 0-4; and "Don't know" was a separate answer choice. "OECD" presents the unweighted average across countries.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

Results also showed that levels of trust vary across public institutions. As in other OECD countries, the police is the most trusted institution and political parties are the least trusted. Around 41% Portuguese trust in their national government, 51% in the local government and 46% in the civil service – values that are close to the average among OECD countries (Figure 2.5). The drivers of public trust also vary according to the institution and level of government considered, suggesting a need for a range of strategies to ensure that policies and reforms to build confidence are correctly targeted. For example, improving the perception of the reliability of government in addressing future crises and ensuring that people's voices is heard through inclusive policy making and open communication are particularly important drivers of trust in national government (Figure 2.6). Conversely, levels of trust in local governments are most influenced by perceptions that public authorities would be responsive to their feedback and would act fairly. And finally, trust in the civil service is predominantly influenced by satisfaction with administrative services and feeling the government is responsive to their concerns (Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.5. Levels of trust in government and public institutions are close to the OECD average

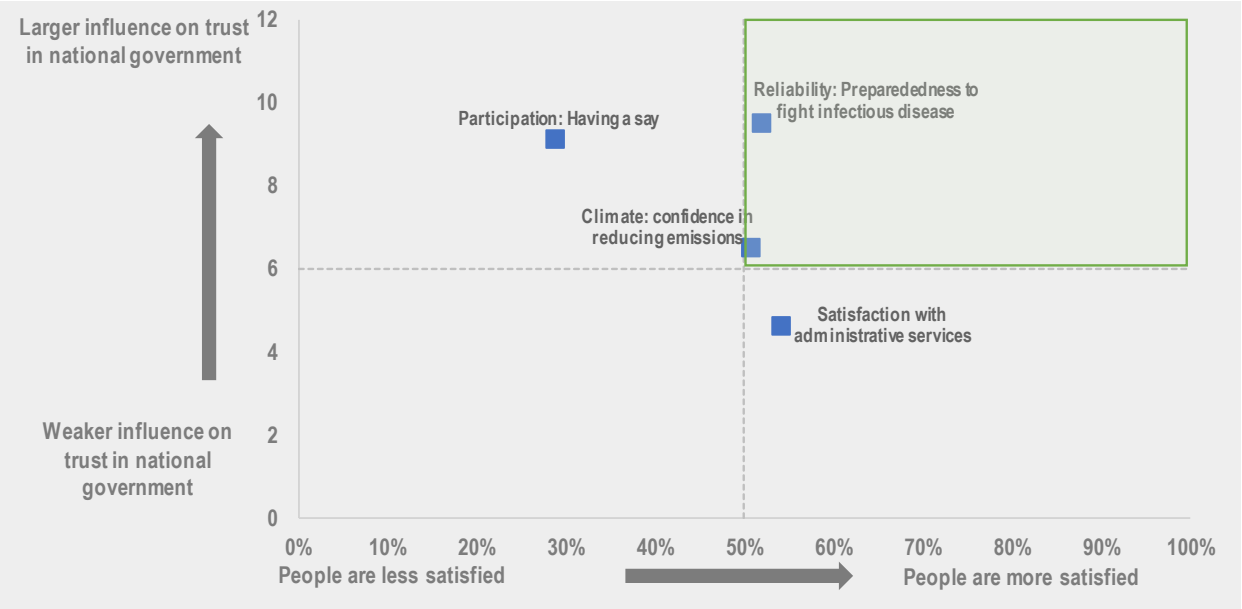
Share of respondents who indicate trust in various government institutions in Portugal and OECD average (responses 6-10 on a 10-point scale), 2021



Note: Figure presents the share of response values 6-10 to the questions: "On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all and 10 is completely, how much do you trust the noted institutions?". "OECD" presents the unweighted average across 22 countries. For more detailed information, please find the survey method document at http://oe.cd/trust.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

Figure 2.6. Reliability and political efficacy are key determinants of trust in the national government

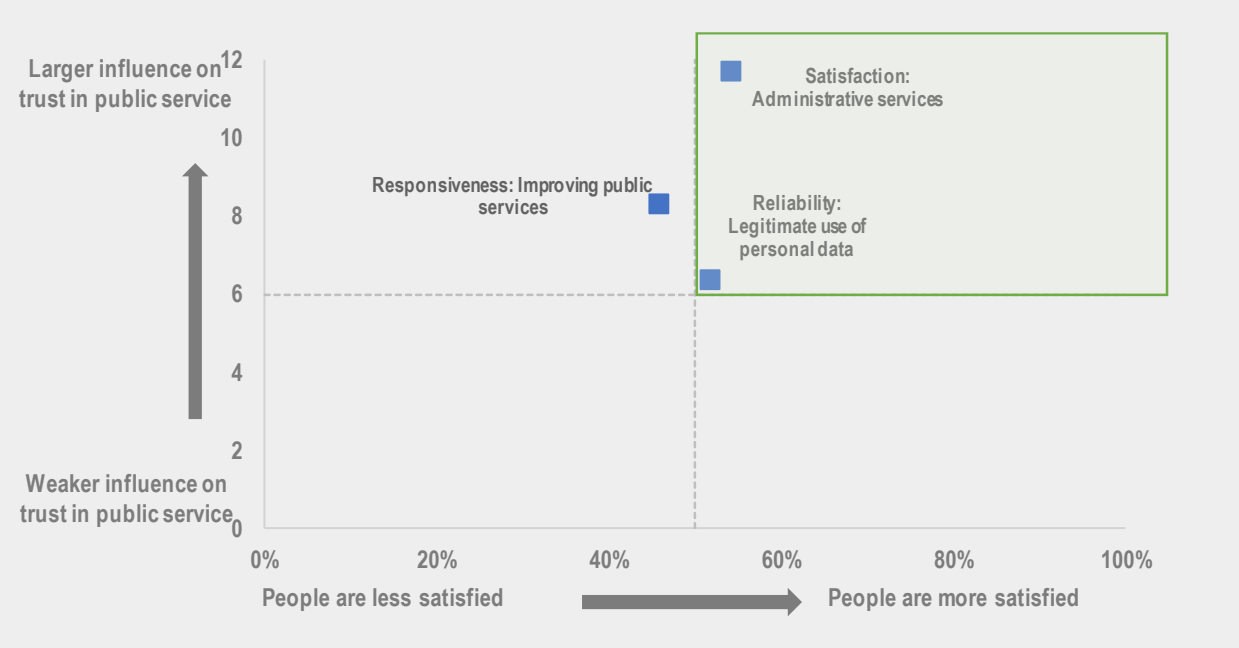
Percentage point change in trust in national government in response to improvements in selected variables (Y-axis) and shares of the noted variable in Portugal (X-axis), 2021



Note: Figure shows the statistically significant determinants of self-reported trust in government in a logistic estimation that controls for individual characteristics and self-reported levels of interpersonal trust. All variables depicted are statistically significant at 99%. Satisfaction with administrative services is statistically significant at 90%. Only questions derived from the OECD Trust Framework are depicted on the x-axis, while individual characteristics such as age, gender, education, which also may be statistically significant, are not shown.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

Figure 2.7. Satisfaction with administrative services has the highest explanatory power for trust in the civil service

Percentage point change in trust in public service in response to improvements in selected variables (Y-axis) and shares of the noted variable in Portugal (X-axis), 2021

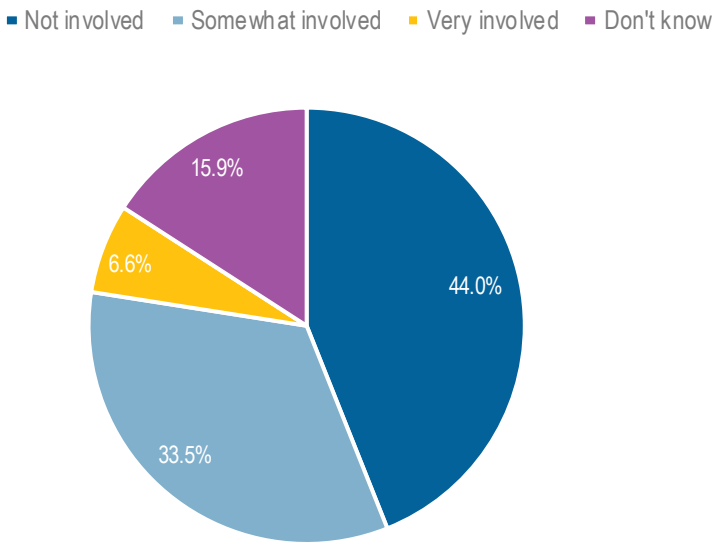


Note: Figure shows the most robust determinants of self-reported trust in civil service in a logistic estimation that controls for individual characteristics and self-reported levels of interpersonal trust. All variables depicted are statistically significant at 99%. Only questions derived from the OECD Trust Framework are depicted on the x-axis, while individual characteristics such as age, gender, education, which also may be statistically significant, are not shown.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

The pandemic has underscored a global context increasingly characterised by multiple simultaneous crises. Going forward, to build resilience under growing uncertainty and complexity, Portugal will need to set public trust as an explicit policy objective and better understand what drives it. This complexity will increasingly require Portugal to invest in a competent and trusted civil service to develop policy responses that are more and better informed by experts' advice and that clearly consider people's expectations, needs and well-being. Currently, according to the pilot module on the role of science and expert advice in policy making implemented in Portugal as part of the OECD Trust Survey, 44% of respondents believe that scientists are not sufficiently involved in decision making (Figure 2.8). This is a notable finding given that the Portuguese particularly value the role of scientists in tackling certain policy issues, such as climate change. Moreover, those who are confident that the government would listen to scientists have more positive perceptions of the government's competence, such as in innovation or crisis preparedness, and report higher levels of trust.

Figure 2.8. Many Portuguese respondents think that scientists are not involved enough in decision making

Share of respondents reporting whether scientists are involved in decision making in Portugal, 2021



Note: Figure presents responses to the question "From your point of view, are scientists involved in political decision-making processes in Portugal? ". The response choices "They are not involved at all" and ''They are very little involved'' are grouped in ''Not involved''. ''They are a somewhat involved'' stays ''Somewhat involved'' and the response choices 'They are very involved'' and '''They are very much involved'' are grouped in ''Very involved''.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

People's perceptions of the competence and values of government and of evidence-informed policy making measured by the OECD Trust Survey were openly debated with experts and policy makers and mapped with policy priorities. A clear overall message from the OECD Trust Survey is that Portugal should promote open and inclusive policy making by systematically including and taking into account the views of different population groups.

3 Promoting public policy evaluation to improve decision making

As part of its effort in strengthening decision-making processes and policy development, the Portuguese Competence Centre for Planning, Policy and Foresight in Public Administration (PlanAPP) has requested technical support from the OECD to promote the systematisation of public policies evaluations in the Portuguese government.

Public policy evaluation has a key role to play in promoting evidence-informed policymaking and ensuring that policies are improving outcomes by bringing an understanding of what works, why, for whom, and under what circumstances (OECD, 2020[2]). Evaluation is also a core tool of sound public governance as it supports governments in spending better and promotes transparency and accountability of tax-payers money. It can therefore promote public accountability, increase public sector effectiveness, and ensure progress towards long-term government goals.

Yet, overall, the Portuguese government still suffers from important challenges that hinder an evidence-informed policymaking approach (PlanAPP, 2022[11]). In particular, there is little institutionalisation and systematisation of evaluations across the government, and, as a result, little opportunity for actors to share good practices across the system, to conduct cross-sectorial evaluations and to create a critical mass of skills. The quality of internal evaluations conducted by the administration is often challenged due to the fact that line ministries often lack the skills, data and quality mechanisms to foster it. Finally, the impact of evaluation results is difficult to assess as evaluations are not always communicated or linked to decision-making processes. There is therefore an important opportunity for PlanAPP to play a central role in fostering such a coordinated approach across government and in promoting demand for evaluations and evidence.

This chapter provides an overview of how PlanAPP could promote policy evaluation and evidence-informed decision making through fostering better institutionalisation of policy evaluation, as well as increasing its quality and impact. It does so by conducting a gap analysis between the current state of play in Portugal compared to the standards set by the OECD Council Recommendation on Public Policy Evaluation, as well as by outlining scenarios for improving the systematisation of evaluation based on good practices found in other member countries.

3.1. Institutionalising policy evaluation

Institutionalising policy evaluation with a whole-of-government perspective is essential to ensuring that isolated and unplanned evaluation efforts can become more formal and systematic approaches. There is no uniform approach to establishing a government-wide institutional framework for policy evaluation.

Nevertheless, evidence from the OECD shows that institutionalising policy evaluation requires governments to (OECD, 2020[2]):

1. Adopt a **clear and shared understanding of** what **policy evaluation** is in terms of objectives, tools and features.
2. Define **high-level guidance across government**, such as in a legal or policy framework or in a multi-annual evaluation agenda, on when to conduct policy evaluation and what type of evaluation is needed.
3. **Give actors explicit mandates to conduct and coordinate evaluations,** as well as to promote their quality and use across government.
4. Promote the existence of a **rich evaluation ecosystem** with actors performing, commissioning and using evaluation results both inside and outside the executive.

