

## *Chapter 1*

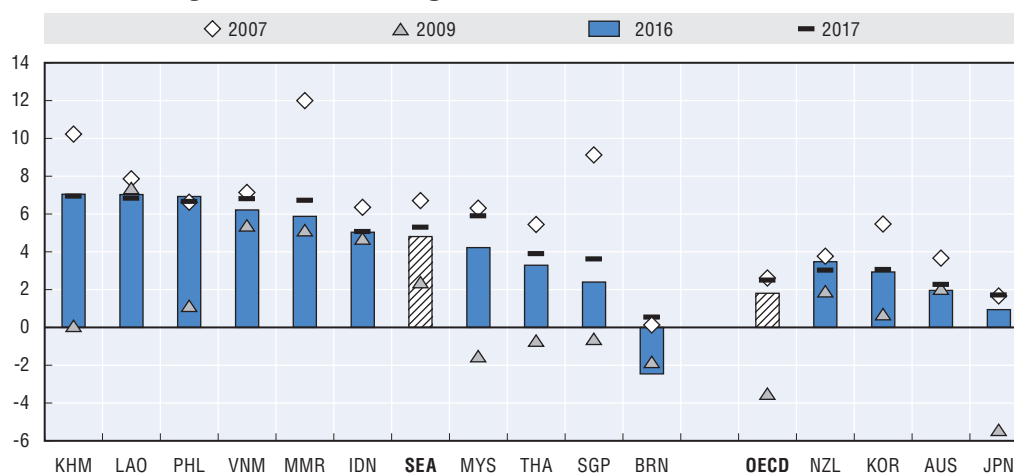
# **Towards a citizen-centric civil service**

## Introduction

This Southeast Asian (SEA) edition of *Government at a Glance* collects new data on public sector management in the ten countries that make up the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a regional grouping that promotes inclusive and innovation-led economic growth among its ten members. They are Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; Indonesia; Lao PDR; Malaysia; Myanmar; the Philippines; Singapore; Thailand and Viet Nam. Comparisons to four OECD countries in the neighbourhood (Australia, Japan, Korea and New Zealand), as well as to the SEA and OECD averages, offer policy makers new evidence to improve decision making and provide better public services. The data in this publication have been collected to better understand the current governance situation in SEA countries, as well as to underpin learning from each other and from OECD countries.

SEA countries make up the world's seventh-largest economy and had a population of around 633 million people in 2015, with an average annual real GDP growth rate at 5.3% in 2017, much higher than the OECD rate of 2.5% (Figure 1.1). This is expected to remain unchanged from 2018 to 2019 (OECD, 2018).

Figure 1.1. Real GDP growth, 2007, 2009, 2016 and 2017



Note: Data for 2017 in some countries refer to forecasts.

Sources: For SEA countries, IMF (April 2018) World Economic Outlook Database. For OECD countries, OECD National Accounts Statistics (database).

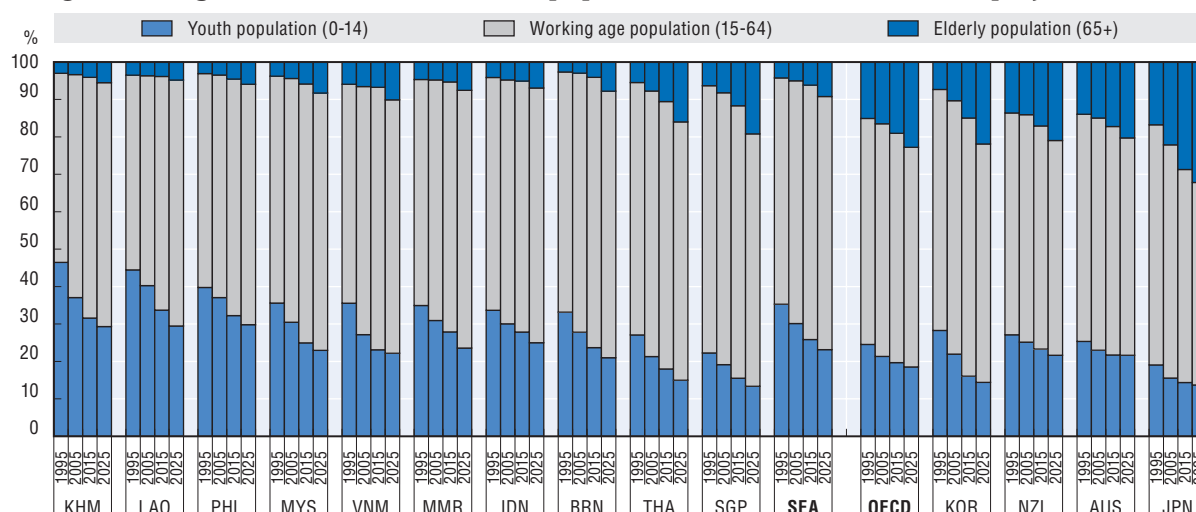
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Compared to OECD countries, SEA countries have on average larger current and projected youth and working-age populations in the overall population (Figure 1.2). This trend will likely contribute to SEA countries' ability to sustain higher growth rates, though youth unemployment is a key challenge in the region (ILO, 2017). As for most countries, populations are also ageing, changing the types of services that citizens will require from the state.

In tandem with the strong starting points of citizen satisfaction with services, fiscal health and young populations, citizen expectations of government services have been rising. Recent OECD reports highlight that countries in the region need to strengthen public sector institutional capacities to

improve citizens' quality of life and to foster inclusive and sustainable growth (OECD, 2018). However, the institutional challenges faced are diverse; fiscal management, bureaucratic efficiency, civil service capacity, the response to new, disruptive technologies and openness and transparency are among the major issues still to be addressed.

Figure 1.2. **Age distribution rates of the population, 1995, 2005, 2015, and projected 2025**



Notes: Each share represents the number of individuals in each age group divided by the total population; Data are ordered by higher youth population in the first year (1995).

Sources: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, DVD Edition.

