

## Reader's guide

**I**n order to accurately interpret the data included in *Government at a Glance 2021*, readers need to be familiar with the following methodological considerations that cut across a number of indicators.

Starting with Chapter 2, individual indicators are presented in a standard format on two pages. The first page contains text that explains the relevance of the topic and highlights some of the major differences observed across OECD countries. This is followed by a “Methodology and definitions” section, which describes the data sources and provides important information necessary to interpret the data. Closing the first page is a “Further reading” section, which lists useful background literature providing context to the data displayed. The second page showcases the data. Figures show current levels and, where possible, trends over time. A glossary of the main definitions of the publication can be found in the final chapter of the book.

### Definition of government

Data on public finances are based on the definition of the “general government” sector 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 and publicly owned resident enterprises and companies. Finally, data on public management practices and processes refer to practices and processes at the central level of government only.

### Calendar year/fiscal year in National Accounts data

Unless specified, data from the OECD National Accounts are based on calendar years.

Data for Australia and New Zealand refer to fiscal years: 1 July of the year indicated to 30 June for Australia and 1 April of the year indicated to 31 March for New Zealand. For Japan, data regarding sub-sectors of general government and expenditures by classification of the functions of government (COFOG) refer to fiscal year.

The data on public finances and economics, based on the *System of National Accounts (SNA)*, were extracted from the *OECD National Accounts Statistics (database)* and the *Eurostat Government Finance Statistics (database)* on 11 May 2021. The data on public employment were extracted from the *OECD National Accounts Statistics (database)* and the *ILOSTAT (database)* on 12 April 2021.

## Country coverage

*Government at a Glance 2021* includes data for all 37 OECD countries based on available information. The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Some additional non-member countries, such as Costa Rica, and the Russian Federation<sup>1</sup> (accession countries to the OECD) as well as other OECD key partners (i.e. Brazil, People's Republic of China, India, Indonesia and South Africa) and Romania also supplied data for some indicators. Data for these non-member countries are presented separately at the end of tables and figures.

## Country abbreviations

OECD countries			
Australia	AUS	Norway	NOR
Austria	AUT	Poland	POL
Belgium	BEL	Portugal	PRT
Canada	CAN	Slovak Republic	SVK
Chile	CHL	Slovenia	SVN
Colombia	COL	Spain	ESP
Czech Republic	CZE	Sweden	SWE
Denmark	DNK	Switzerland	CHE
Estonia	EST	Turkey	TUR
Finland	FIN	United Kingdom	GBR
France	FRA	United States	USA
Germany	DEU		
Greece	GRC		
Hungary	HUN	<b>OECD accession countries*</b>	
Iceland	ISL	Costa Rica	CRI
Ireland	IRL	Russian Federation (hereafter "Russia")	RUS
Israel	ISR		
Italy	ITA	<b>OECD key partners</b>	
Japan	JPN	Brazil	BRA
Korea	KOR	People's Republic of China (hereafter "China")	CHN
Latvia	LVA	India	IND
Lithuania	LTU	Indonesia	IDN
Luxembourg	LUX	South Africa	ZAF
Mexico	MEX		
Netherlands	NLD	<b>Other non OECD countries</b>	
New Zealand	NZL	Romania	ROU

\* Note: With regard to the Russian Federation, see Note 1 above.

## OECD averages and totals

Costa Rica was not an OECD member at the time of preparation of this publication. Accordingly, Costa Rica does not appear in the list of OECD members and is not included in the zone aggregates.

## Averages

In figures, the OECD average is presented as the unweighted, arithmetic mean or weighted average of the OECD countries for which data are available. It does not include data for non-member countries. In the notes, OECD countries for which data are not available are listed.

If a figure depicts information for one or more years, the OECD average includes all OECD countries with available data. For instance, an OECD average for 2007 published in this edition includes all current OECD countries with available information for that year, even if they were not members of the OECD at that time.

In the case of *National Accounts* data, averages refer to the weighted average, unless otherwise indicated. The OECD average is calculated through 2019 as not all OECD countries have data available for 2020. However, together with the OECD average, this edition includes also the OECD-EU average. The OECD-EU group comprises countries which are members of both the OECD and the European Union in 2020 (namely Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden; the United Kingdom is not part of this composition as it is no longer an EU member country). For these OECD and OECD-EU averages, the method of aggregation for the calculation of the indicators expressed as ratios (e.g. government expenditures in terms of GDP) use the denominator as weight (in this case the GDP, market prices, which is expressed in PPP).

## Totals

OECD totals are most commonly found in tables and represent the sum of data in the corresponding column for the OECD countries for which data are available. Totals do not include data for non-member countries. In the notes, OECD countries for which data are not available are listed.

## Online supplements

For several indicators, additional tables and figures presenting country-specific data or annexes with complementary information on the indicator methodology can be found online. When available, these are noted in the “Methodology and definitions” section of the indicator. *Government at a Glance 2021* also offers access to StatLinks, a service that allows readers to download the featured data’s corresponding Excel files. StatLinks is found at the bottom right-hand corner of the tables or figures and can be typed into a web browser or, in an electronic version of the publication, clicked on directly.

