4.2 Tools to increase the reach and inclusiveness of stakeholders' participation

Stakeholder participation is recognised as a pillar of good governance, enabling responsive and open policy making, thereby bolstering public trust in government and democratic resilience (OECD, 2022a). Accordingly, many countries mandate the participation of stakeholders in legislation development and design corresponding strategies. All 13 of the surveyed Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries with data available have legislation on stakeholder participation in policy making, and on petitions or other forms of citizen initiative. In 10 of the 13 countries (77%), there are legislative provisions on handling citizens' complaints. The collection and use of citizen feedback by government entities is less commonly covered, with only 7 out of 13 countries (54%) having a legal provision for this (Figure 4.4).

Countries in the LAC region have strategies to enhance the participation of different groups in society. For instance, all 15 of the surveyed LAC countries have specific strategies to promote the inclusion of women in their policy-making processes. In addition, 14 out of 15 (93%) have strategies to enhance youth participation and individuals with special needs. The range of strategies also varies widely by country, with Costa Rica and Panama having a strategy to encourage the participation of all nine groups listed in the survey, while other countries just have strategies for a few groups (Figure 4.5).

Governments are using digital tools to increase the scope and impact of participatory processes (OECD, 2022b). Among surveyed OECD countries, 30 out of 32 have at least one digital platform for citizen participation (94%), compared to 10 of the 15 surveyed LAC countries (67%). Four LAC countries (27%) have a single government portal compared to 15 OECD countries (47%) (Figure 4.6). Enhancing the use of these portals should be accompanied by policies to address potential digital divides and ensuring all voices are heard.

Among other factors, the impact of participation portals depends on the functionalities they offer. The most common function of portals in LAC countries is carrying out online consultations, which are offered in 8 out of the 10 countries with portals. Other common functions include providing feedback on inputs received and providing information about past opportunities for participation (both offered by 7 out of 10 countries) or providing information about upcoming consultations or related background documents (both offered by 6 out of 10 countries). Uruguay has a single participation portal with all listed functionalities, while Ecuador has multiple participation portals which share several of the listed functionalities; in contrast Panama's participation portal only has one of the surveyed functionalities, underlining the differences in the functionalities available to citizens for participation across the region (Online Figure F.2.1).

Methodology and definitions

Data were collected through the OECD Survey on Open Government, conducted between November 2020 and March 2021, and the OECD-IDB Survey on Open Government, conducted in 2022 in 15 Latin American and Caribbean countries. Respondents were delegates to the OECD Working Party on Open Government who co-ordinated the response across their respective governments.

Citizens refer to individuals, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation or religious and political affiliations. The term is meant in the wider sense of "an inhabitant of a particular place". It is not meant in the narrower sense of "a legally recognised national of a state". In this wider sense, it is equivalent to people.

Stakeholders are any interested and/or affected party, including individuals, institutions and organisations, whether governmental or non-governmental, from civil society, academia, the media or the private sector.

Stakeholder participation is understood as all the ways in which citizens and stakeholders can be involved in the policy cycle and in service design and delivery.

Further reading

OECD (2022a), *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.

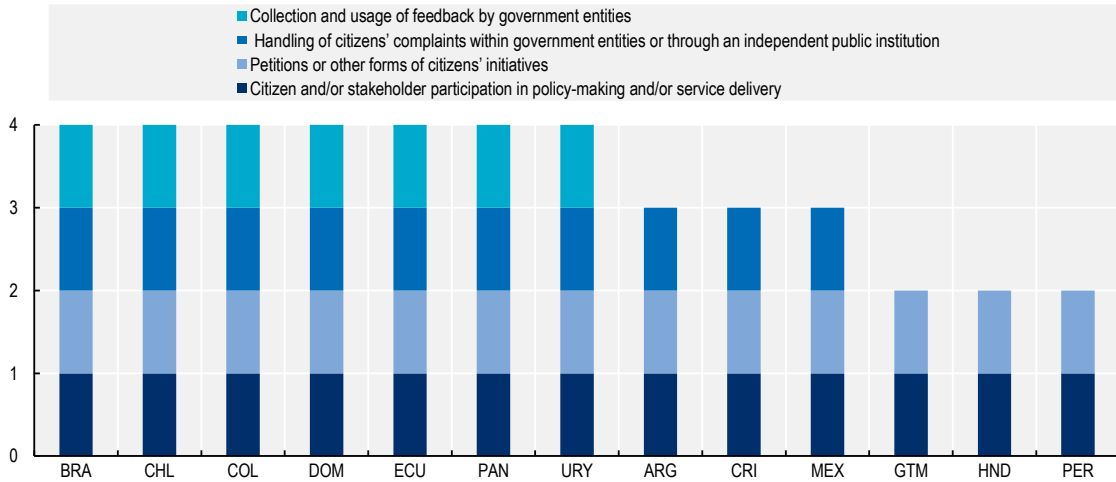OECD (2022b), *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/f765caf6-en.