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For these reasons, promoting a citizen-centric approach is a central goal for Southeast Asian (SEA) governments. Countries in the region are aware of the need to strengthen public sector institutions and of the challenges they need to overcome, sharing a commitment to “regional cooperation for effective, efficient, transparent, accountable civil service systems and good governance” (ASEAN, 2017). SEA governments see the civil service as essential for achieving the ASEAN Vision 2025 of a “community that is politically cohesive, economically integrated, socially responsible and truly rules-based, people-oriented and people-centred”. In 2015, the ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters adopted the Putrajaya Joint Declaration on ASEAN Post-2015 Priorities towards an ASEAN Citizen-Centric Civil Service. It has the following missions:

- enhancing existing measures for networking, mutual learning and sharing experiences among members
- promoting and facilitating the exchange of best practices and public management innovations by enhancing the ASEAN Resource Centres' role as experts in their respective competency areas
- establishing supporting initiatives to help ASEAN civil services develop and adopt cutting-edge practices
- implementing various programmes on civil services matters with the support and assistance of ASEAN dialogue partners and regional/international agendas.

### What does “citizen-centric” mean?

Governments become more citizen-centric when citizens' wants and needs drive policy decisions and public service provision. High-quality service delivery relies on a thorough understanding of citizens' expectations, experiences and key drivers of satisfaction, as well as a

public decision-making framework that puts citizens at the centre. This approach has multiple aims and benefits, including making public administrations more efficient, effective, and transparent, which can, in turn, further increase citizen satisfaction and trust in government. Broadly, a citizen-centric approach is one where, instead of the bureaucracy second-guessing citizens, governments consult citizens about their needs, and encourage their direct participation in policy making and service design and delivery.

Policy makers can also make public services more citizen-centric by using data and information to better understand citizens' needs, and to support civil servants identify potential accessibility gaps. This means that public services are more responsive, accessible and effective (see Chapter 7 on serving citizens). Moreover, measuring citizen satisfaction and preferences, and gathering user feedback, can help civil servants monitor performance over time, improve service delivery, and assess the impact of reforms. Ultimately, the use of such information can lead to a citizen-centric allocation of time and resources (World Bank, 2018). Together, these approaches can improve citizen satisfaction with policy outcomes and with the public services they receive. Citizen satisfaction is linked to service quality and direct experience of services (OECD, 2017c), but also, more broadly, to whether citizens feel that governments are fair stewards of limited resources and follow impartial procedures.

## How to achieve a citizen-centric civil service?

This chapter looks at three ways in which governments can achieve a citizen-centric approach to policy making and service delivery. First, services need to be co-ordinated so that they are organised around citizen demand and not government supply. This requires data on user preferences and service usage to help drive insights and accountability. Second, a citizen-centric approach requires openness, engagement, transparency and accountability in the way policy decisions are made, financial resources allocated and public services provided. Finally, citizen-centricity is about making the right policy and expenditure choices that respond to and anticipate citizen needs.

To support a citizen-centric approach to policy making, more strategic management of the government workforce is needed. Strategic human resource (HR) management helps ensure that the makeup of the civil service reflects society's diversity, builds capacity to innovate, and focuses on establishing links with civil society and leveraging digital tools to reach out to citizens.

This chapter provides a preliminary overview of how SEA countries are performing when it comes to achieving these aims, drawing on new empirical evidence collected for *Government at a Glance Southeast Asia 2019*. It can help governments pinpoint areas for improvement, identify best practices in the region and enhance mutual learning and sharing of experiences among countries. Over time, reflecting on how governments and the policies and services they deliver can be better organised in the interest of more inclusive societies will entail a deeper review of how we assess government performance and the indicators used to measure it.

Overall, the findings in this *Government at a Glance Southeast Asia 2019* edition show a high level of heterogeneity among the countries. SEA countries have varying economic, political and social systems. There is a mix of democratic, communist and autocratic states. Population size also varies greatly with differing demographics. Some countries are sparsely populated while others are dense, and there is a range of dominant religious groups. In reports about the SEA region (OECD, 2018), countries are often clustered into three groups that capture the differences in their size and wealth: Brunei Darussalam and Singapore; the ASEAN-5 (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam), and the CLM economies (Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar). There are nonetheless some overarching governance trends in the region, some of which are barriers to achieving a citizen-centric

civil service: a strong degree of centralisation; a preference for top-down processes; siloed ways of working; weak strategic focus, and a generally low level of openness. Each of these will be discussed throughout the chapter.

## Organising services around citizen needs

Relations between citizens and the public sector are being transformed by the increasing digitalisation of government practices and public service delivery. At the same time, the level of mobile technology penetration and internet access varies widely in the region and is quite low in certain countries, particularly the CLM – Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar (ITU, 2017). The shift towards digital is not universal and governments need to manage the transition, ensuring that those who are not digitally connected do not get left behind, or create new forms of digital divides.

In general, citizens' expectations of efficiency, quality and customisation are shaped by their holistic experiences, including those with private sector providers, and their expectations are changing. SEA countries have the opportunity to learn from the experiences of OECD countries, such as avoiding legacy systems that are difficult to update and embedding flexibility and co-ordination into the HR system to make it more responsive to citizens' and businesses' needs. To keep up in an environment of constant change, civil servants must interact with citizens to gain insights on their needs and experiences, and collaborate to find solutions that best respond to their feedback.

One aspect of integrated service delivery is reflected in governments' national online portals, which combine data, information, systems, processes and services. However, the greatest value does not come from providing citizens with a single point of contact to government services, but rather from easing access to reflect more integrated processes inside organisations. The vast majority of SEA countries have established a national citizens' online portal, although the features and services provided vary greatly among countries (see Chapter 6 on digital government). On the whole, these portals are fairly comprehensive, and may reflect the advantages of a later start than OECD countries, such as having fewer legacy systems, more mature technologies and new ICT tools.

However, some SEA countries could improve by providing a nationally recognised digital identification (eID) mechanism that would enable higher internal integration and improved access to public services. Such mechanisms provide citizens with access to multiple government online services through one portal. While almost all OECD countries have this in place, only three-quarters of the SEA countries do. More critically, in almost all SEA countries the digital identification mechanism is not yet fully integrated with the national online portal for public services (see Chapter 6 on digital government). Establishing this link will play a crucial role in improving the quality of services and of citizen interactions with government, which could have an impact on citizen satisfaction as well as on overall trust.

