

## Introduction

The main objective of the *Government at a Glance* series is to provide reliable, internationally comparable data on government activities and their results. The indicators in *Government at a Glance* are becoming themselves a measuring standard in many fields of public governance and have extended beyond the OECD to cover countries in Latin America and Caribbean and Southeast Asia. The *Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean* is the result of the sustained cooperation between the OECD and the IDB. This third edition provides time series for a core set of indicators that have been published in the previous two editions, and expands to new topics and areas, as well as new countries. Beyond tracking the evolution of LAC countries over time, the publication allows them to compare their governments' performance within the region and to the OECD.

*Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2020* recognises that governments are major actors in modern societies. Every citizen throughout his or her life interacts with governments from the issuance of a birth certificates to the provision of health, education and social benefits. Furthermore, as societies reach higher development levels, expectations of quality public services tend to increase, while their objectives become more complex. . Good governance is critical to long-term economic, social and environmental development. The ability of governments to operate effectively and efficiently depends in part on their management policies and practices. For instance, open government is key to guarantee that the adequate channels are in place to ensure citizens' participation and engagement in policy making and service delivery. At the same time, it permits public scrutiny, which is crucial for greater integrity and accountability of government authorities, managers, and other government officials. In turn, public procurement is conducive to an efficient use of public resources but, in addition, could be used to support secondary policy objectives (e.g. support to environmental objectives or women owned enterprises). This publication provides insight into these fields of public governance, among others.

### What's new in *Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2020*?

The 2020 edition of *Government at a Glance Latin America and the Caribbean* provides a mix of core chapters that remain stable in every edition, and new chapters and features.

The core chapters of *Government at a Glance* present the newest data on indicators on: Public finance and economics (Chapter 2); Public employment (Chapter 3); Budgeting practices and procedures Chapter 5); Human resources management (Chapter 6); Regulatory government (Chapter 7); Open government data (Chapter 8) and Public procurement (Chapter 10).

#### **New chapters**

This edition features two new chapters:

- Chapter 9 on public sector integrity includes composite indicators on the quality of regulations against undue influence and asset declarations, as well as data on mainstreaming integrity policies, risk management and internal audit, which have not been published in *Government at a Glance* before.
- Chapter 11 on core government results presents data on outputs and outcomes for the first time in the LAC edition of *Government at a Glance*. Country results on confidence of citizens in their national government and satisfaction with public services, the rule of law, income redistribution are displayed.

### **New indicators**

Many of the core chapters of *Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2020* present new indicators:

- New data on the functions of the Centre of Government and its role in open government and digital government and in improving the performance of the public administration are included in Chapter 4 on institutions.
- For the first time, chapter 6 on human resources management uses the OECD methodology, hence allowing for comparison of practices between LAC countries and with OECD members.
- Chapter 7 on regulatory governance includes the most recent update of the Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance (iREG) on stakeholder engagement for developing subordinate regulations. Given this new wave of measurement, it is possible to display time series.
- Chapter 8 includes the finalised methodology for the OURData Index, which is fully comparable to the latest OECD data. The total score as well as the individual pillars of data availability, data accessibility and government support for data re-use are presented.
- In addition to the core indicators on public procurement included in Chapter 10, new data are included on procurement and the delivery of infrastructure projects.

### **Indicators on government activities and public management practices**

LAC countries are primarily interested in collecting information to identify how public governance and, more specifically, public management practices contribute to a government's ability to achieve its objectives. *Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2020* is built on the following framework, which describes the public “production” process and identifies five types of indicators: 1) contextual factors 2) inputs 3) processes 4) outputs and 5) outcomes. The current edition includes data for the five components of the framework.

#### **1) Contextual factors**

The online Annex presents contextual information describing some key features of the political and administrative structure for 14 LAC countries included in the publication. Situating policies and indicators within this contextual background can help us better understand differences among countries, and identify those with similar structures that might serve as better comparators for benchmarking purposes.

#### **2) Inputs**

Input indicators include data on government revenues, expenditures, employment and workforce characteristics. These are the main components of the government production function and provide insight into the incentives and constraints that governments face in determining what types of goods and services to provide. Furthermore, these data allow for a comparison of the proportion of the economy devoted to producing different goods and services, as well as the difference in the mix of inputs used for production. For instance, as labour is a key input in the government production process, the size of the public sector may affect government productivity and its capacity to provide goods and services.

#### **3) Processes**

Process indicators refer to the public management practices and procedures undertaken by governments to implement policies. They describe how governments implement policies and how inputs are transformed into outputs and outcomes. Information on processes such as budgeting, public procurement, human resource management, regulatory governance and open government data practices allows countries to evaluate the effects of recent reforms, and identify new strategies to improve productivity. For example, effective human resource management is key for aligning people

management with the strategic goals of public sector organisations. Finally, the openness, usefulness and re-usability of public data can create new business opportunities and inform citizen engagement as well as the government decision-making process.