3.1.1. Institutionalisation of policy evaluation is still in its early stages in Portugal, both inside and outside of the executive

In Portugal, institutionalisation of policy evaluation across government is still in its early stages. First, there is no official definition of policy evaluation yet. As a result, the practice is still often confused with other analytical activities like monitoring or regulatory impact assessments.

Portugal also lacks a cross governmental legal/ policy framework embedding the practice of evaluation across government, as well as guidance providing some overarching rules on when to perform evaluations, how and by whom. Unsurprisingly, therefore, evaluations are not performed systematically by ministries and practices are uncoordinated across government. One important exception in this regard are the evaluations of European funded programmes, which are mandated by EU regulation and are managed by the Development and Cohesion Agency (here after AD&C) in Portugal. The recent adoption of the 2021 Law Decree n.21/2021, which attributes to PlanAPP a clear mandate to coordinate policy evaluations across government, has also proven an important step in institutionalising the practice. For the most part, however, policy evaluation still occurs on *ad hoc* basis in line ministries and there is very little, if any, initiative to conduct cross-sectorial evaluations that require collaboration across ministries.

The absence of such a legal/ policy framework also affects the organisation of the evaluation function in ministries. Indeed, not all line ministries have a policy evaluation mandate. As a result, while there may be a good supply of statistical and analytical skills overall in the Portuguese administration, few resources are explicitly and exclusively devoted to conducting policy evaluations.

Finally, there are still relatively few actors outside of the executive that are considerably engaged in the realm of policy evaluation, which runs the risk of making decision-makers less incentivised in investing in this activity.

3.1.2. To promote further institutionalisation, PlanAPP could work with relevant stakeholders on a definition and a multi-year agenda, as well as promote the adoption of a legal framework and a rich ecosystem for policy evaluation

Portugal could undertake several steps to institutionalise the practice of policy evaluation across the government. Establishing an official government definition of policy evaluation in Portugal could help clarify the concept and perimeter of policy evaluation and help differentiate it from other tools. As a new agency aimed at promoting policy evaluations across government, PlanAPP could develop such a definition. This work could be performed together with relevant stakeholders, in particular from the AD&C, as well as line ministries and any relevant external actors (academia for example). To be comprehensive, a definition of public policy evaluation should provide information on the objectives of evaluation, information on the way it should be conducted, in terms of methodology and quality attributes. The OECD Recommendation on Public Policy Evaluation provides such a comprehensive definition (See Box 3.1). PlanAPP may wish to use this definition as a starting point in its endeavour to develop a shared definition for the Portuguese public sector.

Box 3.1. OECD definition of Policy evaluation

The OECD Recommendation on Public Policy Evaluation defines 'Public Policy Evaluation' as a '*structured and evidence-based assessment of the design, implementation or results of a planned, ongoing or completed public intervention. It assesses the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and/or sustainability of a policy based on its objectives'* (OECD, 2022[12]).

This definition provides information on what should be evaluated (Public interventions) and under which criteria (relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact). Moreover, the recommendations further specify that public interventions can be policies, programmes or plans.

In addition, this definition underlines that policy evaluation can refer to *ex post* evaluations, as well as *ex ante* and concurrent (or *ex durante*) analysis carried out when implementing policies to search for or improve means to reach the set policy objectives.

Source: (OECD, 2022[12])

As policy evaluation requires significant resources and time, forward planning is important to organise evaluation practices across government and ensure that evaluations are timely, regular and fit-for purpose. In this regard, high-level cross-government guidance clarifying when evaluators should conduct evaluations, and how and for what purpose, is crucial. In this context, PlanAPP should consider developing a multi-year evaluation agenda, in consultation with line ministries, to establish high-level guidance on policy evaluation over a medium-term period. This planning document could clarify the policy evaluations that need to be conducted across the executive over the next few years. An evaluation agenda is a recognised good practice used in several jurisdictions like Canada, Ireland, the United States as well as in the Netherlands (OECD, 2020[2]) (See Box 3.2 for more information on evaluation and evidence agendas in OECD countries).

Box 3.2. The use of evidence or evaluation agendas in the Netherlands

Strategic Evaluation Agendas in the Netherlands

The Netherlands has recently adopted a **Strategic Evaluation Agenda (SEA)** in order to better systematise evaluations and ensure that these can impact decision making.

Each ministry publishes a SEA as part of their yearly budget memorandum and covers the entire policy/evaluation cycle: the *ex ante*, the *ex durante* and *ex post* evaluations. The SEA is developed on the basis of discussions between the line ministry and the Ministry of Finance and involve recurrent meetings between key ministerial stakeholders over the budget year.

The Strategic Evaluation Agenda was created to overcome some previous problems that the Dutch system was facing. In particular, as policy evaluations were mandated to happen 7 years after the adopted of a policy, this was often considered too rigid of a structure that hindered the impact of the evaluation itself. For this reason, instead of having a rigid rule on when to exactly perform evaluations, the SEA allows line ministries and the Ministry of Finance to plan evaluations based on which is the most logical moment in term of accountability, learning and policy development.

Source: (Ministry of Finance, 2022[13]) (OECD, 2020[2])

A first step in clarifying roles and responsibilities within the evaluation system would be to assign line ministries an explicit mandate to conduct policy evaluations. In the absence of a cross-government legal framework, line ministries could consider adopting an explicit mandate for evaluation in their organisational decrees. This will be important in order for the Portuguese government to ensure that all sectorial policy topics are evaluated.

On the longer term, the Portuguese government would also benefit from a legal framework establishing some cross-government rules for policy evaluation in order to underline the most basic and essential characteristics of the evaluation system: a definition of policy evaluation, the frequency and timing of evaluations, and the different mandates and responsibilities inside the system. Even if legal frameworks are not, in of themselves, a guarantee of success, they can considerably help the systematisation of policy evaluation particularly in a country with a civil law culture such as Portugal.

In order to promote the external role of the Court of Accounts and of the Parliament as users of evaluation results, PlanAPP could consider sharing its multi-annual evaluation agenda with these actors, as a way for the government to share information with the Court on where it is concentrating its evaluation efforts. Second, sharing PlanAPP's multi-annual evaluation agenda with the Parliament could be a way to foster interest in evaluation results. To further foster the Parliament's role inside the Portuguese evaluation system, PlanAPP could also organise some yearly dissemination events in collaboration with the Technical Unit for Budget Support (*Unidade Técnica de Apoio Orçamental* (UTAO)) on evaluation, as well as trainings for members of Parliament. In doing so, PlanAPP may wish to draw inspiration from what was done in France, where France Stratégie, together with some departments in line ministries, organised the *Printemps de l'évaluation* or Evaluation Spring in Parliament.

3.2. Promoting the quality of policy evaluations

Quality is an essential characteristic to ensure the credibility and legitimacy of evaluations. Poor quality evaluations carry the risk of providing unfit evidence, or evidence that is subject to bias and undue influence (OECD, 2020[2]). The OECD *Recommendations on Public Policy Evaluation* outlines several ways in which countries can foster the quality of their evaluations. The building blocks for quality evaluations are (OECD, 2022[12]):

1. **Build public sector skills for evaluation** by conducting regular training, recruiting and retaining employees with the adequate skills or collaborating with academia, the private sector and other jurisdictions to improve the availability of these skills.
2. Ensure the **availability of high quality**, timely, accessible, disaggregated and re-usable results, performance and administrative **data** for policy evaluation.
3. **Establish quality standards and mechanisms** for evaluations to generate robust and credible evaluation results that can be trusted and used with confidence.

3.2.1. Although evaluation skills exist in the Portuguese government, important challenges remain in regard to ensuring quality of policy evaluations

To conduct evaluations inside the government, public administrations need sufficient resources and the appropriate skills. At the moment, these skills are not sufficiently available inside the Portuguese public administration. Indeed, the public administration is unable to attract and retain these skills for several reasons. First, evaluation skills are quite rare in the Portuguese job-market. In addition, the Portuguese civil service exams do not earmark profiles to specific jobs, which means that administrations with specific skill requirements are not able to find the right profiles for their needs. Finally, wage and career opportunities are not attractive enough in the public administration for these types of skills and talents which are also in high demand in the private sector.

High quality and timely data are also essential to producing reliable and robust analyses. In order for data to meet the quality criteria to be used for evaluation, it needs to be accurate, verifiable and documented (OECD, 2020[2]). In addition, accessing different sources of data is essential to ensuring that departments can unlock insights for policy evaluation. In Portugal, line ministries perceive data access as one of the most significant barriers to policy evaluations as several analytical units are unable to access high quality data for evaluation purposes This is in part because of the way the statistical law of 2008, which establishes that data access can be granted to researchers for scientific purposes, is applied. Indeed, currently, the National Statistics Office (INE) applies a strict interpretation of this notion, which has made it difficult for government institutions to access micro data. An important exception in this regard are the public administrations which are considered research entities by Eurostat, which do benefit from accreditation (criteria e). As of writing this report, only GPEARI and the Bank of Portugal fall under this latter category (Eurostat, 2022[14]). In addition, even when they do have staff who are accredited, line departments also report that the cumbersome process and the format of the data received (sometimes impossible to cross with other datasets or overall low usability) can be a hindrance to performing evaluations.

To be robust and trustworthy, evaluations need to be independent and methodologically sound. For this reason, governments can put in place mechanisms to ensure good governance and methodological robustness of policy evaluations. These mechanisms are still not in place in the Portuguese system and evaluations are conducted in different ways by each line ministries. For this reason, evaluations vary a lot in terms of structure, content and quality across government and monitoring reports are sometimes confused with evaluations.

3.2.2. There is a need to invest in analytical skills, data governance for evidence-informed decision making and mechanisms able to ensure quality of evaluations

Portugal should promote the quality of its evaluations to increase use and impact. To increase the availability of these skills, the Portuguese government should consider investing in trainings for civil servants in public policy analysis and evaluation and consider creating a masters level programme in this field of study. Other OECD countries have developed these types of trainings. This is the case of France, for example, where a public administration school called the National School for Statistics and Economic Administration has developed master programmes to train future economists and statisticians (OECD, 2021[15]) in policy analysis. At the same time, as policy evaluation requires multiple skills, there is need for the cross-governmental institution, PlanAPP, to be equipped with multi-disciplinary teams possessing networking, communication, and analytical skills.

Several actions could be envisaged in Portugal to make data access smoother for the units performing evaluations in line ministries. To this end, the Portuguese government should consider amending the statistical law of 2008 to make it explicit that evaluation and analysis units inside line ministries are one of the categories of actors can access micro data. In parallel, PlanAPP should continue developing framework agreements with INE and the other national authorities (ONAs) to anticipate PlanAPP's data needs over a multi-annual period. In France, for example, France Stratégie is recognised by Eurostat as a research entity while not all evaluation units in line ministries benefit from the same status. Nevertheless, they do not encounter particular issues in accessing microdata as France allows public administrations to access microdata for research activities Finally, as wider data access and use is essential for evidence-informed policymaking, a data governance strategy in the public sector could help to ensure that data can be accessed for research purposes maintaining high levels of privacy.

Together with skills and data access, a mix of quality assurance and quality control mechanisms is very important to foster the quality of evaluations. In this area, Portugal would benefit from the creation, on the medium term, of guidelines for policy evaluations. Together with guidelines, some formal and informal networks could also ensure the quality of the end product. An informal network between policy evaluators

managed by PlanAPP could represent an option. At the same time, to ensure technical quality and rigour a peer-review system could be highly beneficial.

3.3. Creating a culture of evidence-informed decision making

To be used for decision making, policy evaluations need to achieve impact. Indeed, one of the most fundamental rationales for conducting policy evaluations is their usefulness in informing policy and decision making, in general, and improving the intervention they consider, specifically. For this reason, it is essential to facilitate the impact of evaluations inside the government.

In order to conduct public policy evaluations that impact decision making the OECD Recommendation on Public Policy Evaluation suggests countries to (OECD, 2022[12]):

1. **Establish institutional mechanisms to embed evaluation in decision-making processes,** both at the organisational level and across government.
2. **Provide easy access to evaluations** and present the findings deliberately in order to improve the uptake of evaluation results.
3. **Engage relevant stakeholders in the evaluation processes** from the outset in order to create ownership for change and trust in evaluation results.

3.3.1. The absence of formal feedback loops and limited communication of results hinder the use of evaluations in decision-making processes in Portugal

Creating systematic feedback loops represents an effective way to increase the use of evaluations. Feedback loops are mechanisms that can be found either at the level of specific institutions, such as management response mechanisms, or within the wider decision-making cycle, such as through the incorporation of policy evaluation findings into the budget or regulatory cycle or discussions of evidence in strategic planning. The links between policy evaluations and decision making are still elusive in the Portuguese system. Indeed, there are no instruments in place to understand if and how evaluation results are used (Salama and Picalarga, Forthcoming[16]). In particular, there are no mechanisms to ensure a connection between ex post evaluations and policymaking process or budgetary processes. Evaluation results are rarely commented at a managerial level within line ministries, presented to high-level meetings or used when discussing budget allocations.