Moreover, greater collaboration among and decentralisation to sub-national governments and line ministries from central government is another way to bring government closer to citizens. The surveys across the different areas – strategic HR management, budgeting, digital and open government – all show that decision making is still rather centralised and top-down. While this is, of course, important for certain decisions, for others a more citizen-centric approach would entail decision making at a level closer to the communities affected. This is especially important given that most public services are delivered at the sub-national and local levels. A co-ordinated government approach can help provide cross-service synergies, particularly when it comes to service digitisation (see Chapter 6 on digital government). For instance, at the moment, only around half of the SEA countries have formal mutual co-ordination processes or mechanisms below the national level (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. **Existence of a mutual co-ordination process or mechanism formally in place between units responsible for public sector ICT projects, 2018**

	Across central government (e.g. sector CIO co-ordination)	Across all levels of government (e.g. central-local co-ordination)	Across local levels of government (e.g. co-ordination between municipalities)
Brunei Darussalam	●	○	○
Cambodia	●	○	○
Indonesia	●	●	○
Lao PDR	●	○	○
Malaysia	●	●	●
Myanmar	●	●	○
Philippines	●	○	○
Singapore	●	○	○
Thailand	○	○	○
Viet Nam	●	●	○
<b>SEA Total</b>	9	4	1
Australia	●	○	○
Japan	●	●	○
Korea	●	●	●
New Zealand	●	○	○
<b>OECD Total</b>	21	7	7

Key:

Yes = ●

No = ○

Notes: Brunei Darussalam and Singapore have a single layer of government (i.e. the central government); data refer to 2014 for OECD countries. Data refer to 2014 for OECD countries.

Sources: For SEA countries, OECD (2018) Digital Government Performance Survey. For OECD countries, OECD (2014) Digital Government Performance Survey.

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## Citizen-centric policy-making processes: Open, engaging, transparent and accountable

Citizen-centric policy making is dependent on having inclusive processes, as well as evidence and structures in place to ensure that policies and their implementation reflect and integrate citizens' perspectives.

### Openness and engagement

The range of mechanisms for including and engaging citizens in an ongoing and constructive dialogue is greater than ever. However, while these mechanisms are available, it does not necessarily mean that they are being used to their full potential across SEA countries. More and better co-ordination and engagement at the policy design and implementation stages may be required to fully reap the benefits of a citizen-centric approach.

Most SEA countries are still at the early stages of incorporating public engagement into their policy-making and service delivery processes. Few countries have an overarching document focused on citizen participation in the policy cycle; this is something that can be developed in line with the goal of a more citizen-centric approach. Equally, few countries mention that improving citizen participation in policy making or increasing citizen trust in public institutions are key national policy objectives (see Chapter 6 on open government).

### From access to information to open, useful, reusable government data

Citizen-centric and data-driven processes require access to information as a basic precondition. "Freedom of information" (FOI) laws create a framework of legal rights for citizens to request public sector information. However, while almost all OECD countries have an FOI law in place (though their breadth and depth varies from country to country), in Southeast Asia, only Indonesia, the Philippines and Viet Nam have such a law.

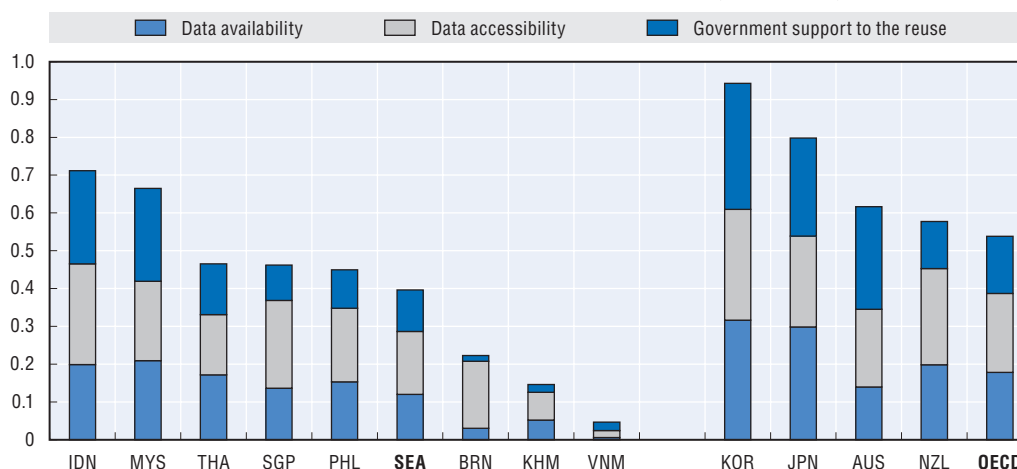
Promoting open and digital government principles, however, requires moving beyond the reactive dissemination of information, towards proactive government dissemination of information. Public transparency and government openness imply the proactive publication of open government data (OGD) that can be shared, analysed and reused on a large scale – within the framework of personal privacy and data protection legislation. This paves the way for innovative uses of government data to generate good governance value (e.g. better public services, greater public sector accountability and integrity), economic benefits (economic growth through the creation of new data-driven business lines) and social value (citizen engagement, data-driven journalism and civic tech).

OGD offers new opportunities to empower citizens, businesses, civil society organisations, researchers and journalists through the enhanced access and reuse of data. As a result, many OECD countries are using OGD to fuel an ecosystem that can provide innovative services and policy solutions through private entrepreneurial and civic efforts (e.g. by creating apps that rely on government data or accessing open data in an automated way through application programming interfaces to better monitor public procurement).

The OECD OURdata Index measures government efforts to design and implement open data policies and initiatives based on the availability, accessibility and government support to promote the reuse of open government data. It builds on the OECD analytical framework for open data policies which is also connected with the principles of the International Open Data Charter. Therefore, the OURdata Index stands as a policy instrument that helps countries assess their relative strengths and identify potential areas for action.

Half of the eight SEA countries that responded to our survey have no formal requirements for all public sector organisations to make their data open by default (see Chapter 6 on open government). Despite concrete actions in some SEA countries to release some high-value government datasets as open data, further efforts could be made to ensure that the necessary pre-requisites to foster greater levels of data availability are in place. Most SEA countries do not have initiatives to promote OGD reuse either within or outside the public sector. Governments could aim to further monitor the implementation of OGD policies and assess their economic and social impact. Although SEA governments have begun implementing some OGD initiatives, their efforts still seem to be at nascent stages. There could be a greater focus on establishing policies that will ensure and promote higher levels of data availability, safeguard accessibility, and, above all, bring governments to support greater data reuse within and outside the public sector.

Figure 1.3. **Open-Useful-Reusable Government Data (OURdata) Index, 2018**



Note: The OECD average is based on 32 OECD countries. Data are not available for Hungary, Iceland and Luxembourg.

Sources: For SEA countries, OECD (2018) Open Government Data Survey. For OECD countries, OECD (2017) Open Government Data Survey.

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## Public transparency and accountability

Two aspects of public transparency and accountability are important in considering a citizen-centric approach. One is measuring the extent to which government processes and policies are accessible to citizens, and the other concerns lobbying, undue influence and corruption.

