

Introduction

The *Government at a Glance* series aims to provide reliable, internationally comparable data on government activities and their results in OECD countries and beyond. In turn, these data can be used by countries to benchmark their governments' performance, track domestic and international developments over time and provide evidence of the impact of their public policies. The indicators in *Government at a Glance* are becoming themselves a measuring standard in many fields of public governance and have extended beyond the OECD to cover countries in Latin America and Southeast Asia. In addition to the core indicators that constitute the trademark of the publication, this sixth edition includes a selection of new indicators and additional data sources, allowing for a more complete picture of the work and results of public administrations across OECD countries. In the current edition, about two-fifths of the indicators presented are based on primary evidence collected directly from government officials through OECD survey instruments. The remainder comes from secondary sources and is based, either on administrative records (e.g. public finances) or household surveys (e.g. trust, satisfaction with services) or to a lesser extent on expert assessment collected by other organisations (e.g. the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index).

What's new in *Government at a Glance 2019*?

The 2019 edition of *Government at a Glance* provides a mix of core chapters that remain stable in every edition, and new features.

The core chapters of *Government at a Glance* present the newest data on indicators on: public finance and economics (Chapter 2); public employment (Chapter 3); budgeting practices and procedures (Chapter 5); human resources management (Chapter 6); regulatory government (Chapter 7); public procurement (Chapter 8); core government results (Chapter 10); and serving citizens (Chapter 11).

New indicators

Many of the core chapters of *Government at a Glance 2019* present new indicators:

- Chapter 5 on budget practices and procedures presents topical aspects of the budget process in areas where new trends and shared practices across OECD countries are emerging or consolidating. Accordingly, it includes indicators on capital budgeting and infrastructure, fiscal risks, gender budgeting, budget transparency and budget for sustainable development.
- New indicators in Chapter 6 on human resources management cover the employment conditions of civil servants and other public employees in OECD countries, performance management of senior leaders in public service, and government approaches to civil service learning and development.

- Chapter 7 on regulatory governance includes the most recent update of the Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance (iREG) on stakeholder engagement, regulatory impact assessment and *ex post* evaluation. Given this new wave of measurement, it is possible to display time series and track the evolution of OECD countries and the European Union over time.
- In addition to the core indicators on public procurement included in Chapter 8, new data are included on public procurement capacity and performance, including the role of centralisation, as well as risk management in public procurement.
- To highlight the growing focus on outputs and outcomes, Chapter 10 on core government results includes a new indicator on the percentage of the population that considers having a say in what the government does.

New features

New features in this edition of *Government at a Glance* include:

- A series of indicators on aspects of public governance are included for the first time. While the chapter on institutions (Chapter 4) includes indicators on the role and functions of the centre of government (CoG) for the second time, it also includes a new feature on the role of CoG in open government policies. It also includes evidence on policy evaluation for the first time, including data on its institutional structures and its use and promotion.
- Chapter 9 on open data and digital government includes an update of the Open Useful Re-usable data (OURdata) Index on open government data, including a specific presentation of the sub-indices that aggregate to the main indicator. For the first time, this chapter also includes evidence from the new Survey on Digital Government, presenting data on the governance of digital government strategies, the co-ordination role of different actors, and policy levers.

