

## 4. GOVERNANCE OF THE POLICY CYCLE

### Openness and inclusiveness

Open government is a culture of governance that aims to transform how the public administration works and interacts with its citizens. A key element of open government is its capacity to engage citizens and stakeholders to include their perspectives and insights and to promote co-operation in policy design and implementation. Stakeholder participation increases government accountability; broadens citizens' empowerment and political influence; builds civic capacity; improves the evidence base for policymaking; reduces implementation costs; builds support and understanding of the need for change and fosters networks of innovation in policymaking and service delivery (OECD, 2020).

The promotion of citizens' active participation in policy making and transparent decision making is often more tangible at the local level (OECD, 2020). According to the OECD Survey on the Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions, about 41% of people in OECD countries believe that they could have a say in community decisions that affect their local area. In the Netherlands (53.3%), Ireland (51.9%), Canada (51.4%) and Mexico (50.7%) over half of the population expect this to be the case; at the other end of the scale, people are less confident in Colombia (28.5%), Norway (26.7%) and Japan (18.1%) (Figure 4.1). The comparatively low levels in Norway may be partly the result of recent reforms pursuing specialization of services through mergers of municipalities and changes in counties' administrative structure which, nevertheless, by lowering contact and closeness to public services and institutions may have resulted in the perception of more distant governments (OECD, 2022a).

In addition to being able to voice concerns, people need to feel these concerns will be heard and addressed, especially when these have a direct effect on their lives, for example in the provision and quality of public services (OECD, 2022b). On average, in OECD countries only 40.2% of people across countries find it likely that a public service would be improved if many people complained about it. However around half of people in Korea (57.7%), the Netherlands (50.1%) and Estonia (49.8%) expect this to happen (Figure 4.2).

Consultations refer to a more formal and advanced level of participation in which the government seeks people's views on a predefined issue and require the provision of relevant information and feedback (OECD, 2020). The inputs received as part of a participatory process, including consultations, should be given careful and respectful consideration. It is therefore important to close the feedback loop – which refers to the efforts taken by those running a participatory process to get back to participants about the status of their inputs and the ultimate outcome of their participation. By not properly closing the feedback loop, public authorities risk discouraging people from participating again and

potentially reduce the benefits of participation, such as increased sense of trust, efficacy and agency (OECD, 2022c).

The results of the OECD Trust Survey show that only one-third of people across surveyed OECD countries (32.9%) think their government would adopt opinions expressed in a public consultation on a major policy area, such as taxation or healthcare reforms. Korea (48.5%), the Netherlands (41.6%), Canada (40.3%) and Ireland (39.9%) have the best results in this area (Figure 4.3).

#### Methodology and definitions

The OECD explores perceptions of public governance using nationally representative 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.

#### Further reading

OECD (2022a), *Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions in Norway*, Building Trust in Public Institutions, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/81b01318-en>.

OECD (2022b), *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>.

OECD (2022c), *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/f765caf6-en>.

OECD (2020), *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/339306da-en>.

#### Figure notes

4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. Likely corresponds to responses of 6-10 on a 0-10 scale, neutral to 5 and unlikely to responses of 1-4; don't know was a separate option. "OECD" presents the unweighted average across countries.

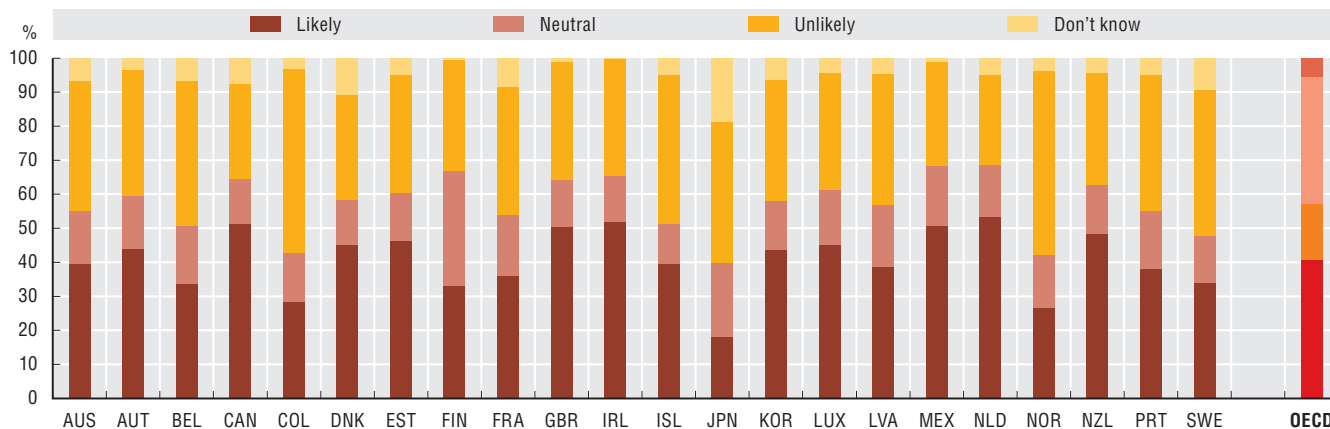
4.1. Refers to the question "If a decision affecting your community is to be made by the local government, how likely or unlikely do you think it is that you would have an opportunity to voice your views?"