On the first aspect, making government processes and policies accessible to citizens, SEA countries show some signs of having transparent processes in place, though challenges still exist. One key aspect is budget transparency. The budget is one of the areas in which parliament, citizens and non-government organisations can hold the government to account. Having transparency in how public funds are used is thus imperative for fostering responsibility and integrity, as well as promoting an open and inclusive budget process. While all SEA countries make certain parts of the budget public, only half release the methodology and economic assumptions underlying the fiscal projections (Table 1.2). Very few countries in the region (30%) currently publish sensitivity analyses, a common practice in most OECD countries.

Making public a citizens' budget is also an important way of helping citizens and non-government organisations understand the process and assess the impact of the budget on their own circumstances, and thus of promoting inclusiveness. The majority (80%) of SEA countries publish citizens' guides to the budget, explaining key information in plain language. On the other hand, while most of the countries produce long-term revenue and expenditure perspectives, only the Philippines makes this document publicly available, a stark contrast to OECD countries, where three-quarters (73%) do so (see Chapter 4 on budgeting).

Table 1.2. **Budgetary information made publicly available, 2018**

	Budget proposal	Budget approved	Methodology and economic assumptions for establishing fiscal projections	Sensitivity analyses of fiscal and/or macroeconomic models	Budget circular	Independent reviews/analyses of macroeconomic and/or fiscal assumptions	Pre-budget report	Long term perspective on total revenue and expenditure
Brunei Darussalam	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	X
Cambodia	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
Indonesia	●	●	●	●	●	X	●	○
Lao PDR	●	●	○	○	●	○	●	○
Malaysia	●	●	○	○	●	X	X	○
Myanmar	○	●	○	○	○	●	○	○
Philippines	●	●	●	●	●	X	●	●
Singapore	●	●	○	○	○	○	X	○
Thailand	●	●	●	○	●	●	○	○
Viet Nam	○	●	●	X	●	X	●	X
<b>SEA Total</b>								
● Publicly available	6	10	5	3	7	3	5	1
○ Not publicly available	4	0	5	6	3	3	3	7
X Not applicable	0	0	0	1	0	4	2	2
Australia	●	●	●	●	○	●	○	●
Japan	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	X
Korea	●	●	●	○	●	○	X	●
New Zealand	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●
<b>OECD Total</b>								
● Publicly available	33	33	28	24	20	28	23	24
○ Not publicly available	0	0	5	6	12	1	5	1
X Not applicable	0	0	0	3	1	4	5	8

Note: OECD total is based on responses by 33 OECD countries due to missing data for the United Kingdom and the United States.

Sources: For SEA countries, OECD (2018) Budget Practices and Procedures Survey for Asian Countries. For OECD countries, OECD (2018) Budget Practices and Procedures Survey.

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Another way in which budget transparency is ensured is by legislative scrutiny in plenary and in committee, which provides an opportunity to raise public awareness of the government's spending priorities and policy objectives. Until recently, this has been fairly limited in the region, and is still in



development, as only four countries have parliamentary budget offices (PBOs) or specialised research units, and only five countries have specialised budget/finance committees. These resources are needed in the parliament to have adequate analytical resources and to redress the capacity imbalance between the legislature and the executive (see Chapter 4 on budgeting).

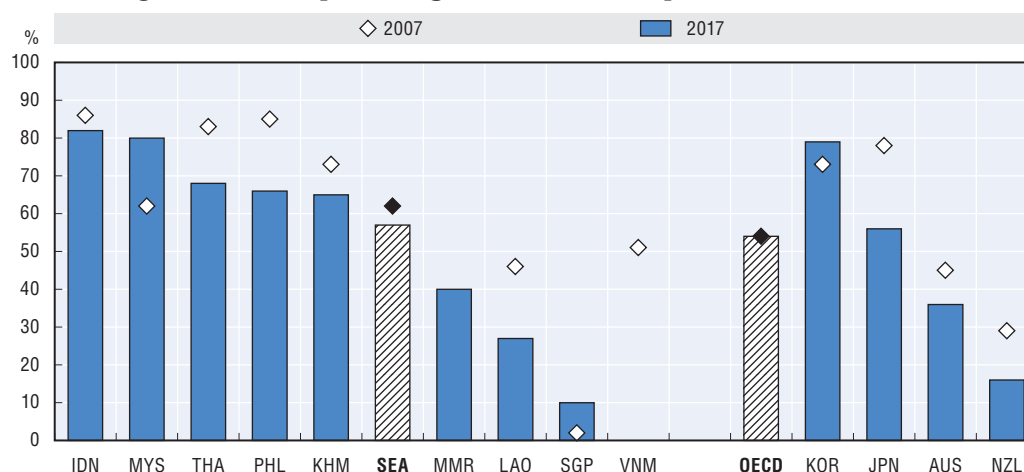
The second aspect is lobbying, undue influence and corruption; public decision-making processes can be vulnerable to influence by vested interests. Efforts to take a more citizen-centric approach will not work in practice if stakeholders do not have fair and equitable access to the decision-making process. As OECD research has shown, inclusive growth means producing policies that avoid the concentration of resources in the hands of a few. An open and transparent policy-making process helps ensure that resources are not captured for designing and implementing policies that would exacerbate inequality.

Vested interest groups can wield influence through various means such as public consultation, lobbying and providing financial resources to political parties and campaigns (OECD, 2017d). In Southeast Asia, political finance is a central issue, as “clientelistic” networks still serve an important function – gifts are exchanged for political support, dynasties and wealthy families control political parties, and business and politics are intertwined to a greater extent than in OECD countries (Ufen, 2017). The public is more aware of this corruption due to the media, creating additional pressure on SEA countries to regulate political finance. One source of proposals for how to do so is the OECD’s Framework on Financing Democracy (OECD, 2016b), which maps relevant risk areas and provides policy options for promoting a level playing field, transparency and integrity in the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns.

Regarding lobbying, when conducted with transparency and integrity, lobbying yields useful information for decision makers. However, it can also lead to undue influence, unfair competition and policy capture to the detriment of the public interest and effective public policies (OECD, 2014). The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Principles for Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying provides guidance for decision makers on how to promote good governance in lobbying and ensure that public decisions reflect constituents’ various views and safeguard the public interest.

