

**Minutes of the Kick-off meeting**  
**"Supporting Development of the Internal Control and Risk Management**  
**Framework in Finland" (23FI14)**  
**13 October 2023**

**Attendance:**

*Ministry of Finance Valtiovarainministeriö and other public organisations (Finland):*

- Ms. Jaana Kuusisto, Government Controller General, Ministry of Finance
- Mr. Esko Mustonen, Deputy Government Controller General, Ministry of Finance
- Ms. Terhi Sääsکیlahti, Senior Specialist, Ministry of Finance
- Members of the Council of Internal Control and Risk Management
- Members of the Risk Management sub-committee
- Members of the Internal Audit sub-committee
- SPIO delegates

*27 total participants from Finland*

*European Commission (DG REFORM)*

- Ms. Alexandra Papatheodorou, Policy Officer

*OECD, Public Sector Integrity Division (PSI)*

- Mr. Jesper Johnson, Deputy Head of Public Sector Integrity Division
- Mr. Darius Matusevicius, Project Manager
- Mr. Lalit Golani, Policy Analyst
- Mr. Cameron Hall, Junior Policy Analyst

**Venue:** Virtual, 13 October 2023, from 12:00 to 13:20 (CET)

**1. Introduction and presentation of agenda (enclosed)**

**2. Opening remarks**

Jaana Kuusisto expressed appreciation to the DG Reform for the project approval. At the moment, there is no comprehensive risk assessment framework in Finland and the project will support this. The kick-off of this project is a significant milestone. The reason is in 2019, it was noted in Parliament that action must be taken to support risk management at both, the central government and agency levels. While there was a change in political parties in Finland last spring (prior to the submission of the application for TSI support), there is still support for this project at the senior management level. The Minister shares the same view and has mentioned this project in their own political discussions. This demonstrates the commitment for this project from the Finland side.

Alexandra Papatheodorou was pleased that the project corresponds directly to the needs of Finland. She emphasized the importance of internal controls within a government. While describing the benefits of internal control and overall sound financial management, she further highlighted the project to support the intention of the European Commission's funding which is backed by the political management and will of Finland. While previous national reform efforts have helped in achieving improved internal controls in Finland, there is still a need for a systematic approach. This is where this project plays a role in doing so, by strengthening the capacity to develop those controls. DG Reform is looking forward to collaborating with Finland and the OECD in this project.

Jesper Johnson noted the importance of the initiative by emphasizing its support for innovation. It is clear a project such as this, will foster greater trust amongst the public administration and lead to better initiatives. To reiterate the importance of internal controls, it is a great way to maintain accountability and provide reasonable assurance. There has been a large focus on government trust recently and it is important to understand the context and processes. This project will reflect upon the context of Finland and provide a product which is more tailored to the needs. It must be recognized that internal controls are not separate from key strategic objectives. It is a key foundation of governance and accountability, and help us shape more efficient public sectors, more productive economies, more inclusive societies, and restore trust.

### **3. Presentation on the project outline (enclosed)**

Darius Matusevicius briefly introduced aspects of the OECD and how it relates to the work of the Public Sector Integrity Division. Following that, he presented the project's context, objectives, key outputs, activities, timeline, and methods according to the DPD.

### **4. Presentation of OECD Public Integrity Indicators – Results of OECD Analysis of Principle 10 (Internal Control and Risk Management) for Finland, validated on 12 September 2023 (enclosed)**

Cameron Hall presented the recently completed work of the analysis of Finland in the Public Integrity Indicators. He briefly described the OECD's work on public integrity, the history of the indicators and related tools. Following the context, he presented how Finland performed (via a comprehensive survey and validation process) in the criteria related to Effectiveness of Internal Control and Risk Management. He detailed how Finland compared to the OECD average in various areas while also noting possible areas for improvement.

### **5. Discussion**

Jaana Kuusisto noted that in Finland the administration system is decentralised. Therefore, within specific agencies there are responsibilities related to these topics, but they do not exist at the central government level. This fact is something which was not discussed or mentioned in the presentation on Public Integrity Indicators Principle 10.

Jesper Johnson acknowledged the fact that the survey did not cover too much on all the various regulatory framework. The exercise provided countries with a snapshot of where they stood, with regards to these indicators.

Terhi Sääskilahti inquired whether all the country information used in the OECD average within the indicator survey had been validated. As well, if they could receive a copy of both presentations.

Cameron Hall confirmed that of the data collected for 30 countries, only 15 had been validated. Jesper Johnson noted that even without validation the results would likely remain unchanged. And the presentations would be shared with Finland.

Jaana Kuusisto posed the question of what actions Finland can take to prepare for the TSI project.

Darius Matusevicius and Jesper Johnson stated that looking at the actions in the DPD and planning ahead based on how it fits with the Finland government cycle, would be useful. This would allow for greater planning and engagement with the OECD team.

Alexandra Papatheodorou added that looking at the timeline in the DPD will give Finland a better understanding. The OECD will also advise when engagement is needed, well in advance.

## 6. Final remarks

Jaana Kuusisto is pleased to be launching the project. Finland is content with the plan and co-operation with the OECD. The work completed on the indicators provides a good foundation. They are open to assess their own aspects and provide support to DG Reform and the OECD. Speaks on behalf of all the stakeholders to state Finland is committed to the project.

Alexandra Papatheodorou stated it was a productive meeting. It is encouraging to see many stakeholders in attendance from the Finland side. DG Reform will rely on engagement and collaboration for the success of the project.

Jesper Johnson reiterated that it was a productive meeting. OECD is looking forward to engage through various forums and believe the project will be successful.

End of the meeting.

*Enclosed: 1) Meeting agenda; 2) Presentation PPT on Project Outline; 3) Presentation PPT on OECD Public Integrity Indicators – Results of OECD Analysis of Principle 10 (Internal Control and Risk Management) for Finland.*