

Foreword

People in Norway trust their public institutions. High levels of institutional trust have helped Norway successfully navigate the COVID-19 crisis and minimise its unintended consequences. Norway faces challenges ahead, however, that will entail complex policy choices. The society is ageing, increasingly diverse, and uncertain about how to cope with climate change, the sustainability of the welfare system and other areas involving intergenerational trade-offs. This report analyses the determinants of public trust in Norway through the lens of the OECD Trust framework, which comprises five drivers of trust grouped under the two dimensions of government competence and government values.

This report is the result of close collaboration between the OECD and the Division for Governance, Organization and Leadership at the Norwegian Agency for Public and Financial Management (DFO). It draws on quantitative information collected through the OECD Trust survey as part of the Norwegian Citizens Survey. In addition, it relies on the insights provided in more than 40 interviews with government officials, civil society representatives and academics in Norway as well as during a workshop on the preliminary findings held with peers from other Nordic countries. Following Korea in 2018 and Finland in 2020, this is the third OECD country study on the drivers of trust in public institutions and the second one carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has thus been informed and enriched by a revision of OECD analytical and measurement instruments carried out via the webinar series “Building a New Paradigm for Public Trust”, which brought together practitioners, academics and experts in the field of public trust.

Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions in Norway emphasises the importance of achieving more responsive public services through better co-ordination in policy and service design and provision as well as of generating space and skills for innovation. It also stresses the importance of strengthening preparedness and foresight for more reliable policies, essential for preserving and reinforcing trust. Maintaining openness and engagement are also crucial for trust. This report provides a detailed set of recommendations that will help Norway define and implement its trust reform, which seeks to improve working methods in the administration by placing greater emphasis on results and experience rather than on compliance with rules.

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