Accessibility, responsiveness and quality of administrative services

Administrative services are offered by public organisations and enable businesses and the public to comply with regulations and laws, exercise their rights, or claim benefits to which they are entitled. Examples of commonly used administrative services include paying taxes, issuing identity documents and applying for benefits.

The accessibility of administrative services reflects the government's capacity to accurately recognise the nature of the public's needs, and tailor delivery to diverse needs. In the OECD Survey on the Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions 2021, 65.1% of respondents expected information about administrative procedures to be easily available in their country (Figure 3.7). However, there are significant variations across countries, with Ireland (83.0%) and the Netherlands (78.9%) having the highest levels of perceived ease of access to information. In general, countries which have higher expectations in this area also tend to have greater satisfaction with administrative services (OECD, 2022). Lack of information is only one barrier to accessing administrative services, however. Others include geographical distance, inadequate facilities for users, insufficient delivery channels, use of complex language and excessive administrative burdens.

Responsive public services recognise people have different needs and adapt to support them. Rather than adopting a "one size fits all" approach, a responsive administrative service takes people's views into account. User support entails providing two-way communication channels through which people receive answers on how their complaints have been treated. Figure 3.8 shows the share of users who accessed administrative services online for whom user support was available. In 2021, Finland, Italy and Türkiye reached 1.0 points (maximum possible score on a scale from 0 to 1) on user support availability, while the average across OECD-EU members is 0.93 points. Considering that these standards are relatively high, 25 out of 26 OECD countries are within 0.07 points of the mean.

Another aspect of public service responsiveness refers to the capacity to meet a diversity of needs by treating everybody fairly. When asked about their own potential application for a generic government benefit or service, a high share of respondents – 58.5% across OECD countries – felt that their application would be treated fairly. Over half of respondents expect to be treated fairly in 18 of the 21 surveyed OECD countries, rising to over 70% in Ireland and the Netherlands (Figure 3.9). Across countries, being confident about fair treatment in applying for government benefits or services is highly and significantly correlated with trust in the civil service (OECD, 2022).

Methodology and definitions

The OECD explores perceptions of public governance using nationally representative survey data from the OECD Trust Survey conducted across 22 countries.

Most countries were surveyed in November-December 2021, with a few surveys taking place in 2020 and January-March 2022.

The 2022 eGovernment Benchmark Insight Report and Background Report combines several data sources collected using different methods to provide a holistic overview of the state of play of eGovernment among EU member countries. The data were collected during the summer of 2021. User centricity refers to the extent to which information and services are available online, supported online and compatible with mobile devices. The primary indicator to capture this dimension is user support, referring to an index score to which online support, help features and feedback are available.

Further reading

Baredes, B. (2022), "Serving citizens: Measuring the performance of services for a better user experience", *OECD Working Papers on Public Governance*, No. 52, OECD Publishing, Paris, *https://doi.org/10.1787/65223af7-en*.

European Commission (2022), *eGovernment Benchmark 2022: Synchronising Digital Governments: Insight Report*, Publications Office of the European Union, *https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2759/488218*.

OECD (2022), *Building Trust to Reinforce Democracy: Main Findings from the 2021 OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions*, Building Trust in Public Institutions, OECD Publishing, Paris, *https://doi.org/10.1787/b407f99c-en*.

Figure notes

"OECD" presents the unweighted average of surveyed OECD countries in the 2021 Trust Survey.

3.7 and 3.9. Data for Finland regarding ease of finding information and fair treatment of applications are not available.

3.7. Ease of finding information is based on the share of responses of 6-10 to the question "On a scale of 0 to 10, if you need information about an administrative procedure (for example, obtaining a passport, applying for benefits, etc.), how likely or unlikely do you think it is that the information would be easily available?". Satisfaction is based on the share of responses of 6 to 10 to the question "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)", equal to the values of responses 6-10 on the response scale, on the y axis.

3.9. Countries are listed in alphabetical order due to the limited number of available countries. Refers to the share of responses of 6-10 to the question: "if you or a member of your family would apply for a government benefit or service (e.g., unemployment benefits or other forms of income support), how likely or unlikely do you think it is that your application would be treated fairly?"
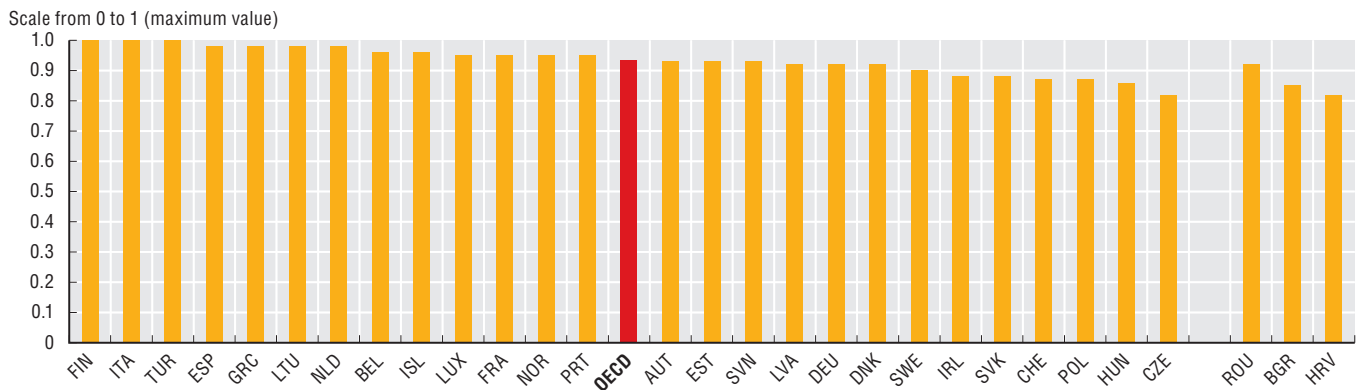
3.7. Perceived ease of finding administrative information and satisfaction with administrative services, 2021

