

Reader's guide

In order to accurately interpret the data included in *Government at a Glance 2015*, readers need to be familiar with the following methodological considerations that cut across a number of indicators. The standard format for the presentation of indicators is 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. It 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 the “Further reading” section, which lists useful background literature providing context to the data displayed. The second page showcases the data. These 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.

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 COFOG refer to fiscal year.

The data 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 8 May 2015.

Country coverage

Government at a Glance 2015 includes data for all 34 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 Colombia, Latvia and the Russian Federation* (accession countries to the OECD), other major economies of the world (i.e. Brazil, People's Republic of China, India, Indonesia and South Africa) as well as others that have participant status to the Public Governance Committee of the OECD (e.g. Ukraine) also supplied data for some indicators. Data for these non-member countries are presented separately at the end of tables and figures.

* 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” (www.oecd.org/newsroom/statement-by-the-oecd-regarding-the-status-of-the-accession-process-with-russia-and-cooperation-with-ukraine.htm).

Abbreviation codes

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

* With regard to the Russian Federation, see footnote above. On 9 April 2015, the OECD Council decided to open accession discussions with Costa Rica and Lithuania (data for these two countries are not included in the publication).

OECD averages and totals

Averages

In figures, the OECD average is presented either as unweighted, arithmetic mean and/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 with unavailable data are listed. In the text, the reference is made for the OECD weighted average, unless otherwise indicated.

When the two OECD averages are not shown in an indicator, the OECD average refers to the unweighted, arithmetic mean.

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 2009 includes all current OECD countries with available information for that year, even if at that time they were not members of the OECD.

In the case of *National Accounts* data, OECD averages are calculated until 2013, as not all OECD countries (mainly, OECD non-European countries) have available data for 2014 .

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 with unavailable data are mentioned.

Online supplements

Several indicators include additional online tables and figures that present country-specific data. When available, these are noted in the “Methodology and definitions” section of the indicator. *Government at a Glance 2015* also offers access to StatLinks, a service that allows readers to download the corresponding Excel files of the data featured. 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: www.oecd.org/gov/govataglance.htm:

- Country fact sheets that present key data by country compared with the OECD average.
- *Government at a Glance* statistical database that includes regularly updated data for a selection of quantitative indicators via OECD.Stat and the publication of qualitative data for the GOV surveys 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 (e.g. 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 defense 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, vacationers) 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 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 should be read with the following information:

- 2007, 2009 and 2013: PPPs for European countries are annual benchmark results provided by Eurostat. PPPs for non-European countries and Russia are OECD estimates.
- 2008, 2011: PPPs for all OECD countries and Russia are triennial benchmark results calculated jointly by the OECD and Eurostat.
- 2014: PPPs for all countries are preliminary OECD estimates and should be taken with caution.
- Chile: Data for Chile from 2007 to 2009 are OECD estimates and have been revised with the introduction of the 2011 benchmark results.
- More information is available on the OECD PPP Internet site: www.oecd.org/std/prices-ppp.

Composite indicators

The publication includes several descriptive composite indexes in narrowly defined areas related to conflict of interest and open government data. 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).

Details about the variables and weights used to construct the conflict of interest and open government data composites are available in Annex D and Annex E, respectively. While the composite indicators were developed in co-operation with OECD countries and are based on theory and/or best practices, the variables composing the indexes and their relative weights are based on expert judgments and, as a result, may change over time.

Signs and abbreviations

..	Missing values
x	Not applicable (unless otherwise stated)
p.p.	Percentage points
UWA	Unweighted average
WA	Weighted average
PPP	Purchasing Power Parities
EUR	euros
USD	US dollars



From:
Government at a Glance 2015

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2015-en

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2015), "Reader's guide", in *Government at a Glance 2015*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2015-4-en

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