Moreover, most SEA countries sit in the bottom half of 176 countries in Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index 2016. When it comes to citizens’ perceptions, a majority (57%) in the SEA countries for which there are data believe that corruption is widespread throughout the government in their country (Figure 1.4). However, this perception in most SEA countries is less prevalent than it was in 2007 on average (62%), with the number declining in all countries except for Malaysia and Singapore (Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4. Perception of government corruption, 2007 and 2017



Notes: Data correspond to the percentage of “Yes” answers to the question: “Is corruption widespread throughout the government in this country, or not?”; Data for Malaysia are for 2015 rather than 2017. Data for Lao PDR are for 2008 rather than 2007. Data for Myanmar and Viet Nam are not included in the SEA average due to missing time series.

Source: Gallup World Poll (database).

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Addressing corruption issues linked to unaccountable governments, lack of oversight, shrinking civil society spaces, and high-profile corruption scandals involving political finance can have an impact on public trust in government. Transparency in policy making correlates positively with trust in politicians and negatively with the level of perceived undue influence (World Economic Forum, 2017).

A strategic and sustainable response to corruption also places public integrity at its core. Building an integrity system in the public sector is a critical component not only for preventing corruption but also for safeguarding democratic institutions and the rule of law. The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Integrity (2017) provides a strategy for organisations to create whole-of-society public integrity systems, with an emphasis on promoting a cultural change.

The Recommendation incorporates much of the existing knowledge on integrity, including the development of conflict-of-interest management frameworks as a tool to avoid policy capture and strengthen individual resilience against corruption. Such frameworks usually encompass private interest disclosure by decision makers, follow-up of disclosures and enforcement in case of non-compliance. The *OECD Guidelines for Managing Conflict of Interest* (OECD, 2003) set out core principles for public officials seeking to identify and manage conflict-of-interest situations: serving the public interest, supporting transparency, promoting individual responsibility and creating an organisational culture that resists undue influence and policy capture.

Using a mix of these policy measures to promote a culture of integrity in the public and private sectors can help curb the risks of policy capture and contribute to a stable foundation for citizen-centric policy making and inclusive growth.

## A civil service that responds to and anticipates citizens' needs

In addition to service quality, openness and transparency, citizen-centricity is linked to a competent civil service that can deliver and innovate to respond to changing needs. This means that the civil service make-up must reflect wider society in its diversity and that the civil service should be professional, strategic and innovative in order to anticipate, listen and adapt to citizens' wants and preferences.

### **The importance of gender equality**

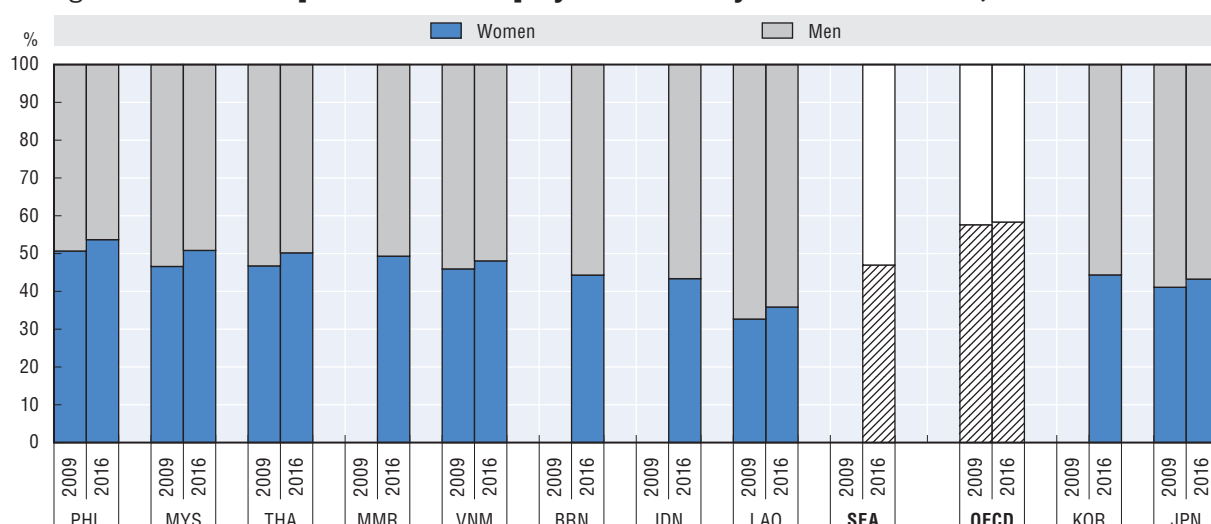
Governments are increasingly recognising the importance of having a civil service workforce that reflects society, to ensure that the needs, aspirations and experiences of a diversity of citizens are reflected in decision making and that barriers and gaps in service delivery can be better understood (OECD, 2015). Public sector employment frameworks can help governments to achieve that goal. A more representative public sector can better access previously overlooked knowledge, perspectives and networks, leading to improved policy development and implementation. It also better understands and serves the needs of marginalised groups.

In OECD countries, the notion of which groups should be represented in the public sector, and to what extent, has expanded to become more inclusive over time (Pitts and Wise, 2010). These groups tend to include women; racial, ethnic and religious minorities; the poor; the elderly; the disabled; and other minority groups such as indigenous populations. The long-term goal is that these groups have similar representation in the public sector workforce as in the population. Comparable data for SEA countries are available mainly for women's representation in the public sector. Overall, women are well represented in the public workforce but face significant barriers in reaching senior leadership positions.

In 2016, on average about half (47%) of the SEA public sector workforce was female (Figure 1.5). Some public sector jobs may offer more flexible working conditions to allow for a greater work-life balance. In some countries, there are also greater benefits or more stable employment than in the private sector. In all the SEA countries for which there are data in 2009 and 2016, the trend is that the share of women in the public sector workforce has increased over time, at a faster rate than in OECD countries, though the latter had a higher starting point. On average, the proportion of women in public sector employment is lower in Southeast Asia than in OECD countries, although it is comparable to the two OECD countries in

the region for which there are data, Korea and Japan (nonetheless, it is worth noting that these are the two countries with the lowest rates among OECD countries). The public sector has, on average, the same share of women employed as in the total economy (Figure 1.6). This is different from the trend witnessed in OECD countries, where there is a higher share of women in the public sector.