Publicity and communication of evaluations are essential to promote their use and impact. Indeed, policy makers and stakeholders cannot use evidence and the results of evaluation if they do not know about it. At the moment, in Portugal, with the exception of AD &C, evaluations are not made public by default but are available across government (Salama and Picalarga, Forthcoming[16]). This hinders the visibility of evaluations and their potential use and impact. Moreover, even if they are available across governments they are rarely shared between institutions and for this reason there is very little awareness of what different departments are doing in the realm of evaluations.

3.3.2. Fostering the impact of evaluations requires to tie results to decision-making processes, ensure they are transparently as well as effectively communicated

Policy evaluations need to be connected to decision-making processes. One way to ensure the impact of policy evaluations is to discuss them at the highest level of government. This is what is done in France, for example, where France Stratégie will share some of its policy evaluations with the Council of Ministers. In order to increase the visibility and impact of its policy evaluations, PlanAPP should consider sharing them with the Portuguese Council of Ministers for information. PlanAPP's position at the centre of government is particularly adequate for this. When developing its multi-annual evaluation agenda, PlanAPP could

already discuss with the Presidency of Council of Ministers which ones should be shared with this forum. Another important way in which governments can ensure that evaluations impact decision making is through the budget process and budgetary decision making more generally. For instance, evaluations can also be useful to inform spending reviews as they can help in understanding which policies are valuable and which ones do not work properly.

An easy step to increase chances of impact is to make evaluations public. Indeed, evaluations cannot be used to their full potential if they cannot be accessed by decision-makers. A majority of OECD countries publish most of their evaluations, and several of them chose to do so by default – which is to say that evaluations have to be made public unless otherwise stated. In order to ensure that evidence is available for decision-makers to access, the Portuguese government could consider making all evaluations public by default. In addition to being available, evaluations should be easy to find in order to increase their impact. Creating a unique database where all government evaluations are collected could help maximise access. PlanAPP has recently begun efforts to create such a database (PlanAPP, n.d.[17]), which should be expanded to include more evaluations in it and keep the webpage updated in the future, and, ultimately house all, or most, of the government evaluations. This database should be easy to navigate using keywords and should strive to be exhaustive. Criteria for inclusion in the database should be clear and explicit. Finally, PlanAPP can play an essential role in supporting the communication efforts of line ministries. To this end, PlanAPP could develop a communication strategy alongside its multi-annual evaluation agenda, to ensure each evaluation conducted lead to user-friendly deliverables, outreach events and a coherent communication of results across line ministries.

3.4. Empowering policy evaluation champions

Evaluation champions are essential institutions inside an evaluation system as they considerably help in systematising the production of evaluations, help foster analytical skills across government and set quality standards, as well as can promote the impact of evaluation results. The importance of evaluation champions is underlined by the OECD Recommendations on Public Policy Evaluation which advises countries to designate evaluation champions to coordinate evaluations across institutions and advise on best practices to promote their quality and use (OECD, 2022[12]).

Evaluation champions can perform different activities depending on their mandate and positioning within government, which can be summarised as follow:

- **Encourage** the conduct and use of evaluations;
- **Coordinate** evaluations across institutions;
- **Advise** on best practices to promote their quality and use, often through manual and guidelines;
- **Systemise**: overview of what exists, detecting needs for evaluation, promoting evaluation;
- **Support** the technical quality of evaluations by providing peer advice and controlling the quality of the end product of evaluations;
- **Promote** impact of evaluations;
- **Produce** or **commission** evaluations.

3.4.1. The creation of PlanAPP represents a step forward to establishing a policy evaluation champion inside the Portuguese government, but more skills and networks are needed

Until recently Portugal was missing a coordinating institution in the realm of policy evaluation. In 2021, PlanAPP was established as an evaluation champion (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 2021[18]).

Being positioned inside an agency directly under the responsibility of the Presidency of the council of ministers it is in a strategic position to fulfil this coordination function.

In order to play its role, PlanAPP could create a network of evaluators inside line ministries. This network could build on the existing interministerial network for cooperation and sharing of knowledge and resources (*Rede de Serviços de Planeamento e Prospetiva da Administração Pública*, RePLAN), which is coordinated by PlanAPP. The network is still in a developmental phase but was set up with the main objectives of boosting cooperation between different governance areas, promoting capacity building and sharing good practices, as well as harmonising planning procedures and instruments (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 2021[18]).

As part of the RePLANnetwork, a specific evaluation working group could be established bringing together all line ministries and agencies inside the government working on policy evaluation. The evaluation team of PlanAPP (UTA) can serve as a secretariat for this group by organising regular meetings.

In the Portuguese government, such network of evaluators could benefit from sharing good practices and discussing evaluation methods and results. Together with this governmental network, PlanAPP could also mobilise the expertise of the network of academics and stakeholders that are important to promote quality and use.

In addition, PlanAPP will require a variety of skills and capacities within its evaluation team in order to perform the responsibilities attributed. Indeed, as it was shown, evaluation champions are expected to perform a very broad range of activities. For this reason, the evaluation unit team will need to undergo specific trainings and attract some more technical figures to support the work of the division.

4 Supporting decision making with strategic foresight

4.1. Strengthening strategic foresight as a core competency in the Government of Portugal

In an increasingly complex and uncertain contextual environment, citizens expect Governments to adjust public policies to address emergent changes while generating answers to societal needs and expectations. The recent crises that impacted our societies highlighted the need to strengthen Government processes and mechanisms that to ensure the preparedness, responsiveness and resistance for sudden disruptions and their aftermath. The post-pandemic context in particular "accentuates existing challenges and increases the risk of governments making policy decisions based on overly hasty or narrow assumptions about the future" (OECD, 2020[19]).

Strategic foresight can, thus, help Governments to stress-test and future-proof their policies against critical disruptions and unintended consequences, as well as to proactively prepare "strategies to prevent or mitigate new challenges or seize new opportunities" ((OECD, 2020[19])). The investments and expectations generated by recovery and resilience processes require stewarding and steering capacities in Government to ensure that initiatives are sustainable, impactful and responsible beyond the short-term. At the same time, our societies are being reshaped by grand challenges and trends of change e.g. technological change, green transition and demographic changes (such as migrations or ageing), among others. These are affecting the efficacy of existing policy configurations and are shaping societal perspectives about the needs and rights in a desired future. Strategic foresight can support the design of forward-looking policy actions and strategies for Governments to generate discussions and set directions "on how best to advance societal goals and global well-being by challenging and expanding our perceptions of what is possible in the future" (OECD, 2020[19]).

Among its main attributions, the newly established Competency Center for planning, policies and foresight PlanAPP has the mission to promote strategic foresight competencies and practices (Law-Decree n.21/2021, 15 March 2021). PlanAPP was granted the mandate to elaborate foresight analyses and studies that are relevant for the definition of public policy priorities in Portugal, as well as to disseminate a culture of foresight and related methodologies among the Portuguese public administration (Dispatch n.646/2022, 17 January 2022). PlanAPP also has the purpose to ensure the co-ordination of policies across government sectors and improve the institutional capacity to design and steer strategies for public purposes.

Strategic foresight is the ability of Governments to consistently perceive, make sense of, and act upon ideas about future changes as they emerge in the present. Methodological advances and international experiences in a wide range of contexts have demonstrated the benefits that strategic foresight can offer to decision making. Governments are using strategic foresight to make sense of complex, conflicting challenges, commonly referred to as *wicked* problems. By analysing and preparing for future scenarios, strategic foresight strengthens decision making and planning activities under uncertainty and enables

structured responses to emergent trends and societal transformations. These approaches also support governments to deal with long-term processes and goals, allowing for the exploration of future opportunities beyond the usual risk avoidance attitudes towards change and lock-in resulting from "business-as-usual" approaches.

This chapter gives an overview of the contributions provided to answer PlanAPP's requests to the OECD regarding the use of strategic foresight to strengthen decision making. The OECD support included a series of working sessions, collaborative activities, peer-exchange meetings and the preparation of a working paper on strategic foresight in the centre of government on Portugal (see Box 4.1), From these activities conducted in close partnership with PlanAPP emerged a number of priorities for PlanAPP to learn from their peers. First, the positioning of PlanAPP at the centre of Government highlighted the interest in knowing of examples and meeting with units and teams that share a similar institutional arrangement within Government (e.g. Spain, Lithuania or Finland). Second, the stage of institutionalisation of PlanAPP's strategic foresight capacities, which stand out as relatively recent since its formal creation in 2021, highlighted the interest in good practices and examples that can support PlanAPP at this stage, especially improving its ability to act upon, steward and steer the systemic elements implied in the effective use of strategic foresight for decision-making purposes (OECD, 2019[20]).

The chapter is structured in four sections, each of them centred on a critical action that PlanAPP can activate to improve decision making through strategic foresight. The first section on *framing* strategic foresight aims to inscribe the use of strategic foresight within a broader anticipatory governance approach. The second section supports PlanAPP in *building* strategic foresight through the systemic elements that underpin its effective use in government. This section provides insights on the improvement of strategic foresight demand and mandate, guidance on the most relevant capabilities and skills, and, among others, clarification of the functions that strategic function can play for decision making and decision-makers. The third section enables PlaAPP to *fine-tune* foresight interventions to its context, identifying the most relevant barriers and enablers to the adoption of strategic foresight for decision making. The section also provides PlanAPP with a blueprint regarding the acceptance and use of strategic foresight in Governments (see Table 4.1). The final section highlights the importance of articulating strategic foresight methodologies into structured processes for *doing* concrete activities in order to solve specific policy challenges and deliver value to societies.

Box 4.1. Build capacity and ensure sustainability: knowledge exchange, learn by doing and proactive networking

In addition to the expertise shared in this chapter and in a working paper (Monteiro and Dal Borgo, Forthcoming[21]), the OECD, through its Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (OPSI) actively supported the improvement of PlanAPP's capacity and the sustainability of its interventions through a combination of knowledge transfer, learn by doing and proactive networking activities.

The two workshops that OPSI organised in collaboration with PlanAPP to engage public sector managers and foresight experts aimed to disseminate knowledge and methods of strategic foresight, thus providing capacity-building opportunities to the Portuguese public administration. Furthermore, the workshops enabled open and participative discussions surrounding challenges and opportunities for the future of Portugal, which were proposed to lay the groundwork for PlanAPP's in-depth explorations and further activities. The first collaborative session that took place on 28 June 2022 was to share approaches and experiences from relevant global partners (e.g. OPSI, School of International Futures, Government of Finland) about the use of anticipatory innovation governance and, specifically, strategic foresight in governments. Participants had the opportunity to contribute with insights to identify the top-level changes that call for strategic foresight attention in Portugal and to assess their current challenges

and needs to promote strategic foresight in their organisations. During the meeting, PlanAPP announced the creation of the Working Group for the Foresight Community in Portugal.

The second collaborative session on 22 November 2022, enabled knowledge transfer from relevant partners in the global foresight community, bringing together strategic foresight experts from the European Commission's Competence Centre on Foresight. The session held a collaborative exercise, based upon the logic of learning-by-doing and grass-roots connections, for the participants to generate scenarios for Portugal in 2050 around two specific policy challenges: green and energy transition and equity and social cohesion. The positive outcomes of this session helped to promote the Network of Planning and Foresight Services in Public Administration (RePLAN), which envisages the co-operation and exchange of resources and knowledge across government (Law-Decree n.21/2021, Chapter III, 15 March 2021). The first meeting of RePLAN took place on the following day (23 November 2022) to launch the network, discuss its objectives and governance, identify transversal challenges, and define guidelines to support an Action Plan for 2023.

The work developed in the module surrounding foresight supported the networking of PlanAPP with relevant partners of the international community. First, OPSI planned and organised a series of peer-to-peer meetings with teams and units from different national contexts (Finland, Flanders, Germany, Lithuania, and Spain), so that PlanAPP could have a first-hand contact with particular experiences and best practices and begin to establish enduring relationships. The participation of PlanAPP in the Annual Meeting of the OECD Government Foresight Community on 4 October 2022, provided a platform to present their activities to a broader audience and create an opportunity to engage in dialogues with global partners. This proactive networking was intended to strengthen PlanAPP's international connections and its participation in the global community of strategic foresight.

4.2. Framing strategic foresight: supporting proactive and prospective governments

For governments to improve their proactive and prospective natures, strategic foresight needs to be inscribed within a broader anticipatory governance approach. Foresight analysis and insights of possible futures need to be matched with concrete actions in the present. The opportunity to bridge the strategic foresight impact gap, i.e. the distance separating foresight expertise and the actions to target policy goals, lies in the mobilisation and embeddedness of strategic foresight via government functions and mechanisms. The anticipatory innovation governance (AIG) model, developed and applied by OPSI (Tõnurist and Hanson, 2020[22]), suggests that governments should adopt mechanisms of agency and of authorising environment to craft better policy responses based on foresight interventions.