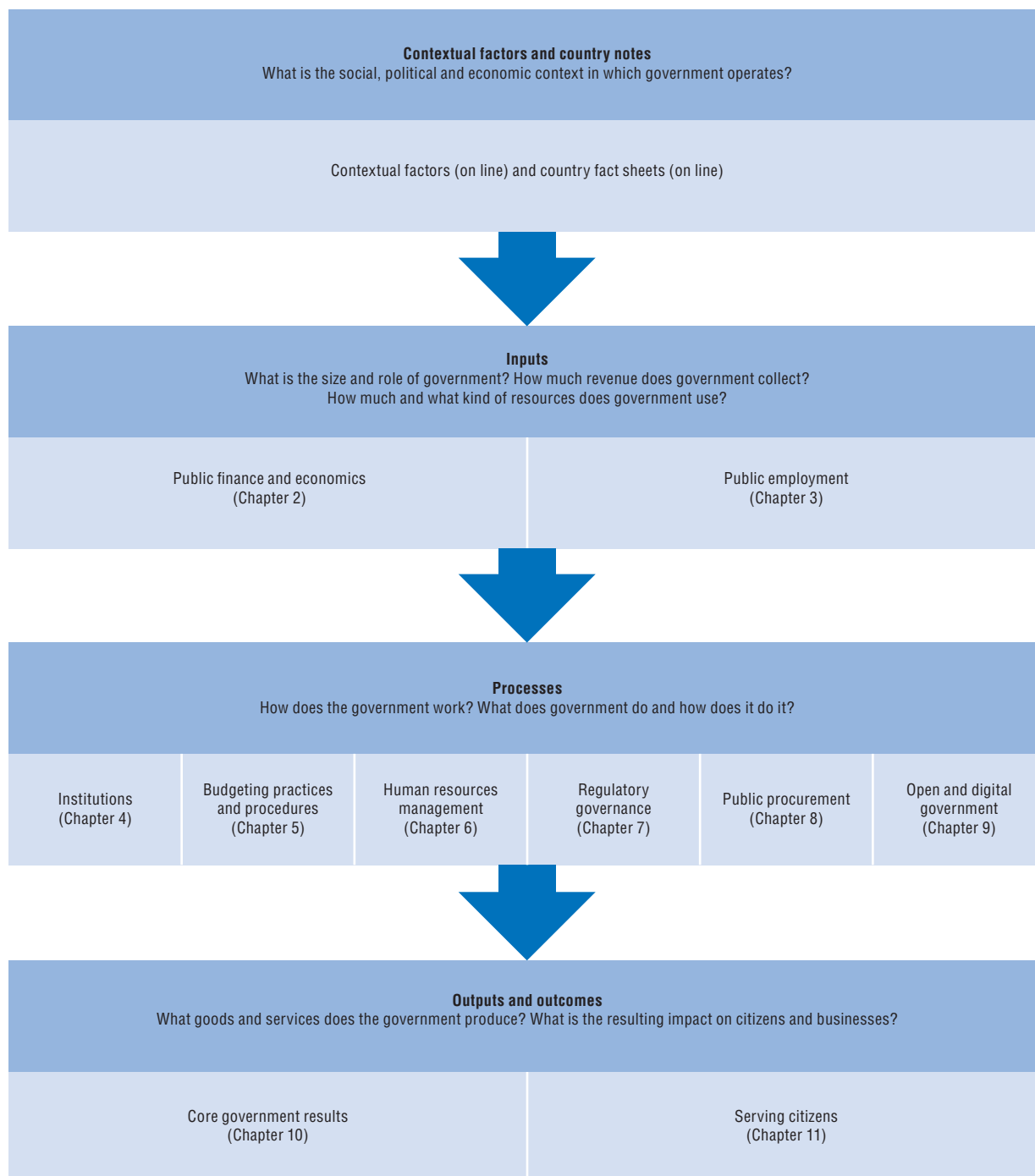
Definition of government

Data on public finances are based on the definition of the sector “general government” found in the *System of National Accounts* (SNA). Accordingly, general government comprises ministries/departments, agencies, offices and some non-profit institutions at the central, state and local level, as well as social security funds. Data on revenues and expenditures are presented both for central and sub-central (state and local) levels of government and (where applicable) for social security funds. Data on employment also refer to general government, although data on employment by gender refer to the public sector, which covers both general government as well as publicly owned resident enterprises and companies. Finally, data on public management practices and processes refer to those practices and processes in the central level of government only.

Framework and structure of the publication

Government at a Glance covers the 36 OECD countries and includes data, when available, on accession countries (Colombia, Costa Rica and Russia) as well as other major economies such as Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa. These countries play a significant and increasing role in the world economy and international political structures.

This sixth edition of *Government at a Glance* includes contextual information as well as input, process, output and outcome indicators. Figure 0.1 presents the conceptual framework for *Government at a Glance*.

Figure 0.1. **Conceptual framework for Government at a Glance 2019**

Context

Contextual factors (on line) present information on some key features of the political and administrative structures for each OECD country. Considering contextual information makes it possible to understand the major institutional differences and similarities among countries, and thereby help to identify comparators for benchmarking purposes. In addition, the country fact sheets (on line) provide a country-by-country storyline on how the data

provided in *Government at a Glance* apply to the specific context of public sector reforms in OECD countries and some accession countries.

Inputs

Inputs refer to the resources used by governments in their production function, as well as how they are mixed; these resources correspond to labour and capital. The chapters that describe these inputs are “Public finance and economics” (Chapter 2) and “Public employment” (Chapter 3), including indicators on government expenditures, production costs, employment and the composition of the public sector workforce. Differences in these indicators can help readers understand the different capacities of governments in producing and delivering public goods to citizens.

