

Introduction

The *Government at a Glance* series aims to provide reliable, internationally comparative data on government activities and their results in OECD countries and beyond. In turn, these data can be used by countries to benchmark their governments' performance, to track domestic and international developments over time and to provide evidence to their public policy making. The indicators in *Government at a Glance* are becoming themselves a measuring standard in many fields of public governance. In addition to the core indicators that constitute the trademark of the publication, this fifth edition includes a selection of new indicators and additional data sources, allowing for a more complete picture the work and results of public administrations across OECD countries.

What's new in *Government at a Glance* 2017?

The 2017 edition of *Government at a Glance* provides a mix between core chapters which remain stable in every edition and new features. The core chapters of *Government at a Glance* are Chapter 2: Public finance and economics, Chapter 3: Public employment and pay, Chapter 5: Budgeting practices and procedures, Chapter 6: Human resources management, Chapter 7: Public sector integrity, Chapter 8: Regulatory governance, Chapter 9: Public procurement, Chapter 13: Core government results, and Chapter 14: Serving citizens. In addition to those core chapters, this edition presents a series of new and consolidated features:

- Two new chapters are dedicated to public sector innovation and risk governance. Both topics are essential to ensure that government can successfully address governance challenges and deal with crises, while benefitting from technological advancements that facilitate more effective and efficient government action. The chapter on risk management and communication provides insights into how OECD countries assess, prevent, and respond to the effects of critical risks including natural disasters and other types of risks. It draws on two new OECD surveys on risk communication and on the governance of critical risks. The chapter on public sector innovation presents an overview of OECD countries' efforts to foster the use of innovative approaches in public administration to make it more open, collaborative and participatory.
- *Government at a Glance* 2017 draws on a range of brand-new data in the areas of human resource management as well as public employment and pay. This includes
 - An update of the Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management and composite indicators (last presented in 2011), including previously covered topics such as delegation in HRM, staff performance management, practices in place for senior civil servants and new areas like data-informed human resource management;
 - An update of the Survey on the Compensation of Employees in Central/Federal Governments (last presented in 2013) that collects information on employees' salaries and employer contributions in different occupational groups;

New survey data on the composition of the workforce in the central/federal government by occupational group, age, and gender.

- This edition also features new composite indicators that provide a snapshot of country practices in specific areas of public governance. The update of the composite indicator on open government data provides policy insights on the level of availability, accessibility and government support for the reuse of data. It builds on the International Open Data Charter and on the analytical framework developed by the OECD. The Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance (iREG) are displayed for the first time in the chapter on regulatory governance. They provide information on practices in place in OECD countries for Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA), stakeholder engagement and *ex post* evaluation of regulation and build on the 2012 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Regulatory Policy and Governance.
- The publication also provides a series of new indicators on different aspects of public governance. The chapter on institutions presents recent data on policy advisory systems and the role of the Centre of Government in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in OECD countries. The chapter on open government includes new indicators on OECD countries' open government strategy, the enabling environment for open government, as well as citizen participation. Other new indicators cover infrastructure governance from a budgeting and a public procurement perspective, gender budgeting, and innovative areas in regulatory governance like the use of behavioural insights and international regulatory co-operation in international organisations.
- Finally, to highlight the growing focus on outcomes, a serving citizens scorecard is presented for the first time in this edition of *Government at a Glance* comparing the level of access, responsiveness and quality in the health care, education and justice system.

