

### Efforts to promote open government literacy in the public administration

Open government is a culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth (OECD, 2017). Governance cultures involve both tangible and non-tangible aspects, including values, beliefs, norms of conduct and expectations, which are manifested in policies, services and public goods among others. Open government literacy – understood as the combination of awareness, knowledge and skills that public officials and stakeholders need to engage successfully in open government strategies and initiatives – is key to transforming a country's culture of governance.

Guidelines, toolboxes and other types of written guidance can help civil servants to follow open government principles when designing, implementing and/or evaluating public policies. In 2020, 29 out of 31 OECD countries (94%), and the 3 other economies (Brazil, Costa Rica and Romania) taking part in the Survey on Open Government had guidelines on open government data, and 25 OECD countries (81%) plus the 3 other economies had guidelines on citizen and stakeholder participation. Twenty OECD countries (65%) plus Brazil and Romania had guidelines on reactive disclosure of information, and 19 (62%) as well as Brazil and Romania on proactive disclosure. While only eight OECD countries (26%) and Brazil and Costa Rica had guidelines that explicitly focused on the concept of open government, the majority of the surveyed countries have other guidelines that cover specific principles and practices related to open government (Figure 9.1).

As a culture of governance, open government seeks to promote the inclusion and participation of all groups of society in policy-making. Some countries, such as Lithuania and the United Kingdom, have guidelines that raise awareness of the need to target specific groups and stakeholders when relevant. Some countries also have guidelines on fostering the participation of specific groups of the population: out of the 25 OECD countries with guidelines on participation, 11 (44%), and Brazil, focus on youth, another 8 (32%) and Brazil focus on people with disabilities. Respectively four OECD countries (16%) have guidelines focusing on LGBTIQ+ people, minority ethnic groups, elderly people, and women (Figure 9.2).

Training is another way of ensuring that civil servants embody open government principles. Twenty-six out of 32 OECD countries surveyed (81%) and 3 other economies (Brazil, Costa Rica and Romania) provide training on access to information, and 22 (69%) plus three other economies (63%) plus the 3 other economies have training on citizen and stakeholder participation. Nine OECD countries (28%), as well as Brazil and Costa Rica, have training on open government as an integrated concept (e.g. explaining what open government means) (Figure 9.3). Some countries do not have a centralised training catalogue, with each ministry and institution responsible for designing the training it offers its employees. These trainings would not be captured by these data.

Out of the nine OECD countries that have training on open government, eight (89%) offer them to civil servants at the central/federal level. In seven of them (78%), civil servants from sub-national levels of government can participate and in three (33%), the training is open to employees of the judicial and legislative branches of government (Online Figure G.36).

#### Methodology and definitions

Data were collected through the Survey on Open Government, which was conducted between November 2020 and March 2021. Thirty-two OECD countries and three other economies (Brazil, Costa Rica and Romania) participated. Respondents were the delegates to the OECD Working Party on Open Government, who co-ordinated the response across their respective governments.

Access to information refers to the ability of an individual to seek, receive, impart and use information effectively. In public administration, access to information refers to the existence of a robust system through which government information is made available to individuals and organisations. Proactive disclosure refers to the availability of relevant information without a prior public request. Reactive disclosure refers to the release of public information by a public body following a request by an individual.

Citizen and stakeholder participation refers to all the ways in which citizens and stakeholders can be involved in the policy cycle and in service design and delivery.

Open government data refers to government data that can be accessed and shared, free of charge, and used by anyone for any purpose.

#### Further reading

OECD (2017), *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*, OECD, Paris, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438>.

OECD (2016), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en>.

#### Figure notes

Data for France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Switzerland and the United States are not available.

9.1. Data for Greece are not available.

9.2. Data only cover countries which reported having guidelines on citizen and stakeholder participation.

Figure G.36. (Categories of staff and institutions for which open government training is available, 2020) is available online in Annex G.

