An open government promotes a completely different relationship between the government and its citizens. It aims to build stronger democracies and improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of public services by relying on the use of new technologies. It is built on a citizen-centered approach to create public value by collaborative schemes to co-design and co-implement public policy. In parallel, it promotes public scrutiny so that there is greater integrity and accountability from government authorities, managers, and other officials.

Slightly more than three quarters of LAC countries that replied to the survey, including Brazil and Peru, have either elaborated their own definition of open government or adopted the country's definition from an external source (e.g. OECD or Open Government Partnership). Having a country-tailored definition at its disposal is essential to encompass and channel the various initiatives implemented by different institutions across government.

In the LAC context open government initiatives remain scattered and only in some countries are linked to broader national development plans (e.g. Costa Rica's national development plan 2015-18) or public administration reforms. Aligning these efforts has the potential to improve co-ordination within central government and facilitate collaboration across branches of government as well as with relevant stakeholders from civil society, academia and the private sector.

To strengthen and focus open government efforts many governments worldwide, including 62% of LAC countries, have adopted an open overarching government strategy that in many cases refers to the Open Government Partnership (OGP) action plans (e.g. Colombia, Panama and Paraguay). On the other end of the spectrum, 38% of LAC countries such as El Salvador and the Dominican Republic indicated that their government has not yet created an overarching strategy on open government. A common risk to be avoided when designing and implementing open government strategies is to favour short-term commitments rather than deeper changes needed for open government to become an effective mechanism.

Open government is not a goal in itself, but rather a channel to develop more effective policies, better targeted services, and stronger accountability. For 61.5% of LAC countries surveyed, the main objective of open government reforms is to improve transparency (compared to 85.7% of OECD countries for which transparency is the main priority). El Salvador and Dominican Republic indicated that the main priority is improving citizen participation in policy making while Mexico mentioned that open government reforms should solve public problems by improving quality of life and generating social benefits.

Methodology and definitions

The data presented was collected through the OECD Survey on Open Government and open data, conducted in 2015. The survey was answered by 13 countries from Latin America and the Caribbean; respondents were predominantly senior government officials in charge of open government reforms. Countries were asked to answer two parts of the survey: The first part aimed at detecting the approach of the main institution responsible for open government. A special survey module was sent to the ministries of finance and health and another ministry selected by each country. The answers from the ministries were used to complement the analysis.

The OECD (2014) defines open government as "the transparency of government actions, the accessibility of government services and information, and the responsiveness of governments to new ideas, demands and needs. A government is open when it is transparent, accountable, engaging and operates with integrity, which – through specific policy instruments and practices driving change and innovation processes-is likely to lead to better services and policies, higher trust in government, social well-being, quality of democracy".

Further reading

OECD (2014), *Open Government in Latin America*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264223639-en*.

OECD (forthcoming), *Open Government Review of Costa Rica: Towards an Open State*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

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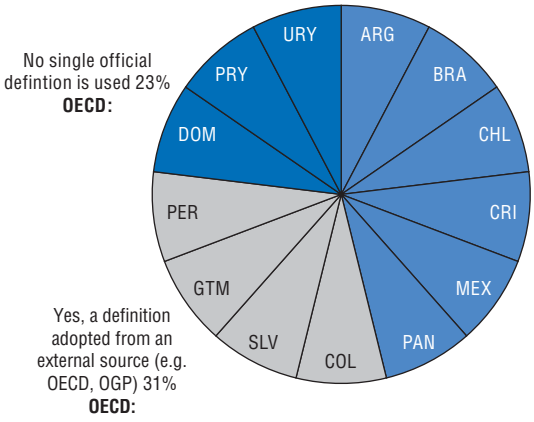
Santiso, C., et al. (2014), Improving Lives Through Better Government: Promoting Effective, Efficient, and Open Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, DC., *https://publications.iadb.org/handle/11319/6696*.

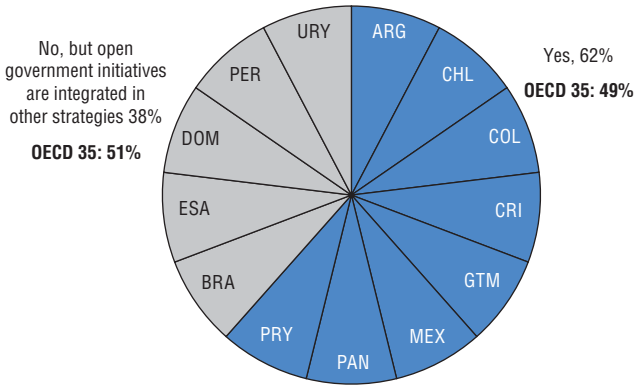
8.12. Existence of a single definition of open government, 2015



Source: OECD (2015), survey on Open Government and Open Data.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933431484

8.13. Existence of national open government strategy



Source: OECD (2015), survey on Open Government and Open Data.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933431491

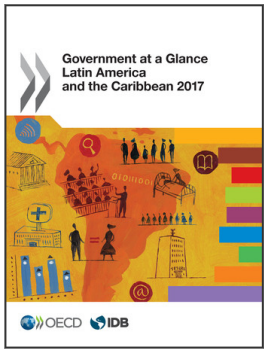
8.14. Main objective that the government intends to achieve through open government initiatives, 2015

Countries	Main Objective
Argentina	❍
Brazil	●
Chile	●
Colombia	●
Costa Rica	●
El Salvador	❍
Guatemala	●
Mexico	×
Panama	✦
Paraguay	●
Peru	●
Dominican Republic	❍
Uruguay	●
OECD35	● (30)
LAC13	
●	8
❍	3
X	1
✦	1

Key:
✦ Improve the accountability of the public sector.
● Improve the transparency of the public sector.
❍ Improve citizen participation in policymaking.
× Other.

Source: OECD (2015), survey on Open Government and Open Data.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933431856



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