4.2. Refers to the question "If many people complained about a public service that is working badly, how likely or unlikely do you think it is that it would be improved?"

4.3. Refers to the question "If you participate in a public consultation on reforming a major policy area (e.g. taxation, healthcare, environmental protection), how likely or unlikely do you think it is that the government would adopt the opinions expressed in the public consultation?" Finland and Norway are excluded from the figure as the data are not available.

4.1. Perceptions of opportunities to influence local decisions, 2021

Share of respondents reporting different levels of likelihood that they would have a voice in community decisions

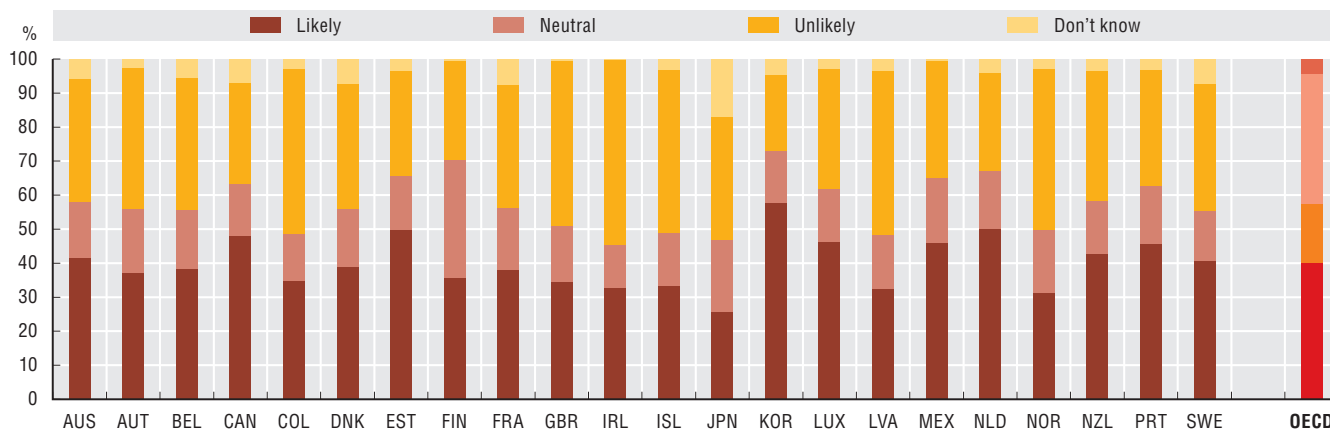


Source: OECD Trust Survey (<http://oe.cd/trust>).

StatLink <https://stat.link/e54tvu>

4.2. Perceptions of responsiveness to public complaints, 2021

Share of respondents reporting different levels of perceived likelihood that a public service that is working badly would be improved if many people complained

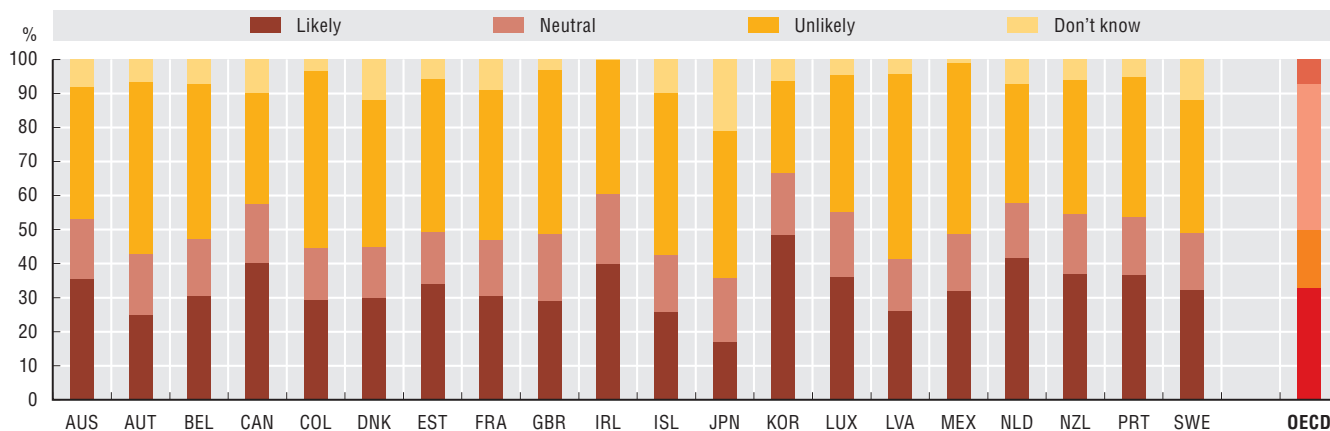


Source: OECD Trust Survey (<http://oe.cd/trust>).

StatLink <https://stat.link/ms6q89>

4.3. Perceptions of efficacy of public consultation, 2021

Share of respondents reporting different levels of likelihood that opinions expressed in a public consultation would be adopted



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

StatLink <https://stat.link/dfwqkl>



**From:**  
**Government at a Glance 2023**

**Access the complete publication at:**

<https://doi.org/10.1787/3d5c5d31-en>

**Please cite this chapter as:**

OECD (2023), "Openness and inclusiveness", in *Government at a Glance 2023*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/662bd661-en>

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>.