

ONLINE WORKSHOP:
REGULATORY BARRIERS TO COMPETITION IN
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES: MEASUREMENT AND REFORM
EXPERIENCE
18-19 NOVEMBER 2021

Call for contributions

Since 1998, the OECD Product Market Regulation (PMR) Indicators have measured barriers to competition raised by excessive, restrictive, or outdated regulation (<http://oe.cd/pmr>). Professional services have a key role in well-functioning economies, since they are an intermediate input, whose effective regulation has a significant impact on downstream sectors, hence on productivity and growth. The services covered by the PMR Indicators are related to six professions: lawyers, notaries, accountants, civil engineers, architect and estate agents. Assessing the quality of regulation for these professions requires striking the right balance between the need to ensure that competition is effective and can deliver its benefits, and the need to correct the market failures that characterise the provision of these services. It is also essential to consider that current regulatory frameworks are molded in country-specific traditions, following their legal approach and the current division of activities among regulated professions and between these professions and public officials.

In order to keep the PMR indicators for professional services in line with best international standards and to ensure that they capture the effective barriers to competition current regulations may raise, the Economics Department of the OECD, jointly with the Competition Division of the Directorate for Financial Affairs, is organising an online workshop. The aim of this workshop is to hold a fruitful discussion and sharing of experiences with OECD delegates, regulators, professional bodies and scholars on this topic.

More specifically the workshop will address the following issues:

- Reforms that have changed how professional services are regulated, the policy rationale that has motivated them and their impact on quality, prices, and access to professional services.
- How to measure how well the markets for professional services are working and how these variables are linked to specific regulatory features of these markets
- What drives competition in these markets and hence what should regulation focus on: is it just a matter of regulating the supply side of the market, or does the behaviour of consumers have a role to play? If so, should the demand side, including biases in consumers' behavior, also be addressed when considering how these professions should be regulated? If the indicators should take account of the demand side factors, such as consumer biases, availability of choices and switching costs, how should these be measured?
- Effectiveness of self-regulation through chambers and professional bodies vs alternative regulatory approaches.

The focus will be on the 6 professions included in the PMR Indicators:

1. Lawyers
2. Notaries¹
3. Accountants²
4. Engineers
5. Architects
6. Estate Agents

If you wish to submit a paper, a report or a study on one of the above topics, please submit a long abstract (around 1000 words) by **15th September 2021** to the email address: PMR2018@oecd.org

Selected submissions will be posted on an OECD webpage dedicated to this event and the authors will be invited to present at the workshop.

An invitation to the workshop with a detailed agenda will be circulated in late September and will be posted on the webpage <https://www.oecd.org/economy/reform/indicators-of-product-market-regulation/>

For further information, please contact the OECD organizers:

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¹ Notaries (included in ISIC 4.0 6910 class) are professionals that usually confer authenticity on legal deeds, contracts, oaths and other legal documents. They can also provide legal advice. Such a professional figure may not exist in all jurisdictions.

² Accountants (included in ISIC 4.0 6920 class) are professionals who can: prepare financial accounts for firms, handle payrolls, reconcile firms' books at year end, and prepare tax returns for firms and individuals. In some countries accountants may also review the accounts of companies and organisations to ensure their validity and legality.