

3. GDP per capita

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is a core indicator of economic performance and commonly used as a broad measure of average living standards or economic well-being; despite some recognised shortcomings.

For example average GDP per capita gives no indication of how GDP is distributed between citizens. Average GDP per capita may rise for example but more people may be worse off if income inequalities also increase.

Equally, in some countries (see Comparability), there may be a significant number of non-resident border or seasonal workers or indeed inflows and outflows of property income and both phenomena imply that the value of production differs from the income of residents, thereby over or understating their living standards.

A full discussion of these issues can be found in the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report (see “Further reading”).

Definition

The definition for GDP is described in Section 1 and population estimates are described in the Reader’s Guide.

A focus on per capita GDP is also useful in decomposing drivers of overall GDP growth. For example real GDP can grow without there being any improvement in real GDP per capita. Decomposing per capita growth into two parts, labour productivity growth (measured as GDP per hour worked) and labour utilisation growth (measured as hours worked per capita) is helpful in this context.

Comparability

The comparability of population and GDP estimates across countries is good (see Section 1). However, some care is

needed in interpretation, for example Luxembourg and, to a lesser extent, Switzerland have a relatively large number of frontier workers. Such workers contribute to GDP but are excluded from the population figures, which is one of the reasons why cross-country comparisons of income per capita based on gross or net national income (GDI and NNI) are often preferred, see second chapter on Income. (See also “Reader’s Guide”, relating to PPP based comparisons.)

Source

- OECD (2011), *National Accounts of OECD Countries*, Vol. 2011/1, OECD Publishing
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/na-v2011-1-en>.

Online database

- OECD (2011), “Aggregate National Accounts: Gross domestic product”, *OECD National Accounts Statistics* (database), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/data-00001-en>.

Further reading

- Report of the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Report), www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr.
- OECD (2002), *Measuring the Non-Observed Economy: A Handbook*, International Labour Office/International Monetary Fund/International Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264175358-en>.
- Lequiller, F. and D. Blades (2007), *Understanding National Accounts*, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264027657-en>.
- OECD (2000), *System of National Accounts, 1993 – Glossary*, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264180871-en>.
- UN, OECD, IMF and Eurostat (eds.) (1993), *System of National Accounts 1993*, United Nations, Geneva, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/sna1993>.

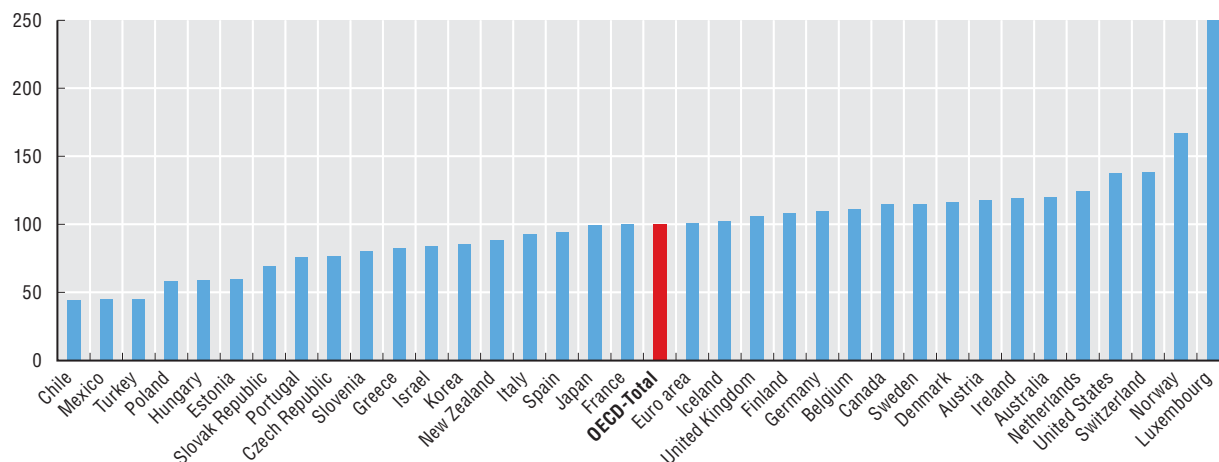
Table 3.1. **Gross domestic product per capita, OECD = 100**

