

3. GDP per capita

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is a core indicator of economic performance and commonly used as a broad measure of average living standards or economic well-being; despite some recognised shortcomings.

For example average GDP per capita gives no indication of how GDP is distributed between citizens. Average GDP per capita may rise for example but more people may be worse off if income inequalities also increase.

Equally, in some countries (see Comparability), there may be a significant number of non-resident border or seasonal workers or indeed inflows and outflows of property income and both phenomena imply that the value of production differs from the income of residents, thereby over or understating their living standards.

A full discussion of these issues can be found in the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report (see “Further reading”).

Definition

The definition for GDP is described in Section 1 and population estimates are described in the “Reader’s guide”.

A focus on per capita GDP is also useful in decomposing drivers of overall GDP growth. For example real GDP can grow without there being any improvement in real GDP per capita. Decomposing per capita growth into two parts, labour productivity growth (measured as GDP per hour worked) and labour utilisation growth (measured as hours worked per capita) is helpful in this context.

Comparability

The comparability of population and GDP estimates across countries is good (see Section 1). However, some care is

needed in interpretation, for example Luxembourg and, to a lesser extent, Switzerland have a relatively large number of frontier workers. Such workers contribute to GDP but are excluded from the population figures, which is one of the reasons why cross-country comparisons of income per capita based on gross or net national income (GDI and NNI) are often preferred, see second chapter on Income. (See also “Reader’s guide”, relating to PPP based comparisons.)

Source

- OECD (2012), *National Accounts of OECD Countries*, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/2221433x>.

Online database

- OECD (2012), “Aggregate National Accounts: Gross domestic product”, *OECD National Accounts Statistics* (database), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/data-00001-en>.

Further reading

- Lequiller, F. and D. Blades (2007), *Understanding National Accounts*, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264027657-en>.
- OECD (2002), *Measuring the Non-Observed Economy: A Handbook*, International Labour Office/International Monetary Fund/International Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264175358-en>.
- OECD (2000), *System of National Accounts, 1993 – Glossary*, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264180871-en>.
- Report of the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Report), www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr.
- UN, OECD, IMF, World Bank and Eurostat (eds.) (1993 and 2008), *System of National Accounts*, United Nations, Geneva, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/sna.asp>.

Table 3.1. **Gross domestic product per capita, OECD = 100**

Based on current PPPs

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Australia	115	117	115	115	117	119	118	118	117	117	115	121	120	120 e
Austria	119	118	118	115	117	117	117	114	116	115	117	119	118	120
Belgium	110	110	113	113	116	113	111	109	109	108	109	112	112	111
Canada	116	118	117	116	115	117	117	119	117	116	115	115	115	115 e
Chile	41 e	40 e	39 e	40 e	40 e	40	42	43	44	44	45	46	48	49
Czech Republic	65	64	64	67	68	70	71	72	74	77	76	78	75	75
Denmark	118	117	118	117	119	114	115	112	114	114	118	116	119	117
Estonia	38	38	40	42	46	50	52	56	61	65	65	60	60	62
Finland	102	103	105	105	106	103	106	104	105	109	112	108	107	107
France	103	103	103	106	107	102	100	100	100	100	101	102	101	100
Germany	109	109	106	106	106	106	105	105	106	107	109	110	111	113
Greece	74 e	73 e	75 e	78 e	82 e	84 e	85 e	82	85	84	87	89	82	74
Hungary	48	48	49	53	57	57	58	57	58	57	60	61	60	61
Iceland	126	124	118	121	120	115	120	118	114	112	116	112	105	103
Ireland	109	113	118	122	128	130	130	131	134	136	125	121	120	120
Israel ¹	94	93	96	92	90	83	83	78	76	77	75	77	78	80 e
Italy	108	106	106	108	104	102	98	96	96	97	98	98	94	94
Japan	110	107	106	105	105	105	104	103	101	101	99	98	99	97 e
Korea	63	68	70	72	76	76	77	77	77	79	79	82	85	86
Luxembourg	195	213	220	214	221	227	231	231	249	255	249	243	251	254
Mexico	40 e	40 e	41 e	40 e	40 e	41	41	42	44	44	45	44	45	46 e
Netherlands	115	117	121	122	123	119	118	119	121	123	127	125	124	122
New Zealand	86	88	86	87	88	88	87	85	86	86	86	89	87 e	86 e
Norway	124	130	148	147	143	143	151	161	171	169	181	166	169	176
Poland	43	43	43	43	45	45	46	47	48	51	53	58	59	61 e
Portugal	71	73	73	73	74	73	71	72	73	73	74	76	75	72
Slovak Republic	47	45	45	48	50	51	52	55	58	63	68	69	69	69
Slovenia	71	73	72	73	76	77	79	79	81	82	86	83	80	79
Spain	85	86	87	90	93	93	92	93	96	97	98	98	94	92
Sweden	110	113	115	112	113	114	115	111	113	116	117	113	116	118
Switzerland	137	133	133	131	132	128	126	124	129	134	140	141	143	146
Turkey	39	36	38	34	33	33	36	39	41	42	44	44	46	50
United Kingdom	106	106	107	109	111	111	113	111	111	108	106	105	105	102
United States	143	145	144	142	142	143	143	143	141	140	138	137	137	137
Euro area	101	101	100	102	103	101	100	99	100	101	102	103	101	101
OECD-Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

1. Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.


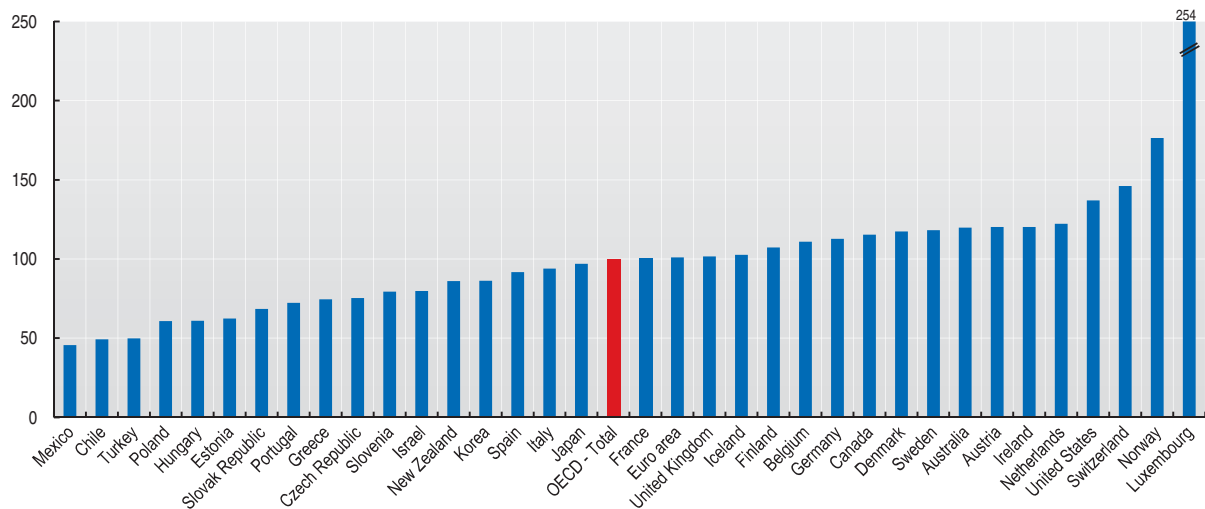

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932762273>

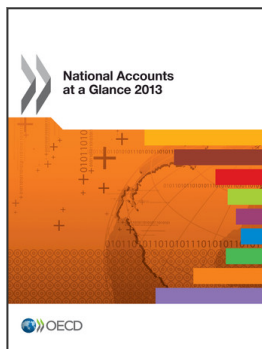
Figure 3.1. **Gross domestic product per capita, OECD = 100**

Based on current PPPs, 2011



Note: Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932761570>



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