29. E-Government readiness

A high level of readiness to develop and implement e-government services is a prerequisite for a high-performing and innovative public sector that delivers integrated services, making life easier for citizens and businesses. E-government readiness is therefore a significant indicator of whether a country is prepared to harvest efficiencies gained from ICT-enabled public administrations.

The UN's e-government readiness index is a combined indicator of the supply of, potential demand for and maturity of e-government services. OECD member countries exhibit a high capacity to develop and implement e-government services. This is generally characterised by an extensive broadband infrastructure; a repository of electronic information on government laws and policies, including links to archived information and downloadable forms; and a high level of comfort with ICT by citizens and businesses. Countries with the highest readiness index tend to also have a large amount of transactional and e-commerce features on their government websites. As noted by the UN in its 2008 e-government survey, the Scandinavian countries with the top three scores on the readiness index all generally share similar e-government environments (*e.g.* the accessibility and penetration of the electronic infrastructure) and strategies (*e.g.* the online provision of services). Each country has two main government websites: one that is informative and another that is a gateway for e-government services. In addition, citizens and businesses are able to access many services and complete many transactions online. However, similar levels of e-government readiness can also result from different strategic approaches.

Internet access is a prerequisite for citizens and businesses to use e-government services, and thus a leading indicator of countries' readiness to harness the potential efficiencies of ICT. Broadband penetration has increased dramatically in most OECD member countries in the past five years as countries have made significant investments in their telecommunications infrastructure.

Methodology and definitions

The UN e-government readiness index is an internationally agreed-upon composite index that measures the capacity of governments to develop and implement e-government services. The index ranges from 0 (low level of readiness) to 1 (high level of readiness). Constructed within the framework of the UN global e-government survey, the indicator consists of three sub-indices: the web measure index, the telecommunication infrastructure index and the human capital index.

The web measure index ranks countries based on the coverage, sophistication and availability of e-services and e-products. The index categorises countries as having an emerging, enhanced, interactive, transactional or networked e-government presence.

The telecommunication infrastructure index is a weighted average of 5 measures of ICT infrastructure capacity per 100 persons: number of personal computers, number of Internet users, number of telephone lines, number of broad-band subscriptions and number of mobile phones.

The human capital index is a weighted average of the adult literacy rate (two-thirds weight) and the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio (one-third weight). For more information on the methodology used to construct this index, see the source listed below. Note that it does not take into account other potentially important aspects of readiness, such as laws on privacy and data protection.

Broadband penetration is the number of broadband subscribers (DSL, Cable, Fibre/LAN, other) per 100 inhabitants and is based on data collected by the OECD from member country governments. 29.2 shows both the cumulative and the incremental change in broadband subscriptions between 2003 and 2008.

Further reading

United Nations (2008), E-Government Survey, *From e-Government to Connected Governance*, United Nations Publication, New York.

Note

29.1: For Austria, the 2008 UN survey did not include the main national e-government portal *Help.gv.at*. It complements the sites of central, regional and local authorities providing one-stop-shop access to information and transaction services for citizens and businesses, thus playing a key role in Austrian e-government.