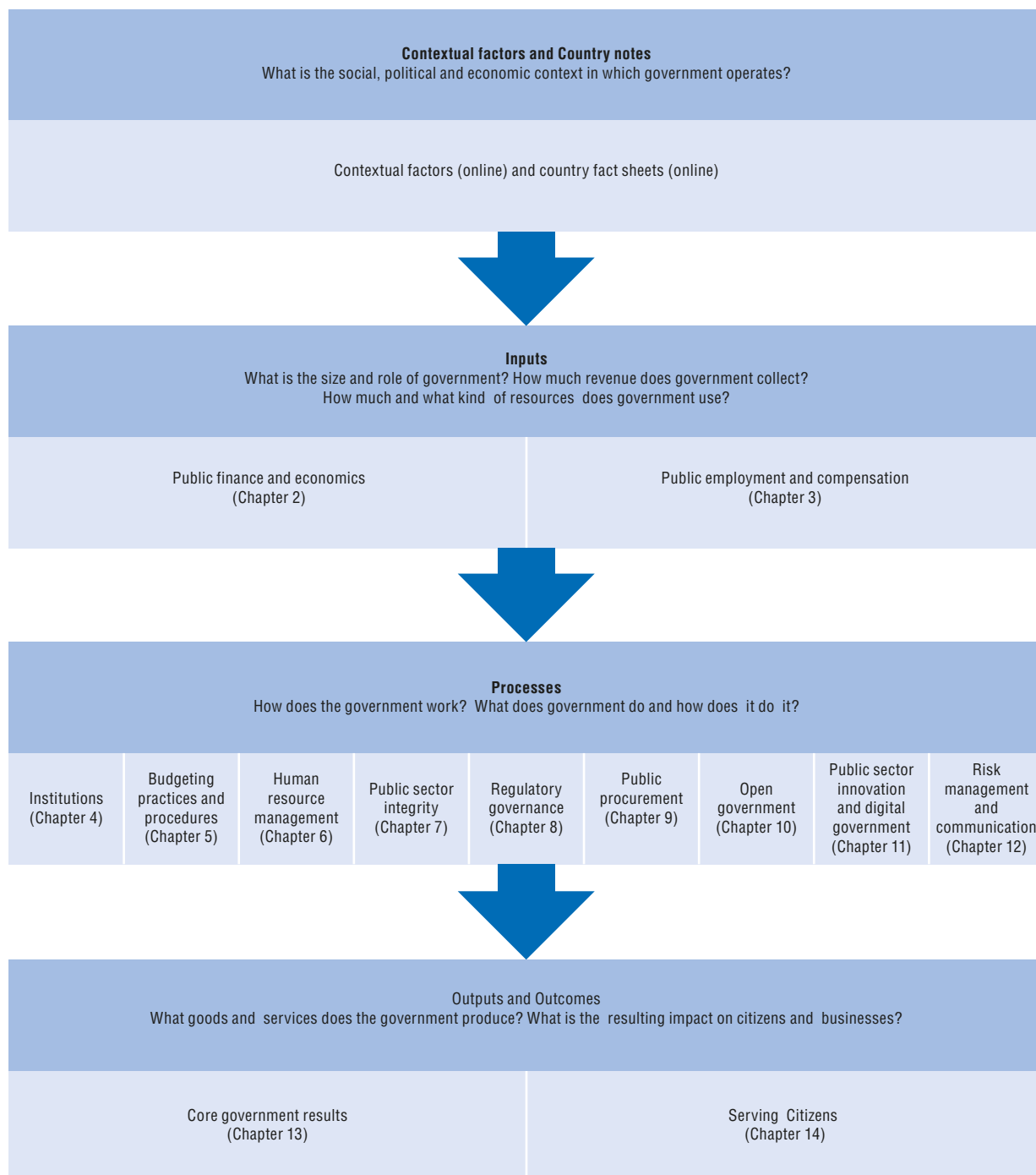
Definition of government

Data on public finances are based on the definition of the sector “general government” 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. However, data on employment refer to the public sector, which covers both general government as well as public corporations, such as publicly owned banks, harbours and airports. Finally, data on public management practices and processes refer to those practices and processes in the central level of government only.

Framework and structure of the publication

Government at a Glance covers the 35 OECD countries, and also includes data, when available, on accession countries (Colombia, Costa Rica, Lithuania and Russia) as well as other major economies of the world such as Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa. These countries play a significant and increasing role in the world economy and in international political structures.

This fifth edition of *Government at a Glance* includes contextual information as well as input, process, output and outcome indicators. Figure 0.1 presents the conceptual framework for *Government at a Glance*.

Figure 0.1. **Conceptual framework for Government at a Glance 2017**

Context

Contextual factors (online) present information on some key features of the political and administrative structures for each OECD country. Considering contextual information makes it possible to understand the major institutional differences and similarities amongst countries, and thereby help to identify comparators for benchmarking purposes. In addition, the country fact sheets (online) provide a country-by-country storyline on how the data

provided in the *Government at a Glance* publication apply to the specific context of public sector reforms in OECD countries, and some accession countries.