OECD (2017), "Recommendation of the Council on Open Government", *OECD Legal Instruments*, OECD, Paris, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438.

Figure notes

Figure 4.4. Data for Jamaica and Paraguay are not available.

F.2.1 (Functions of participation portals, 2021) is available online in Annex F.
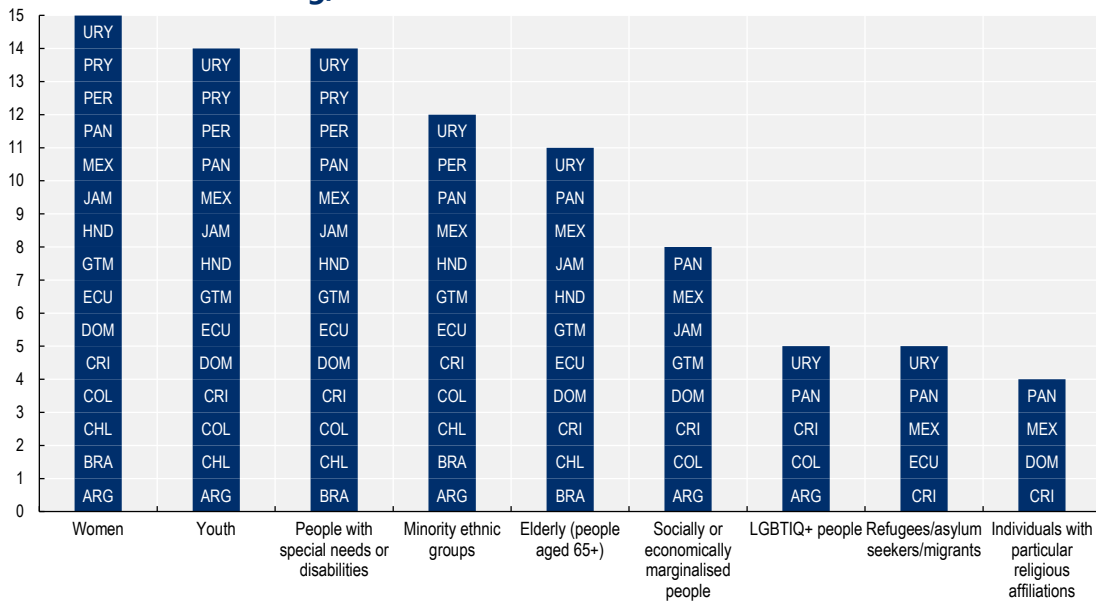
Figure 4.4. Open government elements for which there are legal provisions, 2021

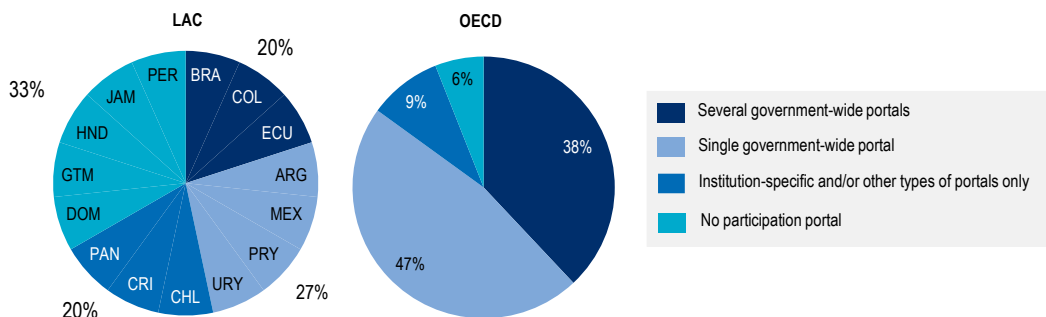Source: OECD-IDB (2022), Survey on Open Government; OECD (2021), Survey on Open Government.

StatLink https://stat.link/412vhd

Figure 4.5. Groups for which there is a dedicated strategy or policy to encourage their participation in decision making, 2021

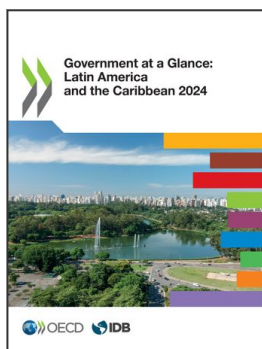Source: OECD-IDB (2022), Survey on Open Government; OECD (2021), Survey on Open Government.

StatLink https://stat.link/8ur4yt

Figure 4.6. Availability of government-wide portals to facilitate citizen and stakeholder participation, 2021

Source: OECD-IDB (2022), Survey on Open Government; OECD (2021), Survey on Open Government.

StatLink https://stat.link/pjdqf3

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