Figure 1.5. **Share of public sector employment filled by women and men, 2009 and 2016**

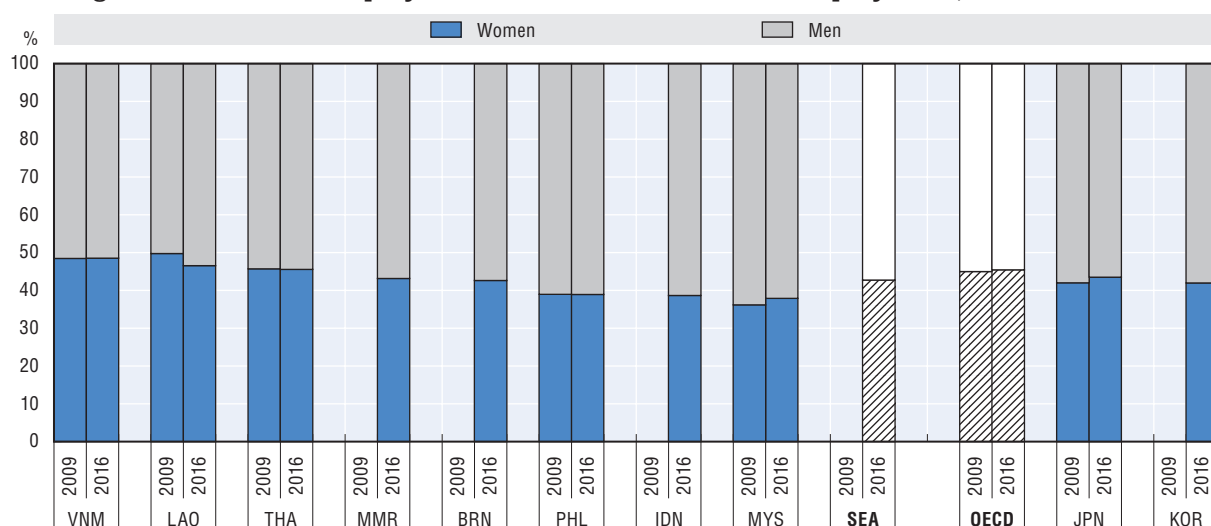


Note: Data for Lao PDR: 2010 rather than 2009, 2017 rather than 2016. Brunei Darussalam: 2014 rather than 2016. Korea and Myanmar: 2015 rather than 2016. Thailand: 2010 rather than 2009.

Sources: International Labour Organization (ILO) ILOSTAT (database), Employment by sex and institutional sector. Data for Korea were provided by national authorities.

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Figure 1.6. **Share of employed women and men in total employment, 2009 and 2016**



Note: Data for Lao PDR: 2010 rather than 2009, 2017 rather than 2016. Brunei Darussalam: 2014 rather than 2016. Korea and Myanmar: 2015 rather than 2016. Thailand: 2010 rather than 2009.

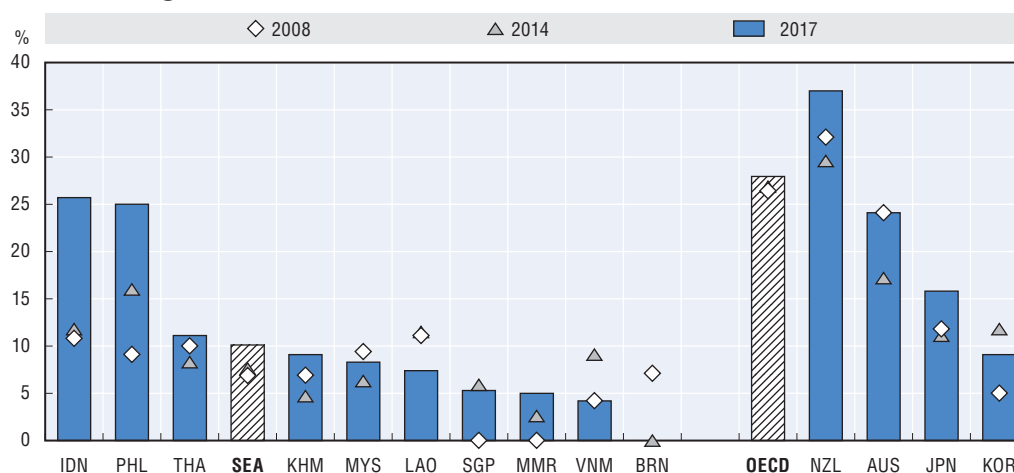
Sources: International Labour Organization (ILO) ILOSTAT (database), Employment by sex and institutional sector. Data for Korea were provided by national authorities.

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However, the gender imbalance found in senior levels of central government considerably limits the role of women in the decision-making process. In 2017, on average, women held only 10% of ministerial positions in SEA countries. While on average all SEA countries are far from having equal representation

reflecting women's share of the population, the proportion of women ministers varies somewhat in the region (Figure 1.7). When it comes to women ministerial representation, SEA countries are some way behind the OECD average (28%), including that of the OECD countries in the region.

Figure 1.7. **Share of women ministers, 2008, 2014 and 2017**



Notes: Data represent women appointed ministers as of January 1 of each year of reference. The total includes Deputy Prime Ministers and Ministers. Prime Ministers/Heads of Government were also included when they held ministerial portfolios. Vice-Presidents and heads of governmental or public agencies have not been included.

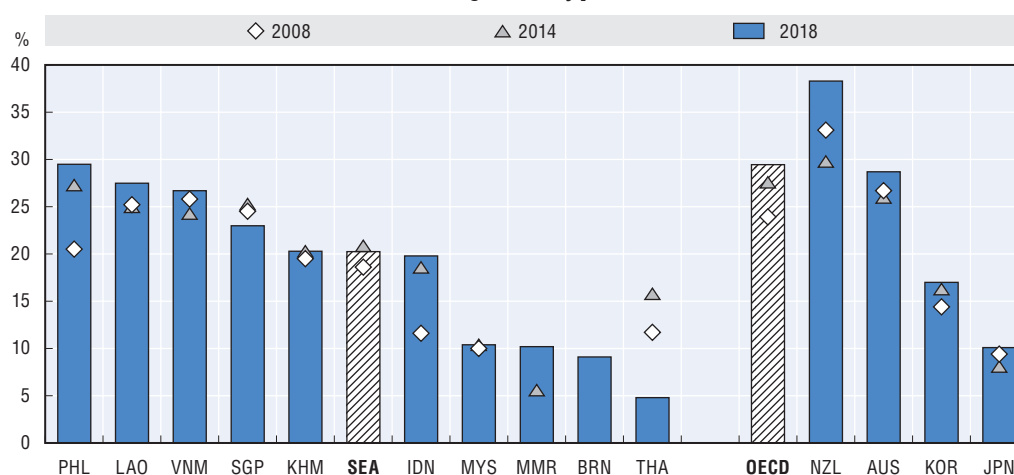
Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (2017, 2014 and 2008) "Women in Politics".