The use of systemic approaches to sustain the adoption and use of strategic foresight in government is relevant to ensure its embeddedness and sustainability. The adoption of this systemic lens offers potential advantages to strategic foresight initiatives:

- **Systemic approaches account for the uncertainty and complexity of social and political problems.** These approaches call for agile, adaptive and experimental mind-sets and courses of action for strategic foresight interventions to keep pace with the ongoing changes and maintain its relevancy.
- **Systemic approaches account for multiple actors and multiple dimensions present in social and political challenges**. Among other actions, this path takes into account the heterogeneity, disparity of values, and eventual conflicts existing among stakeholders.
- **Systemic approaches are sensitive to self-organisation, synergies and feedback loops.** Among others, these approaches highlight the importance of collaboration and inclusion to sustain

cross-sectoral initiatives and promote stakeholder engagement based on synergies and feedback. At the same time, they are sensitive to emergence and disruptions evolving from systemic dynamics.

- **Systemic approaches embrace the holistic nature of systems and their purpose.** The creation of value is accounted as an expression of the fitness-to-purpose of actors and of components in relation to the system as a whole. Strategic foresight ensures that its activities and results are relevant for its users, centred on their needs and expectations.

4.3. Building strategic foresight: systemic elements for efficient interventions

Strategic foresight capacity-building needs to cover a set of systemic elements, namely demand and mandate, capabilities and skills, institutional arrangements, embeddedness in policy making, and feedback and learning loops (OECD, 2019[20]). These five elements play critical roles in ensuring that strategic foresight is able to create high-quality processes and products to embrace futures contingencies and opportunities. The ultimate purpose is to ensure that policy makers are applying contributions generated by foresight to bring value to society.

For strategic foresight to go beyond single-shot applications, sustained demand for its uses, tools and skills, especially from high-level sponsors and "champions" needs to be in place. The adoption of foresight requires a clear definition of mandates and the allocation of responsibilities to government organisations and actors.

Strategic foresight **capabilities and skills** need to be nurtured across public sector. The critical capabilities and skills that are needed to adopt, strengthen, and steward strategic foresight in government are considered against a structured display of layers (systemic, organisational, individual, and social imaginaries). The layers are defined in accordance with their contexts and bearers, as well as their specific value-creation purposes and processes.

- At the **systemic layer**, strategic foresight is embedded in the surrounding public governance environment. Here, the purpose is the creation of value for its users (e.g. policy makers), through the improvement of decision-making processes and support in the design, co-creation and implementation of public policies.
- On the **organisational layer**, capabilities and skills are embedded in public sector organisations and add value to the processes of design and execution of strategic foresight interventions.
- At the **individual layer**, capabilities and skills for strategic foresight are related both to the objective characteristics of individual workplaces and to the internalised attitudes and behaviours of public servants.
- **Social imaginaries** permeate all the layers, while at the same time they constitute a specific area in itself. Strategic foresight embeds in collective representations and behaviours and adds value to culture. The prevailing beliefs, biases and blind spots shape the perception and appreciation of the future, but forward-looking exercises may play at the same time an active, albeit limited, influence in shaping the collective representations and attitudes towards the future.

There is a significant diversity of **institutionalisation processes and formats** of strategic foresight in governments around the globe. Among these examples, it should be highlighted the importance of a strong and direct connection with the policy arena, the creation of legislation and regulatory incentives, the support to specialised agencies or units benefiting from explicit (and transversal) mandates, or the professionalisation of practitioners and their careers and expertise.

Strategic foresight needs to respond to the needs of its users. From the analysis conducted during this project there are eight functions that foresight performs for decision-makers:

1. **Strategic foresight can help decision-makers *self-reflection***, enabling them to articulate unasked questions, debunk implicit biases and surface assumptions that sustain their daily routines.
2. **Foresight approaches provide useful *insights* for decision-makers**, creating high-quality, robust and reliable products to improve the impact of policy making.
3. **Foresight practices, processes and products can *steward* the implementation of public policies**, providing constant awareness about ongoing, unpredictable changes or long-term impacts of public policies.
4. **Strategic foresight helps to mobilise and mediate stakeholders' *participation and co-creation*** around the exploration and debate about plausible and desirable futures.
5. **Engagement with futures can nurture the creation of *empathy* among stakeholders**, enabling the mutual understanding of diverse points of view about the future and contributing to the establishment of common ground.
6. **Strategic foresight offers decision-makers *scope to experiment,*** including stress-test options regarding the future and probes into potential future paths and outcomes based on present-day decisions.
7. **Decision-makers can *acquire or improve their skills***, such as their ability to account for sustainability or their agility to cope with unexpected events.
8. Through its incentives to adopt longer-term, forward-looking perspectives, **strategic foresight can drive decision-makers' *imagination* to express and inspire alternative narratives of uncertain and complex scenarios.**

Learning loops are critical for strategic foresight's constant improvement and dissemination. The iterations with citizens and expert consultations are considered crucial approaches for the inclusivity and transparency of foresight interventions. They also enable and promote the delivery of rigorous and integral findings to improve the understanding of societal challenges and support guidelines for action. At the same time, the adoption of specific instruments to monitor, measure and evaluate strategic foresight is decisive to ensure its continuous improvement.

4.4. Fine-tuning strategic foresight: blueprint for its acceptance and use in Government

Foresight approaches need to be fine-tuned to their specific context of application. The acknowledgement of barriers and enablers is an important step in the design of adaptable, achievable, robust and context-adjusted strategic foresight processes and interventions.

Salient obstacles to strategic foresight adoption and use in government can be found in all the systemic elements pointed above. In the **demand and mandate** element, the combination of deep-entrenched characteristics of policymaking culture, such as short-termism or risk aversion, creates an adverse environment for strategic foresight. In the element of **capabilities and skills**, strategic foresight has its impact especially limited by the scarcity of specialised skills in public administration and, in general, by the limitations of futures literacy in government. The absence of continuous and accessible training to public officials and senior leaders in government contributes to perpetuating this situation. The existence of organisational and sectoral silos and the co-ordination challenges that arise in these circumstances are relevant barriers at the level of **institutional arrangements**. The absence of strong ownership and in-house capacity to lead and execute strategic foresight within government also constitutes barriers in this area. The lack of timeliness, relevance, acceptability and accessibility of exercises and products to policymaking processes create severe limitations to the **embeddedness of strategic foresight into policymaking.** This situation is aggravated by the absence or limited engagement of stakeholders (starting with decision-makers). Finally, the underuse or ineffectiveness of evaluation mechanisms, which impairs

the impact assessment and self-reflexivity of strategic foresight, stands out among the **feedback and learning loops** systemic element**.**

As for the enabling factors for strategic foresight adoption and use in government, in **demand and mandate**, critical enablers include the involvement and buy-in of policy makers, the credibility and reputation of strategic foresight units and practitioners, and their ability to grasp the right timing of public debates. Within **capabilities and skills**, enablers include the allocation of resources for strategic foresight initiatives, starting with time availability among practitioners, and the attraction and upgrade of strategic foresight skills in public administration. The existence of clearly stated and attributed institutional ownership, and strong mandates and responsibilities stands out among **institutional arrangements**. The availability of high-quality expertise and pertinent skill-sets, as well as the exploitation of pockets of talent and/or of teams equipped to operate transversally in government, all support strategic foresight implementation. The responsiveness to policy makers through the provision of relevant, acceptable and accessible outputs is a critical aspect in the **embeddedness of strategic foresight in the policy cycle**. The recurrent interaction with users to gather their feedback and the application of impact assessment exercises are necessary **feedback loops** for the continuous improvement of strategic foresight processes and practices.

A blueprint of the critical drivers for the acceptance and use of strategic foresight in government is presented (see Table 4.1) to help PlanAPP tailor strategic foresight interventions to the Portuguese context. The acknowledgement of drivers is a step to support the design of adaptable, achievable, robust and context-adjusted strategic foresight processes and interventions. These drivers were built through the exploration of convergences and overlaps among the most notorious barriers and enablers highlighted in cases and studies across the globe.

The blueprint can be used as an actionable instrument. First, the blueprint provides strategic foresight practitioners and decision-makers with a way to make sense of the existing gaps and strengths to establish and promote strategic foresight in government. Furthermore, it can help to define and steer the actions to leverage strategic foresight, offering guidance to select optimal points to act upon and improve strategic foresight adoption and application in government. Finally, this blueprint can also be used in practice as an audit instrument to provide guidance to assess strategic foresight acceptance and use. The blueprint' operators can be detailed and operationalised through the use of indicators gathered and presented in the extensive listings of barriers and enablers of the working paper (Monteiro and Dal Borgo, Forthcoming[21]).

Table 4.1. Blueprint for the acceptance and use of strategic foresight in government

Systemic elements	Drivers
Demand and mandate	**Leadership buy-in**: mandate and sponsorship from policy makers
	Public interest: timing and relevance of public debates about the future and future threats and opportunities
	Reputation and legitimacy: authority and trust conceded to strategic foresight as policy approach and professionalised activity
	Innovation culture: public sector culture and its distance to strategic foresight in terms of thought-, action- and time-frames
Capabilities and skills	**Pool of expertise**: availability and reliability of skills
	Quality of provision: robustness and relevance of strategic foresight processes and products
	Futures literacy
	Resource allocation: support to and sustainability of strategic foresight (e.g. budget)
	Methods and tools: circulation and appropriation of methodological portfolios
Institutional arrangements	**Administrative architecture in government**: supportive regulations and organisational /cross-sectoral co-ordination.
	Safe spaces: support to iterative, agile and experimental processes and activities
	Ownership and institutional encasing: well-defined mission attributions and centre of government units
	Networks and mediation roles

Embeddedness in policy cycle	**Touchpoints**: integration and co-ordination with the policy cycle
	User-centric orientation: responsiveness, relevance, acceptability and accessibility of strategic foresight to policy makers
	Openness and participation: stakeholders' engagement and adhesion to transparency, integrity and accountability principles
Feedback and learning loops	**Knowledge management**: documenting, monitoring and steering interventions based on knowledge
	Monitoring activities and impact assessment
	Feedback channels: participants and stakeholders provide their inputs and reactions
	Targeted communication and active dissemination to relevant audiences

4.5. Doing strategic foresight: purposeful actions and methodological portfolios to cope with policy challenges

The value of strategic foresight interventions lies in its ability to contribute to decision-making processes. Robust methodologies need to be articulated through a structured process (e.g. stages, steps or phases) of concrete actions that ensures strategic foresight is fit-for-purpose and impactful. Distinct models explore strategic foresight as an iterative and actionable process that combines with selected methods and tools (Monteiro and Dal Borgo, Forthcoming[21]).

5 The Strategic setting and role of PlanAPP in the strategic planning framework

Portugal, as many OECD countries, faces a number of complex strategic challenges in the context of the post-COVID recovery and of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, pertaining to economic recovery, inflation and energy issues. The country has also to tackle longer-term, crosscutting policy challenges on competitiveness, demographics and inequalities and needs to embrace the twin green and digital transitions to achieve its objectives, enshrined in Portugal 2030 Strategy[3].

The country has developed a number of key strategic documents that support long-term planning and define strategic objectives, including the Portugal 2030 strategy, the Major Options (MO), the Government Programme, the National Reform Programme (NRP), the Stability Programme and the Recovery and Resilience Plan, both linked to EU commitments, as well as multiple sectoral plans and strategies, but has been lacking a strategic framework and institutional setting to ensure their coherence and fulfilment.

To further support the alignment and the achievement of its strategic objectives and plans, Portugal has created PlanAPP to enhance the coordination and steering of strategic planning processes and the alignment of strategic documents, ensure the preparations of specific strategic documents including the Major Options and the National Reform Programme, and support the development of capabilities on strategic planning across the administration (Government of Portugal, 2021[23]; PlanAPP, 2023[9]).

Established as a competence centre under the Minister of the Presidency and located in the centre of government (CoG), PlanAPP is part of a complex and fragmented institutional landscape for strategic planning in the country that involves both CoG and non-CoG entities. This central positioning of strategic planning functions is in line with the location of strategic planning functions in the CoG: in most OECD countries, CoGs usually steer strategic plans and policy responses, ensure their consistencies and translate high-level strategic visions and election manifestos into national plans that inform policy priorities and work programmes and reflect a specific strategic vision for the future of the country (OECD, 2018[10]).

To fulfil its ambitions, PlanAPP has a number of important functions to perform and challenges to address on strategic steering, coordination and networking, that will be explored in this chapter, to both act as a lever to align and harmonise the strategic planning process in Portugal and as a lever for evidence-informed and inclusive strategic planning.

[3] The Portugal 2030 Strategy identifies four main strategic objectives for the country by 2030: 1) People first: a better demographic balance, greater inflow and less inequality; 2) Digitalisation, innovation and skills as driver for development; 3) Climate transition and resources sustainability and 4) An external competitive and internally cohesive country.

5.1. Strategic steering: PlanAPP as a lever to align and harmonise the strategic planning process in Portugal

5.1.1. Role of the centre of government and strategic units in the Portuguese strategic planning process

CoGs usually play a leading role in strategic planning activities in OECD member countries under different configurations and institutional models. While the strategic planning function is most often located in the CoG, it may involve several entities within the CoG and requires a whole-of-government coordination on strategic planning with different Ministries and government agencies.