Processes

Processes refer to the public management practices and procedures undertaken by governments to implement policies. These address the means used by public administrations to fulfil their duties and obtain their goals. In consequence, they are often essential for ensuring the rule of law, accountability, fairness and openness of government actions. Public sector reforms often target these processes; as such, they capture the public’s attention. This edition includes information on government institutions, budget practices and procedures, human resources management, regulatory governance, public procurement, open government data and the governance of digital government strategies (Chapters 4-9).

Outputs and outcomes

The dividing line between outputs and outcomes can be blurry. While outputs refer to the amount of goods and services produced by governments, outcomes show the effects of policies and practices on citizens and businesses. The success of a given policy should be measured, at a first stage, by outputs, but should ultimately be judged by the outcomes it achieves. Generally speaking, outcomes refer to the effects of public programmes and services on citizens, in terms of welfare gains, health gains, educational/learning gains, and so on. While these outcomes can certainly be affected by the quality of programmes and services provided, they can also be affected by other factors, such as the socio-economic background of the population and individual behavioural factors.

In *Government at a Glance 2019*, measures of outputs and outcomes are provided in two distinct chapters:

- Chapter 10 on core government results focuses on whole-of-government aspects, such as the confidence of citizens in their national government, the rule of law, income redistribution and broad measures of public sector efficiency (output-based) and cost-effectiveness (outcome-based).
- Chapter 11 on serving citizens follows a sectoral approach to measuring the outputs and outcomes of public sector activities. Based on a consolidated framework developed horizontally with other OECD directorates, and in collaboration with OECD countries, the chapter provides measures of services to citizens in terms of access, responsiveness and quality. This year’s edition focuses on three sectors: health care, education and the justice system.

Future activities

In order to produce *Government at a Glance*, the OECD works in close co-operation with other organisations, including the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Justice Project, and the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), Gallup and the European Commission, to provide a comprehensive view of what governments do and how they do it, while avoiding duplication of data collection. Co-operation will continue to be strengthened to ensure the comparability of data across countries covered in *Government at a Glance*.

For future editions of the publication, the *Government at a Glance* plans to:

- update and expand the data collection on public finance and public expenditures by government function, especially beyond OECD EU member countries.
- work with national statistical offices to collect data on both government employment by levels of government and on their key individual characteristics – e.g. gender, age – through the SNA framework.
- develop new composite indicators measuring “intermediate outcomes”, including in the areas of budgetary transparency, digital government, public procurement and risk management.
- provide new outcome indicators in areas closely related to major public governance principles or sectors that have a large impact on citizen well-being (e.g. diversity issues, workforce diversity).
- deepen the already existing work between the OECD Secretariat and other OECD directorates regarding the possible use of new methodologies for both data collection and analysis, such as text mining or big data.

Regional editions of *Government at a Glance*

The first edition of the Southeast Asian *Government at a Glance* was published in September 2019. It includes data for the ten ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)¹ member countries, as compared to the OECD average as well as Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand. The publication includes evidence on public finances and economics, public employment, budget practices and procedures, human resources management, digital and open government as well as a chapter on serving citizens.

In addition, the third edition of *Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean* is being prepared and is expected to be released in March 2020. The publication provides the latest available data on public administrations in the LAC region and compares it to OECD countries.

The first edition of a Western Balkans² *Government at a Glance* is also being prepared and is expected to be released in May 2020.

All data and indicators on public governance are accessible on line

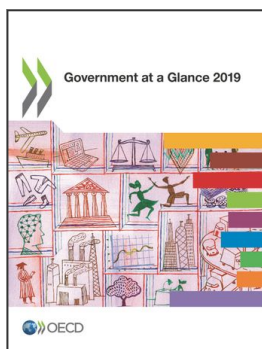
All data collected by the OECD Public Governance Directorate for the production of *Government at a Glance* (starting with the 2015 edition), and for other purposes, are available on line at <https://www.oecd.org/gov/govataglance.htm>.

Readers interested in using the data presented in this publication for further analysis and research are encouraged to consult the full documentation of definitions, sources and methods presented in the *Government at a Glance* publication and on line.

The *Government at a Glance* statistical database includes both qualitative and quantitative indicators on public sector inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes and is regularly updated as new data are released.

Notes

1. The ten members of ASEAN are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam.
2. The six countries included in this publication are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.



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