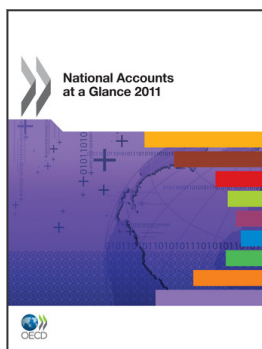
Based on current PPPs

| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Australia | 113 | 115 | 117 | 115 | 116 | 118 | 120 | 119 | 119 | 118 | 118 | 115 | 121 | 120 e |
| Austria | 117 | 119 | 118 | 119 | 116 | 118 | 118 | 117 | 114 | 116 | 115 | 117 | 118 | 118 |
| Belgium | 112 | 111 | 111 | 114 | 114 | 116 | 114 | 111 | 109 | 109 | 108 | 109 | 111 | 111 |
| Canada | 115 | 116 | 118 | 117 | 117 | 116 | 117 | 117 | 119 | 117 | 116 | 115 | 115 | 115 |
| Chile | 40 | 40 | 38 | 38 | 39 | 39 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 44 |
| Czech Republic | 67 | 65 | 64 | 64 | 67 | 68 | 70 | 72 | 72 | 74 | 77 | 79 | 80 | 77 |
| Denmark | 118 | 119 | 117 | 118 | 117 | 119 | 114 | 115 | 112 | 114 | 114 | 116 | 115 | 116 |
| Estonia | 37 | 38 | 38 | 41 | 43 | 46 | 50 | 53 | 56 | 61 | 65 | 65 | 60 | 60 |
| Finland | 98 | 102 | 103 | 105 | 106 | 106 | 104 | 106 | 104 | 105 | 109 | 112 | 109 | 108 |
| France | 102 | 103 | 103 | 104 | 106 | 107 | 102 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 102 | 100 |
| Germany | 110 | 110 | 109 | 106 | 106 | 106 | 106 | 106 | 105 | 106 | 107 | 109 | 110 | 110 |
| Greece | 75 e | 74 e | 74 e | 75 e | 79 e | 83 e | 84 e | 85 e | 82 | 85 | 84 | 87 | 88 | 82 |
| Hungary | 47 | 48 | 48 | 49 | 53 | 57 | 58 | 58 | 57 | 58 | 57 | 61 | 61 | 59 |
| Iceland | 122 | 126 | 125 | 118 | 121 | 120 | 115 | 120 | 118 | 114 | 112 | 115 | 112 | 103 |
| Ireland | 103 | 110 | 114 | 119 | 123 | 128 | 130 | 131 | 132 | 135 | 137 | 126 | 121 | 119 |
| Israel ¹ | 95 | 95 | 93 | 96 | 93 | 91 | 83 | 84 | 79 | 79 | 80 | 81 | 83 | 84 |
| Italy | 106 | 108 | 105 | 105 | 108 | 104 | 102 | 98 | 95 | 96 | 96 | 98 | 99 | 93 |
| Japan | 114 | 109 | 106 | 105 | 104 | 104 | 103 | 103 | 103 | 101 | 101 | 100 | 97 | 100 e |
| Korea | 69 | 63 | 68 | 71 | 72 | 76 | 76 | 77 | 77 | 77 | 79 | 79 | 83 | 86 |
| Luxembourg | 192 | 196 | 214 | 220 | 215 | 222 | 228 | 231 | 231 | 249 | 255 | 263 | 254 | 256 |
| Mexico | 40 e | 40 e | 40 e | 41 e | 40 e | 40 e | 41 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 44 | 45 e |
| Netherlands | 113 | 116 | 117 | 121 | 123 | 123 | 119 | 118 | 119 | 121 | 123 | 126 | 124 | 125 |
| New Zealand | 88 | 86 | 88 | 86 | 88 | 88 | 88 | 87 | 85 | 86 | 86 | 86 | 89 | 88 e |
| Norway | 131 | 124 | 130 | 148 | 148 | 143 | 144 | 150 | 160 | 169 | 166 | 178 | 166 | 167 |
| Poland | 42 | 43 | 44 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 51 | 53 | 58 | 58 |
| Portugal | 70 | 71 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 74 | 73 | 70 | 72 | 73 | 73 | 74 | 76 | 76 |
| Slovak Republic | 46 | 47 | 45 | 45 | 48 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 55 | 58 | 63 | 68 | 69 | 69 |
| Slovenia | 70 | 71 | 73 | 72 | 73 | 76 | 77 | 79 | 79 | 81 | 82 | 86 | 84 | 80 |
| Spain | 83 | 86 | 86 | 88 | 90 | 93 | 93 | 92 | 93 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 98 | 95 |
| Sweden | 110 | 111 | 113 | 115 | 112 | 113 | 114 | 116 | 111 | 113 | 116 | 116 | 113 | 115 |
| Switzerland | 134 | 134 | 131 | 130 | 128 | 129 | 125 | 123 | 120 | 124 | 129 | 134 | 136 | 138 |
| Turkey | 39 e | 39 | 36 | 38 | 34 | 33 | 33 | 36 | 39 | 41 | 42 | 44 | 43 | 45 e |
| United Kingdom | 105 | 106 | 106 | 107 | 110 | 112 | 112 | 113 | 111 | 111 | 108 | 108 | 107 | 106 |
| United States | 142 | 144 | 145 | 144 | 143 | 142 | 143 | 143 | 144 | 141 | 140 | 137 | 137 | 137 |
| Euro area | 100 | 101 | 101 | 101 | 103 | 103 | 101 | 100 | 99 | 101 | 101 | 102 | 103 | 101 |
| OECD-Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

1. Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932549758>Figure 3.1. **Gross domestic product per capita, OECD = 100**

Based on current PPPs, 2010

Note: Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932549055>



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