The Portuguese institutional context is similar to a number of OECD countries in many aspects as multiple entities from the CoG, including the Prime Minister 's Cabinet, the Ministry of the Presidency and the State Secretary for Planning, but also from the Ministry of Finance (especially through its GPEARI - Planning, Strategy, Evaluation and International Relations office) and other agencies, particularly the Agency for Development and Cohesion, are involved in strategic planning activities. Line Ministries are also involved in strategic planning and some have a dedicated strategic unit: the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security (GEP - Strategy and Planning Office); the Ministry of Economy and the Sea (GEE - Strategy and Studies Office), the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (GPP - Planning, Policies and General Administration Office) and the Ministry of Culture (GEPAC - Strategy, Planning and Assessment Office for Culture).

While collaboration appears to be effective for the elaboration of specific strategic document, for instance the 2022 NRP, Portugal government's stakeholders repeatedly highlighted the lack of clear mandates for the different players on the design, implementation and monitoring of strategies as a major challenge to set and prioritize national strategic objectives.

PlanAPP has been created by decree in the CoG under the Minister of the Presidency to ensure macro-coordination on strategic planning; reinforce the consistency and readability of national strategies; shape and steer the overall strategic planning process; reinforce and coordinate sectoral efforts; support and develop the capabilities of other Ministries. Most of these functions correspond to those exercised by strategic units in the CoG in OECD member countries, such as the Government Strategy Department in Finland (Box 3.1).

Box 5.1. The Government Strategy Department in Finland

The Government Strategy Department in Finland (GSD) is located in the Prime Minister's Office and performs strategic coordination and planning activities for the whole-of-government. The GSD was established in 2018 and can be considered as a technical rather than political unit. It carries out wide functions: strategic coordination and alignment, preparations and monitoring of the government programme, its operationalisation into an action plan, coordinating government work on research and foresight, the monitoring and delivery of key government long-term priorities (agenda 2030), and the oversight and support of Ministerial working group on government priorities for which it usually plays the role of Secretariat. These activities are reflected in the structure of the GSD with dedicated team working on each of these topics. The GSD actively engages with line Ministries on strategic topics and is coordinating a number of interministerial working groups and networks, including on foresight, research, and key government priorities. The GSD can also be called to present a government report or topic to the Parliament.

Source: (Government of Finland, n.d.[24])

Based on its mandate, PlanAPP can support further outlining, consolidating and coordinating the strategic planning process across these multiple entities existing in Portugal. PlanAPP can also leverage the newly established Public Administration Planning and Foresight Services Network (RePLAN) to further engage and coordinate strategic planning entities. With this objective in mind, PlanAPP has carried out a mapping of government bodies with a mandate related to strategic planning that can further lead to exploring potential duplication, the consolidation of similar services and missions, and the merger of similar functions/units from different ministries/institutions.

5.1.2. Supporting line ministries in the planning process

One of the CoG's core roles in strategic planning is to support and guide line ministries in enhancing their planning capabilities, and in harmonizing strategic planning practices and documents across the government. As part of the mapping exercise carried out in Portugal during this project, it appears that a number of line Ministries do not have dedicated strategic planning units or capacities. Overall, Portugal has also been lacking whole-of-government guidelines and criteria for strategic planning documents in support to line Ministries. As are part of its mandate to "Draw up and disseminate guidelines and support the creation of sectoral planning and assessment instruments" PlanAPP's could develop and disseminate guidance, resources, templates for the elaboration of sectoral and intersectoral strategies at line ministry level, and support line Ministries in developing their strategic capabilities, particularly those which do not have any unit yet. The Czech Republic provides an example on the development of guidelines, templates and methodologies for strategic planning for the whole-of-government (Box 5.2).

Box 5.2. Guidance provided to line ministries for the elaboration of strategies in the Czech Republic

The Methodology for the Preparation of Public Strategies in the Czech Republic was developed in 2013 and last updated in 2019 to streamline and articulate the procedure for creating strategic documents with the aim of increasing their quality and interconnectedness. It describes the process of individual strategy preparation and implementation, from identifying the need for strategy creation, its preparation for approval and actual implementation.

Guidance available to line ministries can be found on the Government Portal for Strategic Planning and includes the following resources:

- Typology of strategic documents,
- The process of creating a strategic document,
- Templates and tools (model for determining the type of strategic document needed, organisational structure for strategy creation, strategy structure, strategy creation plan, matrix of measures and activities, budget, schedule, communication plan, risk management plan, etc.),
- Comparative analysis of methodological approaches to planning.

The portal is maintained and updated by the Ministry of Regional Development that also uses an Expert Group on Strategies to animate the portal and discuss with line Ministries.

Source: (Government of the Czech Republic, 2022[25])

Engaging line Ministries in strategic planning exercises is also essential to ensure buy-in, coherence and alignment with government strategic priorities. This role is usually supported by the CoG that can help line Ministries contribute to key strategic planning document and identify and connect whole-of-government priorities with sectoral ones, for instance through strategy review meetings. In

particular, PlanAPP is in charge of preparing two crucial strategic documents, the MO and the NRP. For the NRP 2022, PlanAPP has created an interministerial working group to support the involvement of line Ministries. Similar settings could be systematically replicated for all major strategic documents to ensure the engagement of line Ministries in these whole-of-government exercises.

Digital processes and tools can also further support collaboration between all entities involved in strategic planning to better coordinate and align strategic documents, share information as well as to disseminate guidelines and methodologies. OECD member countries have developed different digital platforms to support whole-of-government strategic planning, including strategy databases, digital platforms for submitting and reviewing documents in preparations to Cabinet meetings and websites displaying guidelines, templates and methodologies. Latvia provides an example of online platforms for strategic planning (Box 5.3). While different platforms exist in Portugal, PlanAPP could consider streamlining the existing ones and developing an IT platform to articulate, prepare and disseminate the strategic planning documents and the information available.

Box 5.3. Examples of online databases and platforms for strategies in Latvia

Latvia has implemented an online platform of policy planning documents, called Polsis.mk, on which all strategic documents (plans, monitoring report, updates) are shared and can be accessed by public institutions and the general public. The platform also includes and presents the hierarchy of strategic documents in the country. The platform was launched in 2008 and now includes more than 5,000 references. The platform has been developed and maintained by the Cross-Sectorial Coordination Center (CSCC), which was the leading institution in national development planning and coordination in Latvia under the authority of the Prime Minister. The CSCC has recently been integrated into the CoG, more precisely the State Chancellery. The platform has supported better strategic planning process and the standardisation and streamlining of strategic documents in the country.

Sources: (Government of the Republic of Latvia, 2023[26]) ; (Government of the Republic of Latvia, n.d.[27])

5.1.3. Steering role of the CoG: linking strategy planning with outcomes

Strategic units in OECD member countries have a crucial role to support, monitor and ensure the delivery of government strategic priorities. The role of CoGs then consists in operationalising the programme of the government, and in many instances, translating into an action plan for the government.

While there is no dedicated “Government Action Plan” in the Portuguese strategic framework, **the new version of the MO prepared by PlanAPP can be understood as an attempt to operationalise the government programme**, with a focus on strengthening the links between priorities, particularly those outlined in the Government Programme, and available financing. The approval of the 2015 Budget Framing Law, still in a pilot implementation stage and which was amended in 2022, aims at enhancing and consolidating this approach by establishing a direct link between what is determined at the strategic planning level in the MOs, and what are main policy priorities in sectoral line Ministries (OECD, 2021[3]). The 2022MO was drafted centrally by PlanAPP and validated by the sectors while in previous years it was based on a compilation of contributions from line ministries. The establishment of a working group on the MO could further support the involvement of line Ministries in the process, as was done for the 2022 NRP and following the example of many OECD member countries. PlanAPP could also envisage complementing the Major Options with a short “Action Plan” on government priorities, clearly assigning lead and contributing institutions to each goal.

In addition to supporting the identification of priorities and clarifying roles, in more than 80% of OECD member countries, the CoG plays a key role in monitoring the implementation of strategies and policies (OECD, 2018[10]). The CoG usually focuses on the monitoring of the implementation of the government programme and of key government priorities, in order to report progress and share information for decision to the head of the government. These monitoring activities in the CoG are performed by strategic units as is the case in Estonia, Finland or the UK. A number of OECD member countries have developed comprehensive monitoring systems to follow the implementation of the government programme or of specific strategies, for instance Finland on the Government programme or France with a dashboard focusing on government priorities. CoGs are also organising "stock-take" or "data-driven review" meetings to follow up on the delivery of these priorities with line Ministries. France provides an example of both practices. The UK government has made use of a specific instrument, the *Outcome Delivery Plans,* as a means to signal and mainstream the priorities they wish to focus on and to steer and monitor the progress in implementing those recommendations (Box 5.4).

Box 5.4. Prioritisation in the UK through Outcome Delivery Plans

In 2021, the UK government introduced Outcome Delivery Plans, building on and improving upon the previous Single Departmental Plans. These plans set out how each UK government department is working towards the delivery of its priority outcomes. Outcome Delivery Plans place a greater emphasis on joint working between departments, enabling departments to plan together to deliver shared outcomes. Outcome Delivery Plans also set out plans for delivering critical enabling activities that are crucial to the successful delivery of outcomes, including: attracting and investing in great people; embracing new ideas; and strengthening functional expertise to support the delivery of better outcomes. Additionally, Outcome Delivery Plans also set out how departments are working towards becoming more sustainable and how work contributes to the delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the government's equality objectives, to ensure government departments contribute to these overarching whole-of-government priorities.

Source: Internal report prepared by Ray Shostak in the context of the OECD Centre of Government Review of Brazil; (Government of the United Kingdom, n.d.[28])

In light of the experience of OECD governments, **monitoring and evaluation activities on strategies in PlanAPP appear to be crucial** to enable PlanAPP to track progress on strategic planning activities and on the achievement of government and long-term priorities. A monitoring mandate has been attributed to PlanAPP by Decree-Law No. 21/2021, with particular emphasis on monitoring the environmental, social and economic impact of policies and strategies (Chapter 3). Within this framework, PlanAPP has singled out the demographic challenge as a cross-cutting theme for several public policies. Within the scope of its mission, PlanAPP started its monitoring activity with the long-term Portugal 2030 Strategy, with a focus on the thematic agenda on demography. Monitoring this theme allows the unit to simultaneously monitor one of the four strategic challenges highlighted in the XXIII Government programme – Demography. Additional dashboards and tools as outlined above could support this function in PlanAPP on strategic plans priorities.

In the future, PlanAPP would need to expand this monitoring model to other high-level priorities outlined in the Government Programme and Major Options, such as climate change; digitalisation; inequalities). A number of CoG units in OECD member countries have developed specific units or capabilities to steer, coordinate and monitor crosscutting priorities. For instance, France has created the General Secretariat for Ecological Planning under the Prime Minister while Latvia and Czech Republic have established dedicated units on digitalisation in the CoG.

5.1.4. Prioritisation, hierarchy and alignment of the planning framework for more efficient, effective and coherent government action

Strategic planning aims to support the identification of priorities for the government and articulate between strategic documents at the national and sectoral levels to ensure high level priorities are reflected across documents and implemented. Articulating strategic objectives across different documents and timeframes is particularly crucial to provide a coherent vision and achieve strategic objectives for the country.

While few countries manage to establish a formal hierarchy of planning documents and enshrine it in law like Latvia, **Portugal is confronted with similar levels of complexity in its strategic framework as most OECD member countries**. The multiplicity of strategies, lack of coherence and alignment between strategies was highlighted as a major challenge in responses to the OECD Questionnaire administered in the context of this project.

Portugal has a partial legal framework for strategic planning defined by the Constitution, the Planning Framework Law (Law no 43/91), the 2015 Budgetary Framework Law and a series of decrees for instance on PlanAPP. These legislations mainly cover overall principles on strategic planning and consistency, focus on the Major Options, and provide general roles and responsibilities between the government, the Economic and Social Council and the Parliament in strategic planning. However, they do not provide a clear, detailed strategic planning hierarchy across the different documents nor processes or instruments to prepare and coordinate them. This creates uncertainty and a lack of clarity for most players to be involved in the strategic planning process. Commitments and regulations of the EU are also an important part of the strategic planning landscape of any Member State and lead to the establishment of specific processes and documents. PlanAPP is in charge of both the MO and the National Reform Programme which should facilitate the alignment between the two documents.

This level of complexity and the blurry hierarchy between documents point to the need for Portugal to consider strengthening the strategic planning framework by outlining more detailed strategic processes and clearer roles and responsibilities for each player and enshrining them more formally.

Prioritisation is also an important exercise to align multiple strategic documents and objectives around a small set of priorities. The strategic framework in Portugal reflects a fairly coherent set of priorities throughout its main documents, centred around economic recovery/development, good governance, climate change, demography, inequalities, digital, and innovation. However, the strategic framework lacks a coherent and systematised prioritisation methodology to select measures within the main priority identified and to ensure that they are mentioned coherently across documents.