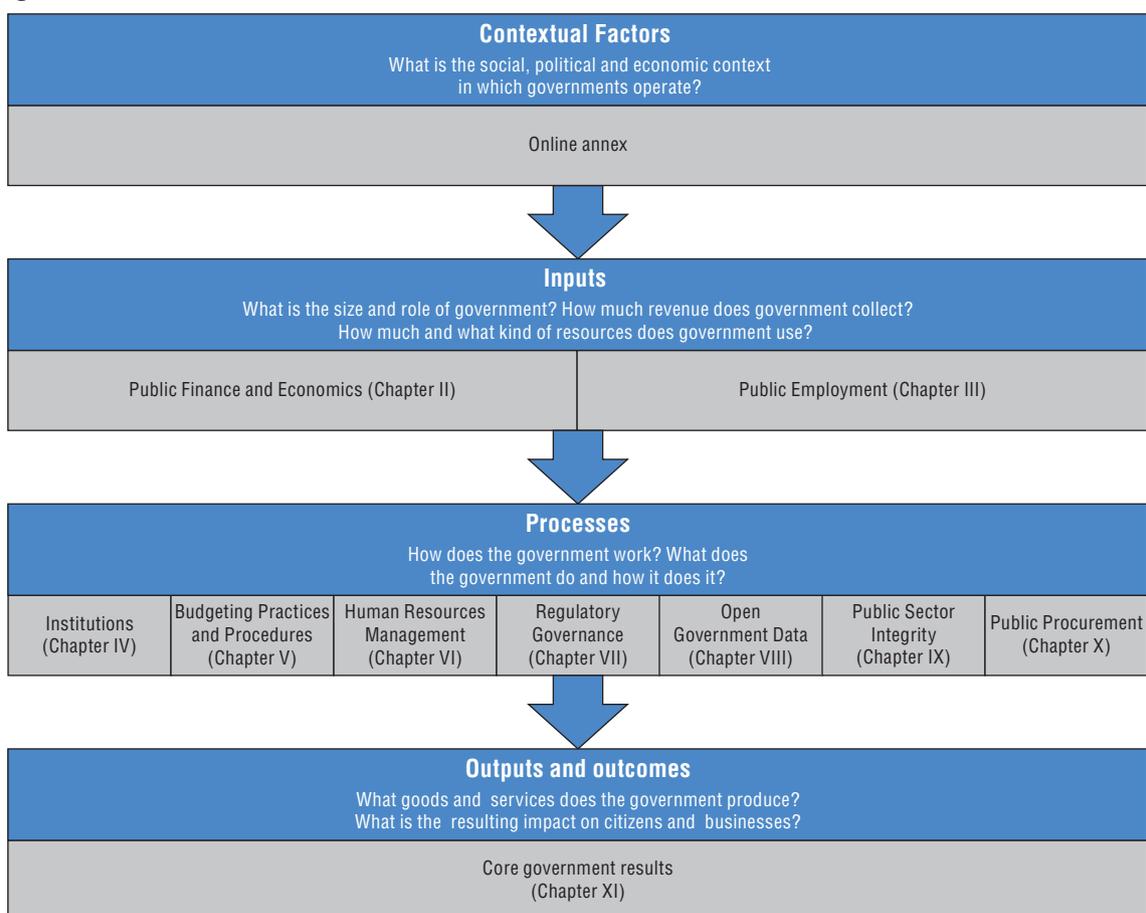
#### 4) Indicators of outputs and outcomes

The dividing line between outputs and outcomes can be blurry. While outputs refer to the quantity and type of goods and services produced by governments, outcomes show the effects of policies and practices on citizens and business. 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.

This edition of the *Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean* includes data on outputs and outcomes for the first time. Chapter 11 on core government results focuses on whole-of-government aspects, such as the confidence of citizens in their national government and satisfaction with public services, the perception of corruption, the rule of law, income redistribution.

Figure 2 below presents the conceptual framework for *Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2020*.

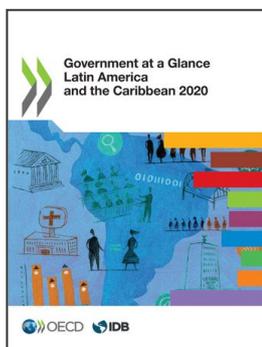
Figure 0.2. **Framework for Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2020**



Source: Author's elaboration.

## Structure

*Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2020* starts with a chapter analysing the current practices on public sector integrity in the LAC region and their relevance for good governance. Chapters 2-11 provide data on the following areas of public administration: Public Finance and Economics, Public Employment, Institutions, Budgeting Practices and Procedures, Human Resources Management, Regulatory Governance, Open Government Data, Public Sector Integrity, Public Procurement and Core Government Results



**From:**  
**Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2020**

**Access the complete publication at:**

<https://doi.org/10.1787/13130fbb-en>

**Please cite this chapter as:**

OECD (2020), "Introduction", in *Government at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2020*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/3ab845a6-en>

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