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The share of women parliamentarians in the lower or single house of parliament is on average double that of women ministers, at 20% in 2018 (Figure 1.8). However, the composition of these assemblies remains a long way from parity. None of the countries comes close, although there is wide variation in the region.

Figure 1.8. **Share of women parliamentarians, 2008, 2014 and 2018**

Lower or single house of parliament



Notes: Data refer to share of women parliamentarians recorded as of 1 June of each year of reference; SEA average does not include Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar due to missing time series; Brunei Darussalam: no data for 2014 and 2008; Myanmar: no parliament in 2008.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union PARLINE (database).

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Collecting further, more systematic and detailed information about the composition of the public sector workforce in a comparative format would help countries think more holistically about the inclusiveness of their public sectors. OECD countries use workforce composition data to help monitor

diversity and inclusion in the workforce, to do workforce planning and to help anticipate future public employment needs. Moreover, increasing women's participation and leadership in public institutions is part of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. SDG5 is "achieve gender equality and to empower all women and girls", and SDG16 is "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". Data collection, analysis and research on women's under-representation in public administration and public leadership is crucial for achieving an inclusive, just and prosperous society.

### ***Towards a professional, strategic and innovative civil service***

A citizen-centric approach to public services goes beyond efficiency and value for money. It is also about hiring and developing civil servants who are willing and know how to listen to citizen needs, have the tools (e.g. digital) to consult and respond, and who have the competencies, incentives and values to focus on outcomes and provide good quality services. They work in systems that offer support, provide them with targets and guidance, and are constantly innovating to keep up with changing needs. Moreover, civil servants face challenges that are complex and not always linear. As countries become richer, attention grows around new types of issues (e.g. environmental awareness), so achieving quality outcomes is not only about providing quality services, but also about getting the mix of services and of policy right.

The goal of the ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM) Work Plan 2016-2020 is to "build and sustain a high performing, dynamic and citizen-centric civil service" speaks directly to this challenge. The ACCSM has two key objectives for achieving its goal: 1) strengthening civil servants' capacity to respond with innovative approaches and collaboration, and 2) developing an enabling environment for responsive, open and adaptive ASEAN civil services.

To respond to policy challenges and deliver services effectively, having a professional civil service is fundamental. This means that civil servants are qualified, impartial, values-driven and ethical. Addressing complex horizontal challenges such as the SDGs, and building capacity for effective decentralisation requires strategic skills. Civil servants will need to encourage collaboration, manage risks, and to have foresight and resilience. Strategies to achieve this depend on the type of civil service system in a given country. While there is a mix of position-based and career-based systems in the region (see Chapter 5 on human resources management), more centralised governance systems tend to have career-based systems, which may help build a dedicated and experienced group of civil servants. Countries with more position-based systems, on the other hand, tend to be more flexible and capable of adjusting their workforce needs, although may experience challenges in maintaining cross-government values. In both cases, these systems need to build the values and skills required to respond to complex governance demands while focusing on their attractiveness relative to the overall labour market, the quality and integrity of recruitment mechanisms, and their ability to inculcate public service values into private sector hires while learning from the new skills and techniques that they bring.

Being able to address complex problems, particularly in the digital age, requires civil servants to have the right skills, knowledge and behaviours. Competency management helps governments understand the abilities needed for a given position, and creates a standard against which to measure effective employee performance. Integrating competencies into a framework used to select, develop and promote civil servants is essential for strategic workforce planning. Competency management is a high priority in most SEA countries, and most of them also have competency frameworks for senior managers and civil servants. Embedding learning in public service culture and values requires not only competency frameworks and training programmes, but also competency development as a core responsibility of public managers. However, digital competencies are severely under-prioritised in the region, and workforce development is among the lowest priorities for senior civil servants (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3. **Digital competencies as a priority for the civil service and employee development as a senior civil service competency, 2018**

	Digital competencies mentioned in competency frameworks	Employee development is a key competency for SCS
Brunei Darussalam	○	○
Cambodia	○	○
Indonesia	○	○
Lao PDR	○	○
Malaysia	○	●
Philippines	○	●
Singapore	●	●
Thailand	●	●
Viet Nam	○	○
<b>SEA Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
Australia	○	○
Korea	○	○
Japan	○	○
New Zealand	..	●
<b>OECD Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>

Key:

Yes = ●

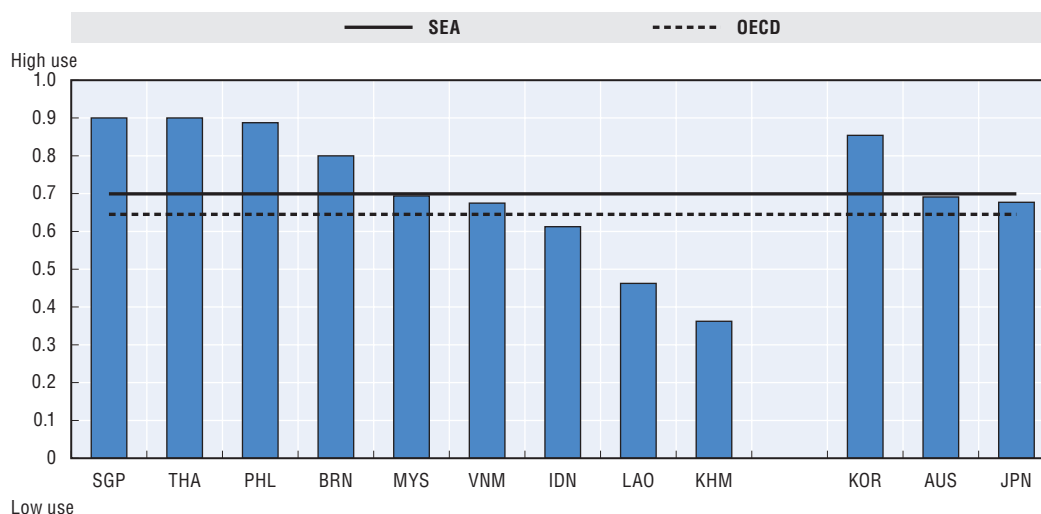
No = ○

Note: Data refer to 2016 for OECD countries.

Sources: For SEA countries, OECD (2018) Strategic Human Resources Management Survey. For OECD countries, OECD (2016) Strategic Human Resources Management Survey.