Source: OECD Trust Survey (*http://oe.cd/trust*).

StatLink ⟐⟐ *https://stat.link/7mpdv9*
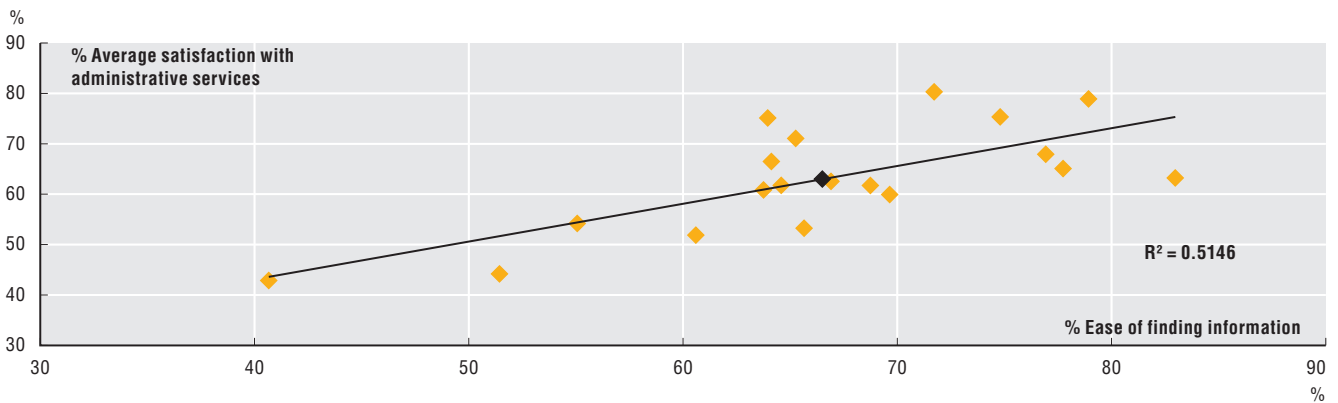
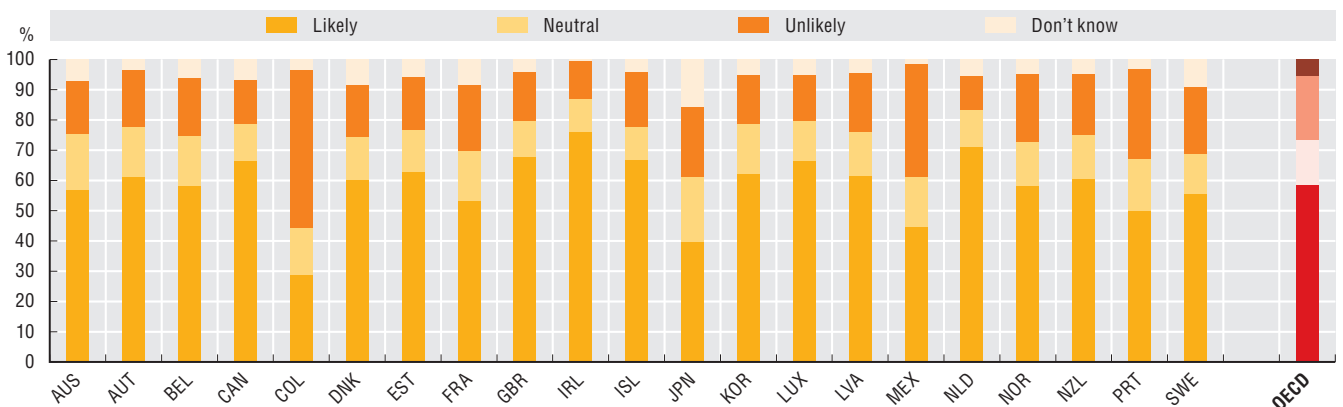**3.8. Score rate for which user support for online services, 2021**

Source: European Commission (2022), *eGovernment Benchmark 2022: Synchronising Digital Governments: Insight report,* Publications Office of the European Union, *https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2759/488218.*

StatLink ⟐⟐ *https://stat.link/8wdhbm*

3.9. Trust in administrative fairness, 2021
Share of respondents reporting different levels of perceived likelihood that a government would treat their application for a government benefit or service fairly

Source: OECD Trust Survey (*http://oe.cd/trust*).

StatLink ⟐⟐ *https://stat.link/p9shae*