The alignment and coherence of sectoral government strategies is an essential role of the CoG and is a crucial challenge for PlanAPP. The CoG can help ensure the coherence of national and sectoral strategic documents and guarantee the continuity of action around major strategic objectives, between sectoral policies. Portugal, like many other OECD countries, also faces challenges linked to the proliferation of strategic documents at the sectoral and cross-sectoral level. The country has identified around 140 planning instruments, supported by approximately 43 inter-ministerial networks as part of an OECD questionnaire submitted during the project. PlanAPP mentioned that recent plans now usually ensure alignment with other sectoral strategic plans and national strategic plans (e.g. *this plan is aligned with national strategy A and B and with national plan for XY),* but the alignment process and methodology have not yet been detailed out.

Ensuring alignment at the sectoral level across strategic documents and consistency with government priorities is one of the key tasks of the CoG on strategic planning. It has been a fundamental role of strategic units particularly in Estonia that called for instituting a number of mechanisms such as strategy review meetings with ministries, terms of references (concept notes) for each new strategy to be prepared by line Ministries and discussed with the CoG and the use of a number of working groups

dedicated to strategic priorities. Belgium has redesigned its approach and process to ensure articulation of strategic documents particularly on the mid-term (Box 5.5).

Box 5.5. Articulating national and sectoral strategies in Belgium

The strategic planning in Belgium has been developed to be highly collaborative and iterative, to account for the federal and "consociational" nature of the administration. Distinction is made between strategic plans on one hand, and operational plans in the other to better link priorities with outcomes.

Strategic planning documents are cascaded down from the government agreement (*Accord de Gouvernement*), which feeds into the government's policy statement (*Exposé d'orientation politique*), declined into a yearly general policy note (*notes de politique générale*). Once political priorities have been established through these documents, the Federal Public Service / Policy and Support (FPS/PPS BOSA) elaborates a draft national strategic plan, and further refined following feedback from ministers. The national strategic plan also includes the budget framework, internal management, communication plan, and allocation of responsibilities. Transversal objectives derived from political priorities are elaborated and selected in parallel and integrated in the strategic plan after a formal validation process.

Yearly operational plans translate the strategic and tactical goals outlined in the strategic plans into operational objectives and processes. These operational plans differ from the strategic plan by their elaboration process, modalities, content, and obligations to politicians, citizens and the BOSA unit. Following the budget approval, the FPS/PPS elaborates and shares the operational plan with Ministers and State Secretaries for their information. In essence, the operational plan includes a SMART description of operational objectives and resources allocated to these, outlines the processes and initiatives through which the operational objectives will be achieved, and related indicators to measure achievement and assign responsibility. Specific KPIs are also assigned to transversal objectives.

Source: (Government of Belgium, 2022[29])

5.1.5. Strengthening the link between planning and budget to better address and fund key strategic priorities

The **relationship between budgeting and planning is critical to government performance** to ensure that budget allocations contribute to achieve the country's vision and strategic objectives. Government should indeed reflect the strategic priorities of the government, and the budget process is particularly important to facilitate such alignment.

The alignment of the budget and planning process in Portugal is framed in the 2015 Budget Framing Law and articulated through the Major Options. Indeed, Art.105 of the constitution outlines that the State Budget (SB) bill should be elaborated in line with the planning options identified in the Major Options. The 2015 Budget Framing Law aims *inter alia* to support to transition to performance budgeting and to better connect spending with priorities. The implementation of the law could be accelerated to further help facilitate the rechannelling of public resources to strategic priorities (OECD, 2023[4]). The Stability Programme (SP) drafted by the Ministry of Finance also conditions the yearly State Budget through medium-term objectives. Together, the Major Options and the Stability Programme thus constitute some of the initial stages of the budgetary process and of its linkages with government priorities while the Budget Law 2015 aims to establish an enabling framework.

Despite these provisions, a number of barriers to effectively linking planning and budgetary processes have been identified through questionnaires and interviews with key stakeholders. Firstly, the Major Options bill for the coming year is being discussed in parallel to the budget mainly due to the change

of government, which doesn't provide sufficient time for the plan to steer budget prioritisation and the allocation of resources. This is set to change in 2023 to follow the 2015 Budget Framing Law: The Major Options elaboration and presentation is scheduled to take place prior to the budget process, so that the MO could help inform the budget process. As planned in the Budget Law, the MO already includes the table of ceilings of multiyear spending by Ministry and sector. Secondly, for the MO to truly orient the budget prioritisation process, it will be key to develop prioritisation criteria which are not just related to the availability of multi-annual funding. While the MO concentrates on measures which are already funded, it should in principle help identify priorities and allocate funding accordingly. Thirdly, PlanAPP's proposal to include, for the first time, a table of multi-year public investments in the MO bill has faced challenges related with the collection and standardisation of information coming from different sources, that will need to be overcome to provide a clear link between multiyear investments and objectives.

Increased levels of coordination and collaboration between PlanAPP and the Ministry of Finance are critical to help ensure government priorities are appropriately funded to deliver better outcomes for citizens. Most CoGs in OECD member countries have some forms of collaboration with the MoF at least during the budget process when they help channel and highlight the priorities of the government. 90% of them work with the Ministry of Finance to link national strategies with the national budget (OECD, 2018[10]). A co-ordinated approach requires well-defined governance arrangements that articulate the functional responsibilities and expertise of each organisation, the flow of information that is to occur, and the decisions and outputs that are to result from the co-ordination (OECD, 2022[30]). This would call for an early involvement of the MoF in the development of strategies and in the preparations of cost estimates by line Ministries, along with PlanAPP. This includes typically associating teams in charge of strategies and finances in line Ministries and in the CoG as well as units in charge of the budget and of spending reviews in the MoF. Line Ministries in Portugal do not systematically comprise a unit in charge of budget while their establishment could support institutional dialogue between their respective Ministries and the Ministry of Finance on funding allocation and their alignment with strategic priorities. Conversely, PlanAPP, and the CoG more broadly, could also play a more active role in the budgetary process to ensure coherence with the strategic framework.

The further implementation of the Budget Law and its application decree, as well as the preparations of the MO provide a supportive context for these evolutions and for better connecting budget and strategic priorities. PlanAPP could be further involved in the different steps of the budget preparations in connection with the strategic planning process and should be more closely associated to a number of exchanges and mechanisms.

As such, the centre of government should identify clear mechanisms to ensure cross-cutting priorities and agendas are appropriately funded. Several countries have been using approaches to respond to cross-cutting challenges and ensure that spending priorities support strategic ones. In particular, Finland has been working on developing phenomenon-based budgeting that aims to address high-level, long-term, strategic priorities that require horizontal, collaborative, whole-of-government approaches ("phenomenon"). This aims to connect the strategic themes and priorities of the country with the budgetary process where appropriations are steered by the strategic priorities and allocated to Ministries accordingly (OECD, 2022[31]). New Zealand has developed a Living Standards Framework (LSF) to include wellbeing priorities into the budget. The wellbeing budget includes outcomes to achieve related to wellbeing every year. Discretionary expenditures are identified to finance those priority outcomes. Five priorities were selected in 2022 pertaining to the "just transition", Physical and Mental Wellbeing, Future of Work, Māori and Pacific Peoples, and Child Wellbeing. The government prepares a specific report and monitoring of the achievements on those outcomes (Government of New Zealand, 2022[32]).

5.2. Strategic Networking: PlanAPP as a lever for evidence-informed and inclusive strategic planning

PlanApp through the establishment of RePLAN (the Public Administration Planning and Foresight Services Network) has a clear mandate to structure and oversee intra-governmental networking for strategic alignment and policy coherence. The decree creating PlanAPP also establishes RePLAN as an inter-ministerial network for planning and foresight services of the public administration in its Chapter III (articles 13-15) (Government of Portugal, 2021[23]). RePLAN aims to foster cooperation and alignment on strategies across the government, increase knowledge sharing and competencies in the administration and to further build the evidence base also involving civil society and academia. In addition to strategic planning processes, RePLAN should also support the coordination of activities on foresight, monitoring and evaluation of strategies mentioned in the previous chapters of the report.

5.2.1. Harnessing expertise and evidence from within and outside the administration

Strengthening the use of evidence is critical in the strategic planning process to support problem identification, better prioritisation of actions and enhancing the quality and relevance of strategies and policies. A variety of sources of evidence are used in Portugal from government, academia and non-government stakeholders. A better understanding of the evidence used in the elaboration and revision of strategies would further strengthen the overall planning framework. In particular, it would help ensure public bodies are operating with the same underlying assumptions when identifying problems, potential solutions and setting objectives. This topic is even more important in the context of Portugal where **more than three quarters of citizens believe that scientists are not involved enough in decision making** as evidenced in the OECD Trust survey (Chapter 2).

To systematise the use of scientific evidence and increase and harmonize their quality, **PlanAPP could develop harmonised standards for the use of evidence in planning activities**. A common understanding of what is considered qualitative and appropriate evidence would improve the overall quality and coherence of planning documents/outputs. The OECD has engaged in a stocktaking exercise to develop principles and standards to mobilise evidence for policy design, implementation, and evaluation (OECD, 2020[33]). Chapter 3 further explores evidence-based decision making.

To deal with complex challenges, governments need the expertise, views and information from a wide range of actors. This requires **a strategic knowledge infrastructure and elaborated policy advisory systems[4] in which knowledge brokers play a key role**. They usually act as the intermediaries between knowledge producers and decision makers to ensure the alignment between the needs of the policy community with the evidence produced by these actors. Knowledge brokers also guarantees evidence synthesis is robust, transdisciplinary, and with appropriate expert inputs. They may also provide advice in the form of options or of specific recommendations and help policymakers assess what evidence is reliable.

Since its creation, PlanAPP has been playing pioneering role as a knowledge broker between science and policy in a more systemic way, including PlanAPP's agenda-setting initiatives for evidence-informed policymaking and mechanisms such as the Science for Policy workshops. PlanAPP could expand its role articulating and steering the currently fragmented policy advisory system in Portugal (including research organisations laboratories, permanent and ad-hoc advisory committees, scientific and consultative councils, etc) for a coherent evidence-informed policy development and planning. In that regard, PlanAPP

[4] Policy advisory systems consist of advisory councils, strategic planning councils, ad hoc commissions, commissions of inquiry, foresight units, special advisors, "tiger teams", innovation fora, "what works centres", think thanks and many other bodies, all of which provide knowledge and strategic advice to government.

has already ongoing and planned co-operation protocols with research and academic institutions, as well as with data providers within the public administration (e.g. Statistics Portugal).

The development of RePLAN can further strengthen and institutionalise this knowledge broker role and consolidate the existing policy advisory system in the country. The establishment of RePLAN envisages the creation of multisectoral teams that could help build and collect evidence and inform strategy making on key priority areas (Government of Portugal, 2021[23]). These teams would function as working groups and bring together policy makers, civil servants, academia and other stakeholders. They could contribute to enhanced evidence-informed strategy and policymaking on specific themes by providing, discussing and sharing inputs, data and analysis that could be used to inform the work of PlanAPP as well as line Ministries.

Whole-of-government strategies and instruments to mobilise scientific evidence to support decision making can also be devised. While evidence can be collected and gathered from different sources by the government, interministerial cooperation can help identify, share and use robust scientific evidence to support strategy and policymaking. Whole-of-government collaboration can also foster a shared understanding of the evidence needs and priorities and a common analysis of the issues at stake and lead to the joint identification of potential responses. Formal and informal channels can be established, for instance with the establishment of formal networks and working groups on broad or specific matters where evidence, inputs and potential solutions can be discussed to inform strategies and policies. To build synergies and ensure alignment on key priorities, governments can also draw whole-of-government annual research agendas. These agendas cover the main research priorities for the government and for individual line Ministries and can be discussed and agreed upon under the guidance of the centre of the government.

In developing its role as a knowledge broker, PlanAPP could draw on the successful Finnish experience that uses both the practices of managing inter-ministerial cooperation on research and foresight and of a common annual plan on research. More details on institutionalising foresight activities are discussed in Chapter 3.

5.2.2. Internal networking: mobilising the whole-of-government on strategic planning

The CoG is well positioned to steer and coordinate whole-of-government strategic planning activities through its convening power and proximity to the head of the executive branch, and to organise the strategic planning process and ensure the involvement of line Ministries and other public institutions.

By developing the RePLAN network, Portugal can better mobilise, align and share strategic priorities, documents and methodologies and increase capabilities across the public administration. The creation of RePLAN in Portugal can also be a crucial lever for PlanAPP to foster an “esprit de corps” among policy professionals (e.g. “groups of collaboration” for best practice exchange, training and informal exchanges among policy planners, “champions” etc. from line ministries and relevant CoG bodies) and strengthen both the stability of the new planning processes and the agility of its planning framework.

Portugal reports the existence of 43 inter-ministerial networks associated to the large range of planning instruments being enforced in Portugal, plus 43 networks linked to one line Ministry or involving other public administration entities. There is no overview nor oversight of these networks, their members, mandates and present activities. In this regard, **RePLAN can act as a “network of networks” and supervise at least part of the existing networks that relate to strategic planning activities**. This requires mapping the different networks, streamlining the number of networks and prioritising those that concerns the whole-of-government or strategic priorities for RePLAN’s oversight and guidance.