StatLink  <https://doi.org/10.1787/888933840361>

Once in the civil service, performance assessment practices can be a critical tool for delivering value for money and encouraging more citizen-centric behaviour by civil servants. Most SEA countries have formal performance assessment in place for all or almost all central government employees. These data tend to be collected and aggregated centrally, in contrast to OECD countries, where this is usually done at the ministry level. Performance-related pay (PRP) is also a common monetary incentive to promote desired behaviours; some form of it, such as one-off performance bonuses, permanent pay increments and promotions, is used in six countries in the region (Figure 1.9). PRP is not a necessary element of a successful performance system. When PRP is based on an inefficient performance system, it can contribute to reducing employee motivation and engagement.

Figure 1.9. **Extent to which performance-related pay is used in central government, 2018**

Sources: For SEA countries, OECD (2018) Strategic Human Resources Management Survey. For OECD countries, OECD (2016) Strategic Human Resources Management Survey.

StatLink  <https://doi.org/10.1787/888933840380>



Ultimately, a citizen-centric government requires an innovative civil service. A working environment that enables innovation is, therefore, a critical component of building citizen-centricity. Individual employees do not work in a vacuum, but within an organisational structure and culture that may support or hinder innovation (OECD, 2017f). Many OECD countries are now considering ways to better measure and manage employee engagement to assess the health of public sector bodies. This can be achieved, for example, through regular employee surveys and benchmarking results. While most SEA countries collect standardised administrative HR data, which can help countries improve strategic civil service management and diversity, many do not conduct employee surveys (Table 1.4). This is something that SEA countries could consider implementing as well.

Table 1.4. **Employee surveys in central government, 2018**

	Are employee surveys conducted?	
	Centralised surveys across the whole central public administration	Government ministries/agencies conduct their own surveys
Brunei Darussalam	○	●
Cambodia	○	○
Indonesia	○	●
Lao PDR	○	○
Malaysia	●	●
Philippines	○	●
Singapore	●	●
Thailand	●	○
Viet Nam	○	○
<b>SEA Total</b>		
Yes = ●	3	5
No = ○	6	4
Australia	●	●
Korea	●	○
Japan	○	○
New Zealand	○	●
<b>OECD Total</b>		
Yes = ●	19	19
No = ○	16	16

Note: Data refer to 2016 for OECD countries.

Sources: For SEA countries, OECD (2018) Strategic Human Resources Management Survey. For OECD countries, OECD (2016) Strategic Human Resources Management Survey.

StatLink  <https://doi.org/10.1787/888933840399>

Research shows that investing in civil servants' human capital and engagement can have a direct effect, not just on organisational performance, but on citizen perceptions and trust in government (OECD, 2016a). Surveys could be useful for assessing performance-related indicators, and for evaluating employee satisfaction and work engagement. Regular employee engagement surveys could help identify the aspects of civil service jobs that employees prefer and that make the public sector more attractive as a workplace.

## Outcomes of a citizen-centric approach

The final chapter in this publication offers a preliminary analysis of how Southeast Asian countries are faring in promoting access, responsiveness and quality of services to citizens based on the OECD Serving Citizens framework. Indicators in this section were chosen according to policy relevance, data availability and data interpretability. Although data are currently somewhat limited in the region, the framework suggests to countries what data would be useful to collect in order to measure and compare citizen-centricity.

Overall, citizens in SEA countries report being fairly satisfied with public services, more so than in OECD countries, based on *Gallup World Poll* data for 2017. On average, a large majority (79%) are satisfied with the quality of health care in the area or city where they live, and an even larger majority (83%) report being satisfied with their education system and schools in 2017. Reported confidence levels with



the judicial systems and courts are lower (69% on average in 2017); however, they have increased by six percentage points since 2007. For each of these three areas, there is heterogeneity in the region.

This may be for a number of reasons. Some caution must be exercised because the data are drawn from a perception-based survey, which asks about satisfaction with services overall, without disaggregating different types of services and elements of public service delivery (access, responsiveness and quality). The sample size is also relatively small (1000 representative citizens in each country) and population in major urban centres is overrepresented as a result of oversampling or exclusion of some rural areas. There is also some variation in the region regarding the extent to which services are provided by the public or the private sector. In some SEA countries, the extension of access to public services has been quite recent, also potentially affecting citizen satisfaction in the short term. However, as SEA countries have growing middle classes, who tend to have rising expectations about quality, developing a more detailed evidence base of citizen access, responsiveness and quality of education, health and justice services would be a useful measure.

## Conclusion

Creating conditions for a citizen-centric approach to achieving inclusive growth has many implications for Southeast Asian governments. One element is building a government workforce which is reflective of wider society, with greater women's representation, particularly in senior management and political leadership positions. Governments could also focus on developing the strategic and innovative capacity of their civil servants, investing in human capital and employee engagement, which have been shown to have a direct impact on citizen trust. It could also mean developing policies in innovative ways with new digital tools, policies based on evidence, constructive dialogue and citizen participation, which promote transparency and accountability. The fight against corruption is also an important challenge in the region.

The evidence on the available strategies and tools is incomplete, and more data is required to build a holistic picture of the relationship between citizen-centric government action and inclusive growth. However, there is a greater awareness that the stakes are high for establishing citizen trust in government and improving policy effectiveness. Widening access to public services and strengthening the quality of services provided will not only have a direct impact on outcomes such as educational attainment and life expectancy, but will also improve social inclusiveness and cohesion, citizen satisfaction, and labour market opportunities, reducing gender gaps. To get a better understanding of the public sector's impact on inclusive growth in Southeast Asia, governments need to continue probing in this direction, while collecting more of the necessary evidence to inform their actions.

### Box 1. Next steps: From citizen-centric to citizen-driven

In OECD countries, there has been a move away from top-down assumptions about what citizens want (*citizen-centric approaches*), towards empowering citizens by engaging them to define their own needs and to collaborate with governments in addressing them (*citizen-driven approaches*) (OECD, 2017e).

New methods such as “systems thinking”, also called “design thinking”, have helped make this citizen-driven approach to public service design and delivery a reality. “Systems approaches” are a set of iterative processes, methods and practices that aim to affect systems change by involving all affected actors inside and outside government (OECD, 2017a; OECD, 2017b).

#### What does citizen-driven mean?

- a human-centred approach that begins with people (citizens, businesses, civil servants) – their needs, aspirations and behaviours.
- problem-solving characterised by curiosity and empathy, seeking to interpret how people engage with their world.
- collaborative engagement with service users to better grasp the tough challenges that people face in their daily lives and involve them in developing solutions.

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