In addition, the following supplementary materials are available online at: <https://www.oecd.org/gov/govataglance.htm>:

- country fact sheets that present key data by country compared with the OECD average
- the *Government at a Glance* statistical database, which includes regularly updated data for a selection of quantitative indicators via *OECD.Stat* and the publication of qualitative data for the surveys collected by the Public Governance Directorate of the OECD via a dedicated web platform
- country contextual notes that present contextual information describing some key features of the political and administrative structures for each member country.

## Per capita indicators

Some indicators (e.g. expenditures, revenues and government debt) are shown on a per capita (i.e. per person) basis. The underlying population estimates are based on the System of National Accounts notion of residency. They include persons who are resident in a country for one year or more, regardless of their citizenship, and also include foreign diplomatic personnel and defence personnel together with their families, students studying and patients seeking treatment abroad, even if they stay abroad for more than one year. The one-year rule means that usual residents who live abroad for less than one year are included in the population, while foreign visitors (for example, tourists) who are in the country for less than one year are excluded. An important point to note in this context is that individuals may feature as employees of one country (contributing to the gross domestic product [GDP] of that country via production), but residents of another (with their wages and salaries reflected in the gross national income of their resident country).

## Purchasing power parities

Purchasing power parities (PPPs) are the rates of currency conversion that equalise the purchasing power of different countries by eliminating differences in price levels between countries. When converted by means of PPPs, expenditures across countries are in effect expressed at the same set of prices, meaning that an equivalent bundle of goods and services will have the same cost in both countries, enabling comparisons across countries that reflect only the differences in the volume of goods and services purchased.

PPPs for current and historical series are produced and updated by the OECD with a specific procedure. PPPs for a given year T are published in five steps:

1. at T+2 months: first PPP estimates, for GDP only
2. at T+6 months: second PPP estimates, based on detailed extrapolations, for GDP, households' actual individual consumption (AIC) and individual household consumption (IHC)
3. at T+12 months: third PPP estimates, incorporating all price and expenditure data for year T
4. at T+24 months: fourth PPP estimates, incorporating updated expenditure estimates
5. at T+36 months: final PPP estimates for year T.

Historical PPP data until 2012 may be revised in December each year in order to incorporate revisions in National Accounts' deflators. In December 2016, historical PPP data until 2012 were exceptionally revised for all European countries.

Additional information is also available at [www.oecd.org/sdd/prices-ppp/](http://www.oecd.org/sdd/prices-ppp/).

## Composite indicators

This publication includes descriptive composite indexes in narrowly defined areas related to digital government, human resources management and key features (i.e. independence and accountability) of sectoral regulators. These composite indexes are a practical way of summarising discrete, qualitative information. The composites presented in this publication were created in accordance with the steps identified in the *Handbook on Constructing Composite Indicators* (Nardo, et al., 2008)<sup>2</sup>.

Details about the methodology used to construct the digital government and human resource management composite indicators are available in Annexes E and F. While the

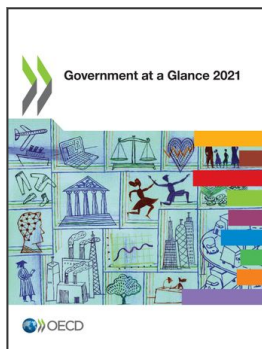
composite indicators were developed in co-operation with OECD countries and are based on theory and/or best practices, the variables included in the indexes and their relative weights are based on expert judgments and, as a result, may change over time. Details about the composites on sectoral regulators can be found in Casullo, Durand and Cavassini (2019).<sup>3</sup>

## Signs and acronyms

Sign/acronym	Meaning
..	Missing values
x	Not applicable (unless otherwise stated)
ADR	Alternative dispute resolution
ATI	Access to information
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
CEPEJ	Council of Europe European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice
CIO	Chief information officer
COFOG	Classification of the Functions of Government
CoG	Centre of government
CPA	Central public administration
GDP	Gross domestic product
GFS	Government Financial Statistics
GFSM	Government Finance Statistics Manual
HR	Human resources
HRM	Human resources management
ICT	Information and communication technology
IFI	Independent fiscal institutions
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IODC	International Open Data Charter
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IT	Information technology
OCSC	Office of the Civil Service Commission
OGD	Open government data
PBOs	Parliamentary budget offices
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
p.p.	Percentage points
PPPs	Purchasing power parities / private-public partnerships
PR	Proportional representation
PRP	Performance-related pay
R&D	Research and development
RBC	Responsible business conduct
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDRs	Special drawing rights
SHRM	Strategic human resources management
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SNA	System of National Accounts
VAT	Value-added tax
WEO	World Economic Outlook
WJP	World Justice Project

## Notes

1. With regard to the Russian Federation, on 12 March 2014 the OECD Council “postponed activities related to the OECD accession process for the Russian Federation for the time being”. For more information, see <http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/statement-by-the-oecd-regarding-the-status-of-the-accession-process-with-russia-and-co-operation-with-ukraine.htm>
2. Nardo M, Saisana M, Saltelli A, Tarantola S, Hoffmann A, and Giovannini E. (2008) *Handbook on Constructing Composite Indicators: Methodology and User Guide*. OECD publishing, Paris.
3. Casullo, L., A. Durand and F. Cavassini (2019), «The 2018 Indicators on the Governance of Sector Regulators - Part of the Product Market Regulation (PMR) Survey», *OECD Economics Department Working Papers*, No. 1564, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/a0a28908-en>.



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