Under the guidance of PlanAPP, RePLAN could support the establishment, organisation and work plan of these multisectoral teams focusing on strategic priorities and crosscutting themes that can feed whole-of-government strategic work. A limited number of well-selected multisectoral teams could support strategic and long-term priorities of the government with defined mandates, deliverables and timelines.

OECD member countries use a wide range of interministerial bodies to support collaboration, alignment, and networking on strategic planning. Finland has established different types of interministerial working group on government priorities that are supported by the Government Strategic Department through a dedicated unit (Box 5.6).

Box 5.6. Governance arrangements and mechanisms for interministerial coordination in Finland

Finland has established a number of coordination mechanisms to support strategy and decision making that are supported by the centre of government, and particularly the GSD. They bring together different line Ministries and are usually shared by one or two lead Ministries depending on the topic. It has created:

- four permanent Ministerial Committees on Finance, Economic Policy, EU Affairs, and Foreign and Security Policy, that play a key role in coordinating government policies on these issues and in preparing the government plenary sessions;
- thematic working groups focusing on few government priorities (e.g. the *Ministerial Working Group on Developing the Digital Transformation, the Data Economy and Public Administration*) that help steer, monitor and implement those priorities;
- and functional working groups on research and foresight (see above).

The GSD is also using informal channels and communication with line Ministries to align, discuss and monitor the implementation progress on strategic reform priorities.

Source: (Government of Finland, n.d.[24])

As it is done in many CoGs across the OECD, **PlanAPP can use the opportunity to convene and establish specific formal and *ad hoc*, informal working groups on strategic priorities, documents or needs to coordinate the work and involve line Ministries**. It has used this possibility to prepare the I2022 Major Options and to prepare the NRP 2022 and might want to further formalise such mechanism in the future. As this document will be prepared on a regular basis, the established working group can be used to better define, prepare and monitor the document.

In addition to formal interministerial workings groups, a **number of collaboration mechanisms have been experimented in OECD member countries on strategic issues**:

- The development of **structured networks** of analytical and strategic units with line Ministries can strengthen the link and build an “esprit de corps” between policy and strategy professionals in the administration. Both Estonia and Finland have largely relied on informal and interpersonal networks from the centre to drive the agenda on strategic topics such as digitalisation.
- **Bilateral meetings between the CoG and line Ministries** regarding their own strategy, such as data and strategy review meeting as in the case of Estonia or the US during which the CoG can play a challenge function particularly in regard to the consistency with the government programme and key national documents;
- **Mobility programmes between the CoG and line Ministries** have also been beneficial in several OECD member countries to strengthen the links across the government, share expertise and resources, provide a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each institution and to develop an “esprit de corps” among participants to the programme.

5.2.3. Citizen and stakeholder engagement in strategic planning and on crosscutting topics

Recent experiences in OECD member countries show that when the planning process is open and inclusive, strategic planning can enhance the legitimacy of policy making and increase the sustainability of policies beyond the electoral cycle. The inclusion of diverse perspectives during the planning process can improve the quality of problem analysis and the implementation of the plan. Evidence also tends to show citizen engagement can contribute to educate civil servants about specific issues and inform proposed solutions.

In Portugal, as is the case in many OECD countries, there is a growing culture surrounding the participation of citizens and civil society in legislative and administrative processes. Recent planning exercise (Portugal 2030, RRP, National Railway Plan, and Active Mobility Strategy) for instance involved meetings with citizens, open hearings, opportunities for written contributions and suggestions. The study from which Portugal 2030 was derived had received over 1 100 contributions during the public consultation process. Additionally, certain consultative councils include civil society representatives. For instance the Economic and Social Council (with representatives of public administration and civil society) is consulted as regards State Budget, Major Options and National Reform Programme documents. The Public Finance Council (a state body of experts) is also consulted on the State Budget and the Portuguese Stability Programme. Both Councils are consulted and emit an opinion on the Major Options prepared by PlanAPP.

Despite some punctual efforts to include citizens earlier in the planning process on several key strategic documents, **engagement with citizens seems to occur mainly at the tail-end of the planning and policy-development cycle**. In the final stage of the elaboration process of planning instruments, a period of public consultation is mandatory in Portugal, during which both citizens and representative associations or any other entities can make remarks or suggestions on the presented proposal of such instruments. This process is carried out through web-based platforms (www.consultalex.gov.pt, www.participa.gov.pt, www.participa.pt).

However, **these processes have been insufficient to meet people's expectations on participation and representation** as underlined in Chapter 2, with only 4 in ten Portuguese perceiving that their opinions would be considered in a public consultation or they would have opportunity to voice their views. Portugal could steer its effort towards including citizens at other stages of the decision-making cycle and systematise citizen engagement in strategy making.

As it is located at the centre, PlanAPP could be leveraged to strengthen citizen engagement in the policy development and planning process. CoGs in several OECD member countries have developed guidelines or toolkits for line Ministries and public institutions to design and foster citizen engagement in strategy and policymaking. France has for instance established the Inter-ministerial Centre for Citizen Participation (CIPC) that offers strategic and methodological support to ministries and government departments that wish to involve citizens in the development of public policies (French Interministerial Direction for Public Transformation, n.d.[34]).

5.2.4. Engaging scientific, civil society and governmental stakeholders jointly on cross-cutting issues – case studies on climate and responsible business conduct

Two case studies from Ireland and France can provide examples for RePLAN on how to establish formal dialogue mechanisms with a wide range of stakeholders to better inform strategies and mobilise stakeholders around complex, multidimensional policy problems (Box 5.7; Box 5.8).

Box 5.7. Case study 1: Engaging civil society and stakeholders on responsible business conduct in France

The French government created under France Stratégie in 2013 a consultative and exchange platform to discuss and provide recommendations on Social and Environmental Responsibility (RSE). The platform aims at promoting RSE and focuses on social, environmental and economic challenges at large, looking at issues such as SDGs, competitiveness, RSE labelling, governance and climate change. It provides recommendations to the government and to all stakeholders including businesses and NGOs, suggests priority actions and identifies and disseminates good practices. The government can also express requests to the platform on certain issues related to RSE.

The platform gathers 50 members from the government, civil society and academia including trade unions, business organisations, NGOs, think tanks, tertiary education institutions' associations and representatives from France Stratégie, Ministries and the Senate. Principles and rules for the functioning of the platform were formalised and agreed by all participants at the onset, including a charter for expressing diverging views. The platform uses a consensus based decision-making approach. Mapping and identifying the right stakeholders have been an important task that has underpin the success of the platform. Members meet during general assemblies several times a year (5 in 2021) and during specific working meetings and groups. The Secretariat is ensured by France Stratégie. Publications are released on the website of France Stratégie and web conference are organised on the different themes to encourage idea sharing and the promotion of the outcomes of the work. Members have agreed on a multiyear roadmap for their activities at the end of December 2020 that is now being implemented by the platform.

The platform has enabled France Stratégie and more broadly the government to engage a wide range of stakeholders into a coordinated and systematic manner on a crosscutting topic to help inform strategy and policy making on the topic. Its work has helped develop new measures and ideas in the field of RSE in France, for instance on RSE labelling for SMEs and micro-enterprises.

Source: (France Stratégie, 2022[35]; French RSE platform, 2022[36])

Box 5.8. Case study 2: Engaging citizens and civil society in the National Dialogue in Ireland

The government of Ireland developed a Climate Action plan in 2019 and then in 2021 and created the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) to further increase societal engagement and public participation in the Climate Action Plan. The NDCA aims to establish a new social contract on climate, to engage, enable and empower everyone in society, including politicians, policy makers, stakeholders and the public, to co-create and deliver practical climate actions, and to inform strategies and policy responses. The NDCA is led by Ireland' Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and supported by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that also plays the role of Secretariat.

The NDCA relies on a number of tools and platforms, including in 2022 alone:

- The Climate Conversations 2022 (CC22) involving more than 400 stakeholders, 4,300 members of the public, young people, populations vulnerable to the transition to carbon neutrality, and local and community organisations.

- Three National Climate Stakeholder Forum events which took the form of deliberative workshops inviting over 300 stakeholders from a wide range of organisations to discuss challenges and solutions to delivering climate actions.
- The first National Youth Assembly on Climate which engaged over 40 young people to capture the views and suggestions on how we deliver climate actions from the young people in Ireland.
- The EPA Climate Change in the Irish Mind (CCIM) study which provided a nationally representative data on the attitudes and behaviours to climate change of 4,000 citizens.
- The EPA Climate Conference 2022, *Creating Ireland's Climate Future* which examined the vision for a climate-neutral and resilient Ireland by 2050 and how that vision will be achieved in terms of strategic planning, built and natural environments.
- The National Social and Behavioural Advisory Group which met 3 times and was established to provide ongoing expert insight into research findings and help inform policy.

The NDCA has built an evidence base on climate action, particularly on the views and behaviours of citizens through the Climate Conversations, that are annual consultation and engagement processes, and the CCIM study. The Climate Conversations has a dedicated webpage that encourages public participation and the CC22 was opened by the Minister of the Environment, Climate and Communications to ensure political support and visibility. The CC22 highlighted that the voice of the public was clear, responsive, conveyed a sense of urgency, and enthusiasm to work with the government. According to the online questionnaire that was also part of the Climate Conversations' process, 92% of respondents expressed that they were worried about climate change, 83% were motivated to take action and 85% said they were already taking some form of action. At the same time, the CCIM study suggested that there might be a disconnect between desire to take action and understanding and implementation of actions that have significant impacts. Both consultation mechanisms have allowed the government to identify trends and practices but also paradoxes in people's behaviours and helped inform future activities and actions.

The NDCA is also enabling the government to identify priority areas for action, such as climate literacy, and to further bring politicians, policy makers, and stakeholders to accelerate delivery through specific engagement events and policy feedbacks. The NDCA contributes to the prioritisation and implementation of climate and energy policy, including the new Climate Action Plans that have been prepared and released every two years since 2019. The creation of the Youth Assembly on Climate is for instance an outcome of the Climate Action Plan 2021.

Sources: (Government of Ireland, 2021[37]); (Government of Ireland, 2022[38]); (Government of Ireland, 2022[39])

6 Way forward

Building on the analysis across the different chapters of this report, this last section offers recommendations and areas of opportunity for Portugal and especially PlanAPP to enhance its role and capabilities to perform the functions and achieve the objectives assigned by its mandate.

6.1. Trust and evidenced-informed policymaking

The analysis of results of the OECD Trust Survey in Portugal supported by the discussion among experts during the OECD-PlanAPP workshop led to the elaboration of four policy recommendations to strengthen trust in public institutions in Portugal:

1. **Set trust as an objective of public policy**

By making trust an explicit objective of public policies, Portugal can accelerate growth and social cohesion and improve the efficacy of the public sector. This involves:

- Regularly collecting, sharing and debating data on trust and its drivers is key to better target policies and evaluate their impact.
- Repeating the Trust Survey at regular intervals, in order to build a time-series of public governance evidence that would allow the monitoring of changes across time and benchmarking with other OECD countries.
- Disseminating and discussing results on trust and its drivers within the government and civil service to strengthen whole of government strategies and policy coherence.

2. **Strengthen government capacities through relevant evidence and skills to address multiple challenges**

Portuguese citizens are relatively satisfied with government's reliability and capacity to address future challenges, a key driver of trust in national government. However, the government and civil service will need to invest in improving evidence and upgrading skills to address multiple crises.

- Enhance the capacity of the civil service and administrative services by improving public officials' digital skills and strengthening systems interoperability across the public administration, in order to facilitate the interaction with users/citizens.
- Develop initiatives to gather and include people's feedback in the design of service delivery, ensuring public services are better adapted to people's needs.
- Coordinate regular exchanges between policy makers and scientists' communities and draft a roadmap to institutionalise in a single framework the mechanisms that bring scientific evidence as input to policy making
- Extend cooperation mechanisms between science and policy makers to Government and Parliament .

3. **Improve perceptions of fairness and integrity, enhancing equality in treatment and opportunities for all**

There is a widespread perception of unfairness and a lack of integrity in Portugal - especially among vulnerable groups - and most Portuguese respondents would like the government to do more to provide equal opportunities for all.

- Start national policy discussions on how to improve equality and promote fairness in different policy areas. These dialogues would collect people's views, needs and ideas on how to better address them. Inputs from different public agencies and at different levels of government should also be collected and co-ordinated.
- Invest in studying causes of the widespread perception of unfairness and adjust initiatives to address it accordingly. Equal treatment of applications for social benefits could be supported by making processes and responses public, as well as by proactively promoting diversity in the public administration and public institutions.
- Improve initiatives targeting participation and representation of youth in public decision making and strengthen the inter-generational perspective in policies and plans. The young in Portugal have significantly lower trust in government than other population groups. These initiatives could include promoting participation in environments that are more familiar for the young, such as schools, as well as developing initiatives to build political literacy.
- Strengthen public integrity initiatives, such as by providing regular training to identify daily ethical dilemmas and better equip public officials to face and tackle them. A comprehensive communication campaign to promote integrity in society could complement specific efforts within the public administration.