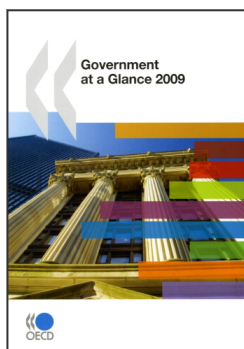### 29.1 E-Government readiness (2008)
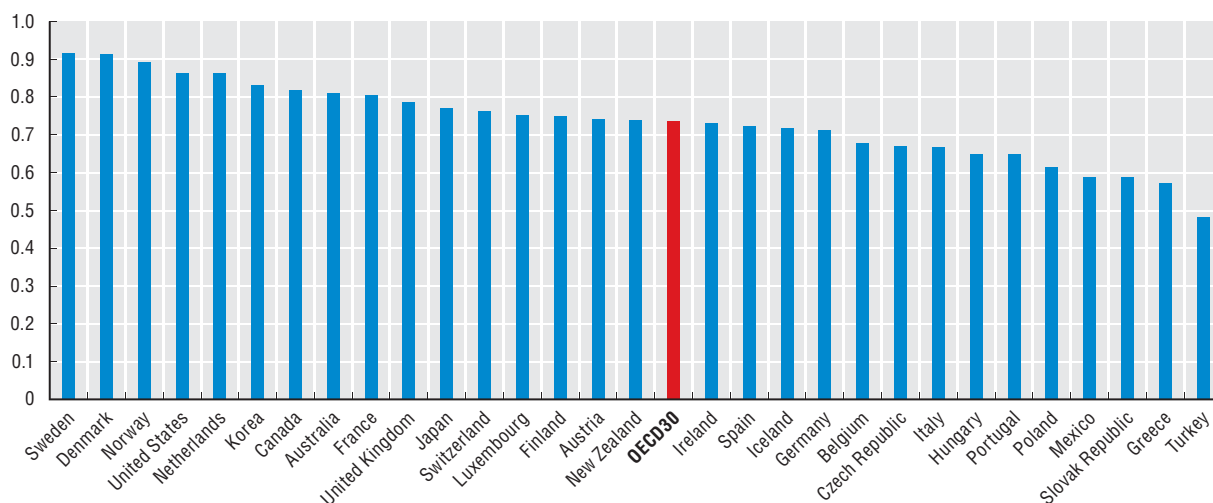
Source: United Nations E-Government Readiness Knowledge Base, *www.unpan.org/egovkb*. Data extracted on 30 July 2008.

29.2 Cumulative broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants (2003-08)
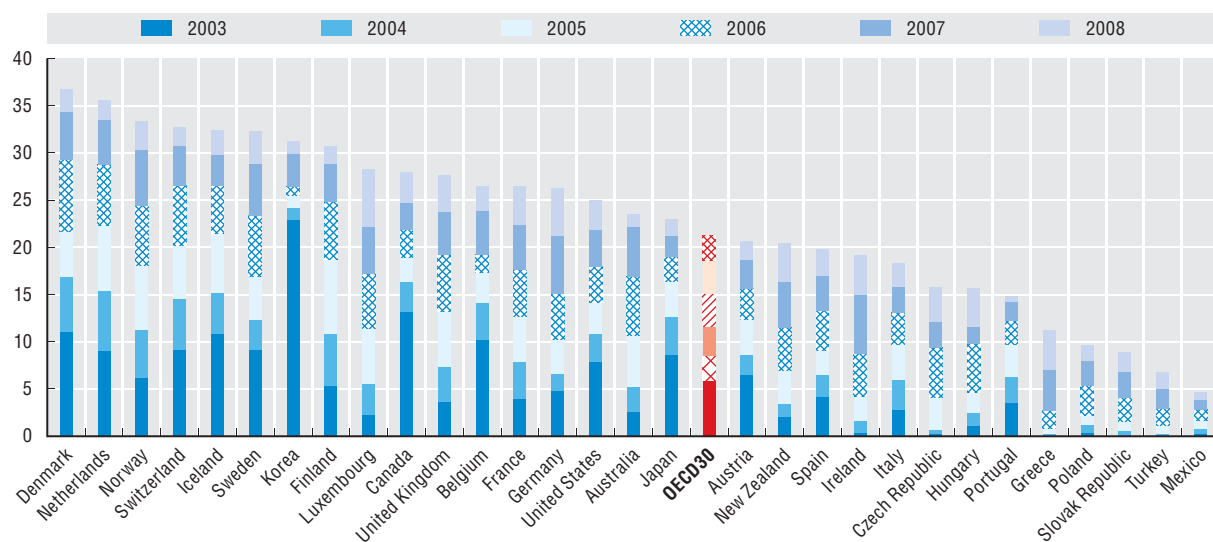
Source: OECD Broadband Portal (2008).

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