Inputs

Inputs refer to the resources used by governments in their production function, as well as the way in which they are mixed; these resources correspond to labour and capital. The chapters that describe these inputs are Public finance and economics, Public employment and compensation, including indicators on government expenditures, production costs, employment, and the composition of the public sector workforce. Differences in these indicators can help to understand the different capacities of governments in producing and delivering public goods to citizens.

Processes

Processes refer to the public management practices and procedures undertaken by governments to implement policies. These address the means used by public administrations to fulfil their duties and obtain their goals. In consequence, they are often essential for ensuring the rule of law, accountability, fairness and openness of government actions. Public sector reforms often target these processes; as such they capture the public's attention. This edition includes information on government institutions, budget practices and procedures, human resource management, public sector integrity (public integrity systems, and internal control and risk management), regulatory governance, public procurement, open government, public sector innovation, and risk management and communication.

Outputs and outcomes

The dividing line between outputs and outcomes can be blurry. While outputs refer to the amount of goods and services produced by governments, outcomes show the effects of policies and practices on citizens and businesses. The success of a given policy should be measured, at a first stage, by outputs but should ultimately be judged by the outcomes it achieves. Generally speaking, outcomes refer to the effects of public programmes and services on citizens, in terms of welfare gains, health gains, educational/learning gains, and so on. While these outcomes can certainly be affected by the quality of programmes and services provided, they can also be affected by other factors, such as the socio-economic background of the population and individual behavioural factors.

In *Government at a Glance 2017*, measures of outputs and outcomes are provided in two distinct chapters:

The Core government results chapter focuses on whole-of-government aspects such as the confidence of citizens in their national government, perception of corruption, the rule of law, income redistribution and broad measures of public sector efficiency (output-based) and cost effectiveness (outcome-based).

The Serving citizens chapter follows a sectoral approach to measuring outputs and outcomes of public sector activities. Based on a consolidated framework developed horizontally with other OECD directorates and in collaboration with OECD countries, the chapter provides measures of services to citizens in terms of access, responsiveness and quality. This year's edition focuses on three sectors: health care, education and the judicial system.

Future activities

In order to produce *Government at a Glance*, the OECD works in close co-operation with other organisations, including the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Justice Project, the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), Gallup and the European Commission, to provide a comprehensive view of what governments do and how they do it, while avoiding duplication of data collection.

Co-operation is to be strengthened as a way of ensuring the comparability of data across countries that are covered in the publication.

For future editions of the publication, the *Government at a Glance* team is planning to:

- Provide new composite indicators in the area of budget practices and procedures;
- Update and expand the data collection on regulatory governance, including on the institutional framework for regulatory policy;
- Repeat the data collection on the centre of government institutions;
- Develop new indicators measuring the implementation of the 2014 *Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies*;
- Strengthen indicators on open government and participative policy making practices as well as on public sector innovation.

Regional and country-focused editions of *Government at a Glance*

The second edition of *Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean* was released in December 2016. The publication provides the latest available data on public administrations in the LAC region and compares it to OECD countries. It contains new indicators on public finances, centres of government, regulatory governance, open government, digital government and public procurement, as well as a special feature on health budgeting.

A second country-focused edition, *Government at a Glance: How Korea Compares*, was published in June 2016, presenting a series of indicators on Korea's policy making practices and government performance compared to those of other OECD countries and of the G7 countries. A first regional edition of *Government at a Glance: Southeast Asia* is expected to be published later in 2017.

All data and indicators on public governance are accessible online!

All data collected by the OECD Public Governance Directorate for the production of *Government at a Glance* (starting with the 2015 edition) and for other purposes are available online on the OECD website. Readers interested in using the data presented in this publication for further analysis and research are encouraged to consult the full documentation of definitions, sources and methods presented in the *Government at a Glance* publication and online. This database includes both qualitative and quantitative indicators on public sector inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes and will be updated on a regular basis as new data are released.



From:
Government at a Glance 2017

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2017-en

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2017), "Introduction", in *Government at a Glance 2017*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2017-6-en

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.