Efforts to promote open government literacy in the public administration

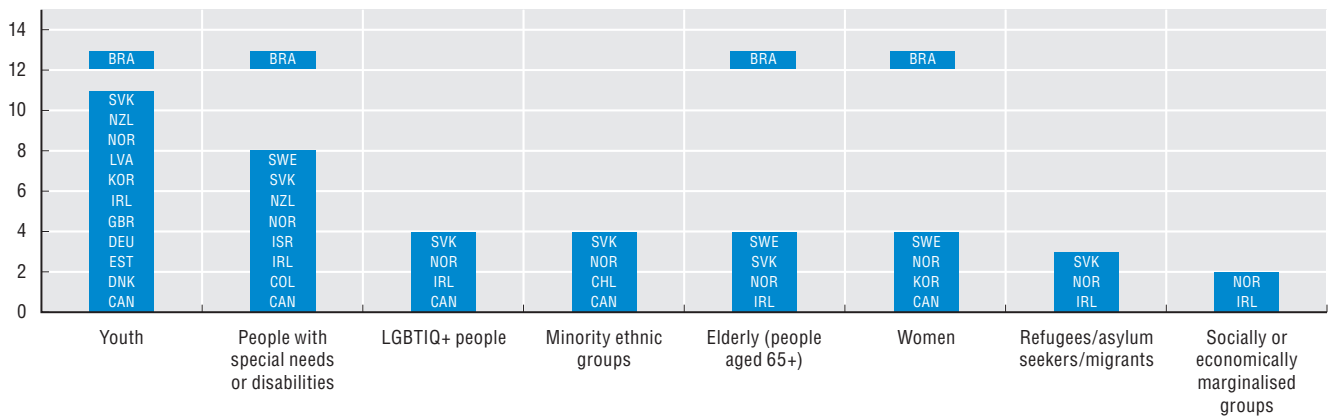
9.1. Availability of guidelines for civil servants on open government-related topics at the central/federal level, 2020



Source: OECD (2021), Survey on Open Government.

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934258591>

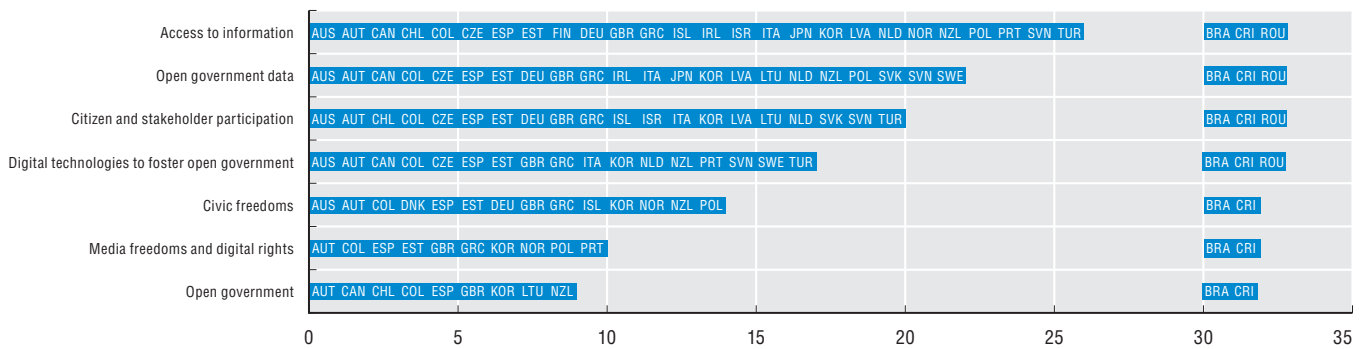
9.2. Focus of participation guidelines for civil servants on specific groups, 2020



Source: OECD (2021), Survey on Open Government.

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934258610>

9.3. Availability of training for civil servants on open government-related topics at the central/federal government, 2020



Source: OECD (2021), Survey on Open Government.

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934258629>



**From:**  
**Government at a Glance 2021**

**Access the complete publication at:**  
<https://doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en>

**Please cite this chapter as:**

OECD (2021), “Efforts to promote open government literacy in the public administration”, in *Government at a Glance 2021*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/6d90d4f2-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.