4. **Promote openness and inclusive policy making to build trust**

Most Portuguese respondents think that public information is accessible and transparent, but only a minority feel they have opportunities to express their views and that their voice would be taken in consideration.

- Consider developing a comprehensive public communication plan, adopting a proactive approach of transparency (in addition to communication plans linked to specific initiatives and issues). This may also include simplifying administrative language, targeting audiences and messages and identifying best channels to reach different publics, among other elements.
- Develop an initiative following principles of good practice for public communication responses to mis- and disinformation in order to ensure a safe environment in which to communicate.
- Invest in communicating how public institutions engage citizens and include their views, by, for instance, ensuring the inputs they provide are public, receive a response, and are used in the development of public services and regulations.
- Proactively reach out to those left behind and engage them, for example, by exploring local or national dialogues (such as those carried out in Finland). Invest in identifying what kind of initiatives could strengthen people's opportunities to participate in politics. This could include the assessment of ongoing projects and programmes in schools with political or civic activities. In addition, explore the possibility of developing a service-learning curriculum and community service activities that provide youth with opportunities to contribute to their communities in a more systematic way.

6.2. Evaluation

In light of the chapter above, and in order to strengthen the use of policy evaluation to improve decision making, PlanAPP should:

1. **Establish a cross-government evaluation agenda to provide high-level guidance on policy evaluation (medium term)**

- Develop a multi-annual evaluation agenda in consultation with line ministries, taking into account cross government evidence gaps as well as evidence needs for future Spending Reviews.
- Publish the multi-annual evaluation agenda and share it with the Presidency of the Council for feedback.
- Share the multi-annual evaluation agenda with Parliament and the Court of Accounts for information.

2. **Develop guidelines to clarify the goals and methods of policy evaluation (medium term)**

- Develop guidelines on policy evaluation and involve relevant internal and external stakeholders in the creation of these guidelines.
- Include an official definition of policy evaluation in these guidelines.

3. **Foster networks to promote the quality of evaluations and the availability of evaluative evidence for decision making (long term)**

- Manage a network of government evaluators to share good practices and methods on policy evaluation. Consider leveraging the existing RePLAN network to this end.
- Establish an advisory group / peer review group to support line ministries in ensuring the quality of their evaluations.
- Cultivate networks with academia to increase the evidence/ science to policy interface, and thus promote the supply of relevant evidence for policy making and, conversely, increase the impact of scientific and research evidence.

4. **Strengthen the availability of policy analysis skills in the public sector (long term)**

- Develop trainings on policy evaluation, in cooperation with academia, for line ministries.
- Invest in PlanAPP's evaluation team skills, in terms of analysis, as well as in terms of evidence synthesis and commissioning of evaluation.

5. **Ensure access to high quality data to conduct policy evaluations (medium term)**

- Develop a framework agreement with the National Statistics Office (INE) and the other national authorities (ONAs) to anticipate PlanAPP's data needs over a multi-annual period (for instance coinciding with the evaluation agenda).

6. **Increase communication activities and make use of evidence synthesis tools to increase the impact of policy evaluations (medium term)**

- Discuss and share the evaluations performed by PlanAPP with the Council of Ministers.
- Use evidence synthesis methods to communicate evaluation evidence effectively to decision-makers.
- Create a user-friendly evaluation database to facilitate access to results.
- Develop a communication strategy supporting the dissemination of results from the multi-annual evaluation agenda.
- Organise outreach events in Parliament to present the results of evaluations and foster demand.

7. **Increase the link between ex ante and ex post evaluation to increase their impact (medium term)**

- Work between the evaluation and the RIA teams in PlanAPP to ensure that Regulatory Impact Assessments can anticipate on data collection needs for ex post evaluations and clarify the goals of policies.

In addition, in order to support PlanAPP's efforts to promote the use of policy evaluations, the **Portuguese government** may wish to consider:

8. **Improving the governance of data for Evidence Informed Policy Making, including by:**
- Reviewing the implementation strategy of the statistical law of 2008 to ensure access to data needed for evaluation purposes.
- Developing a data strategy for evidence-informed policymaking.

9. **Developing a legal framework providing high-level guidance on policy evaluation, which includes:**
- Defining the actors, periodicity and criteria for conducting policy evaluations.
- Making the mandate of line ministry explicit in regard to policy evaluation and clarifying the resources allocated to this activity.

6.3. Foresight

From the activities developed around strategic foresight throughout the project, including the identification and transference of relevant approaches and tools and the connection with selected international peers, the OECD derived a set of five areas of opportunity for PlanAPP to consolidate and further explore in the promotion of strategic foresight for decision making in Portugal. Together with the chapter presented previously in this report on the subject (Chapter 3), an OECD working paper (Monteiro and Dal Borgo, forthcoming) provides a deeper and more extensive analysis on the use of strategic foresight to improve decision making in Governments.

Five areas of opportunity were identified for PlanAPP to explore and foster as part of its foresight mandate. PlanAPP is placed at the centre of government and endowed with a mission, mandate and the needed capabilities to promote strategic foresight and its use (Law-Decree n.21/2021, 15 March 2021). From this vantage point, PlanAPP can continue to build on its ongoing activities and explore five areas of opportunity:

1. **The (collaborative) design of a transversal strategy for foresight** in the Portuguese public administration with an associated roadmap for action, providing the direction and defining the resources required to generate stronger and effective capacities and initiatives. PlanAPP can rely on its formal attributions in defining high-level legislation and programmes, promoting the systematisation of strategic frameworks and ensuring the coherence of sectoral plans with cross-cutting agendas in the Government of Portugal (Law-Decree n.21/2021, 15 March 2021).

2. **Development of a scan of the whole strategic foresight ecosystem in Portugal** to map in detail its actors and their interconnections, as well as identify its specific barriers and enablers. For this purpose, PlanAPP can build on the insights gathered through the Working Group for the Foresight Community, launched in June 2022.

3. **Promotion of concrete interventions that narrow in on specific projects, either domain-specific or challenge-based**, creating the occasion to apply strategic foresight approaches on the ground and oriented to tangible outcomes. Given its mission and mandate to design and run

strategic foresight interventions for the government, PlanAPP can promote these initiatives around policy challenges and requests.

4. **Upgrade of ongoing initiatives to connect existing foresight practitioners in the Government of Portugal**. The creation of a foresight community of practice would increase the interaction and collaboration across sectors and organisations. The establishment of the Network of Planning and Foresight Services in Public Administration (RePLAN), a network that envisages the co-operation and exchange of resources and knowledge across Government (Law-Decree n.21/2021, Chapter III, 15 March 2021), creates a solid starting point for this area of opportunity.

5. **Promotion of exchanges with international partners, benefiting from the contacts already established** with the global ecosystem of strategic foresight to share learnings and to build cross-border initiatives to match global challenges. Those contacts started already to be translated into concrete initiatives of cooperation: PlanAPP is coordinating the Portuguese participation in the *The European Well-being Foresight Project: Ensuring Citizens' Well-being under the EU's Open Strategic Autonomy & the New Global Order*, a project initiated by the *Oficina Nacional de Prospectiva y Estratégia* from Spain and including the participation of several EU member states within the framework of the EU-wide foresight network

6.4. Strategic planning

Based on the benchmark and analysis provided in Chapter5, a number of options and instruments can be considered by PlanAPP to further improve the strategic planning process and increase its capabilities and mechanisms to steer and coordinate strategic plans, and to increase the public administration's capabilities in external and internal networking for evidence-based strategy making.

1. **Map and clarify responsibilities and players in strategic planning activities**

- Develop an overall strategic planning process architecture with clear roles and responsibilities for central units and for line Ministries,
- Carry out a functional review of the mandate and role of all units (CoG, non-CoG) involved in the strategic planning process,
- Communicate a clear vision and narrative on strategic planning through for instance a Manual of strategic planning as in Latvia**.**

2. **Strengthen the planning framework and ensure alignment and consistency across strategies**

- Define and formalise the hierarchical relation between the documents which compose its strategic framework; and revise the Planning Framework Law to include the different documents beyond the Major Options; alternatively a Manual could be published and shared with all government entities as in Latvia;
- Design detailed strategic planning processes for each key strategic document, including clarifying the top-down ***and*** bottoms-up linkages between sets of documents;
- Further clarify the role of the different stakeholders into the strategic planning processes, by outlining these roles in the new framework or revising their mandates;
- Ensure the through-line in the strategic framework is a clear set of priorities.
- Introduce a taxonomy of strategic documents and streamlining documents;
- Enhance coordination and collaboration through institutional and digital mechanisms – for instance by leveraging RePLAN;

- Establish standards and a review process for sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies at different stages of their development (e.g. concept note at origination, inputs and review during the preparations, support to CoG review on the consistency with the government programme when the document is submitted for discussion and approval to the Cabinet meeting).

3. Support line ministries in the planning process

- Based on the existing mapping, identify institutional gaps and overlaps, including in line Ministries, to further support them;
- Consider developing guidelines and templates for line Ministries;
- Dedicate resources in PlanAPP to further support line Ministries in preparing strategies and applying the guidelines;
- Establish online platform that could include: a registry of strategies, and the above-mentioned guidelines and templates;
- Establish a clear work process with line Ministries in the preparations of Major Options to ensure that they can contribute to the document by linking with their sectoral priorities and plans and have the relevant expertise; formalise the existing informal working group and use for instance additional technical groups and informal meetings and consider secondments between line Ministries and PlanAPP to support. The creation of working group as was done for the 2022 NRP can support the involvement and discussions with line Ministries and enhance their contributions to key documents with the support of PlanAPP.

4. Link strategy planning with outcomes

- Expand the current monitoring model to other high-level priorities outlined in the Government Programme and Major Options (Climate Change; Digitalisation; inequalities) that could be steered by the PMO and monitored and supported by PlanAPP, including targets and a limited set of key performance indicators.
- Develop roadmaps and monitoring tools for line Ministries to deliver on high-level priorities, like the Outcome Delivery Plans in the UK;
- Organise and support strategy and data review meetings for PlanAPP with other Ministries to track progress on the implementation of strategies and check their consistency with other national and sectoral strategies.

5. Increase the link between strategic planning and financial planning

- Develop systematic meetings on linking strategy and budget between line Ministries authoring the strategy, the MoF and PlanAPP when preparing and developing the strategy to foster a dialogue on priorities, costing and cost effectiveness of measures; this could take the format of joint meetings and concept documents for strategies;
- Consider increasing the connection between high level prioritization and the budget, by:
  - using the MO to further present measures and priorities of the government programme and guide budget discussions and allocations on priorities if not on the entire budget;
  - outlining expenditures linked to government priorities in the budget process through discussions between the CoG and the MoF and possibly a specific document ("table of reforms" as in Sweden), and
  - developing the practice of spending reviews to align expenditures with strategic priorities.

6. Foster internal networking: mobilise the whole-of-government on strategic planning

- Build a sense of community among units and individuals in charge of strategic planning using the RePLAN commission and informal relations at more technical level;

- Consider creating a limited number of ministerial working groups on strategic priorities that PlanAPP and RePLAN can support as Secretariat - establish and use multisectoral teams on strategic themes and priorities of the government for research and evidence-purpose that can feed the work of the working groups;
- Consider solidifying and formalising the working group on the preparations of the Major Options to ensure buy-in and systematise the process;
- Consider using staff mobility programmes between PlanAPP/RePLAN and line Ministries;
- Consider organising capacity-building activities e.g. supporting the creation of new strategic units in Ministries where they do not exist, and develop training, seminars and lecture on topics selected with the RePLAN network for participants and for the whole-of-administration.

7. Harness expertise and evidence from within and outside the administration

- Raise awareness about the advantages provided by the use of evidence in planning through RePLAN;
- Develop guidance and methodology on the use of evidence and include it in key strategic methodologies and guidance to be established (as suggested in the first part of the policy brief);
- Map out the policy advisory system bodies, particularly the existing networks against the thematic orientations of RePLANs future multi-sectoral teams; consider grouping some of them and suggest the involvement of RePLAN in those that concern strategic, crosscutting priorities:
- Consider establishing a network on foresight and research across the administration (as in Finland for example).

8. Increase citizen engagement and participation in strategic planning

- Consider PlanAPP as playing a role in promoting citizen engagement in strategic planning across the government by ensuring that consultations take place and for RePLAN to discuss and share practices, methodologies and guidelines on citizen engagement in strategy-making;
- Ensure that citizen engagement is envisaged systematically in key national strategic documents as was the case for in Portugal 2030 and suggest mechanisms to the different authors of future strategies when considering the creation of a new one;
- Consider creating a centre for citizen engagement in the CoG to build standards and promote citizen participation principles and practices by all public institutions.

9. Engage scientific, civil society and governmental stakeholders jointly on cross-cutting issues

- Consider establishing platforms and tools to foster dialogue and participatory processes between scientific, civil society and governmental stakeholder on selected topics (e.g. the launch of a national dialogue on climate with the Ministry of Environment and Energy Transition following the example of Ireland in partnership; or the creation of public-private dialogue platform on selected priorities) that co-design and yield jointly produced outcomes (policy-briefs, recommendations).

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