

OECD Anti-Corruption and Integrity Outlook: Country Fact Sheet 2024

Costa Rica

Contextual factors

State structure	Executive power	Legislative system	Legal system
Unitary	Presidential	Unicameral	Civil law

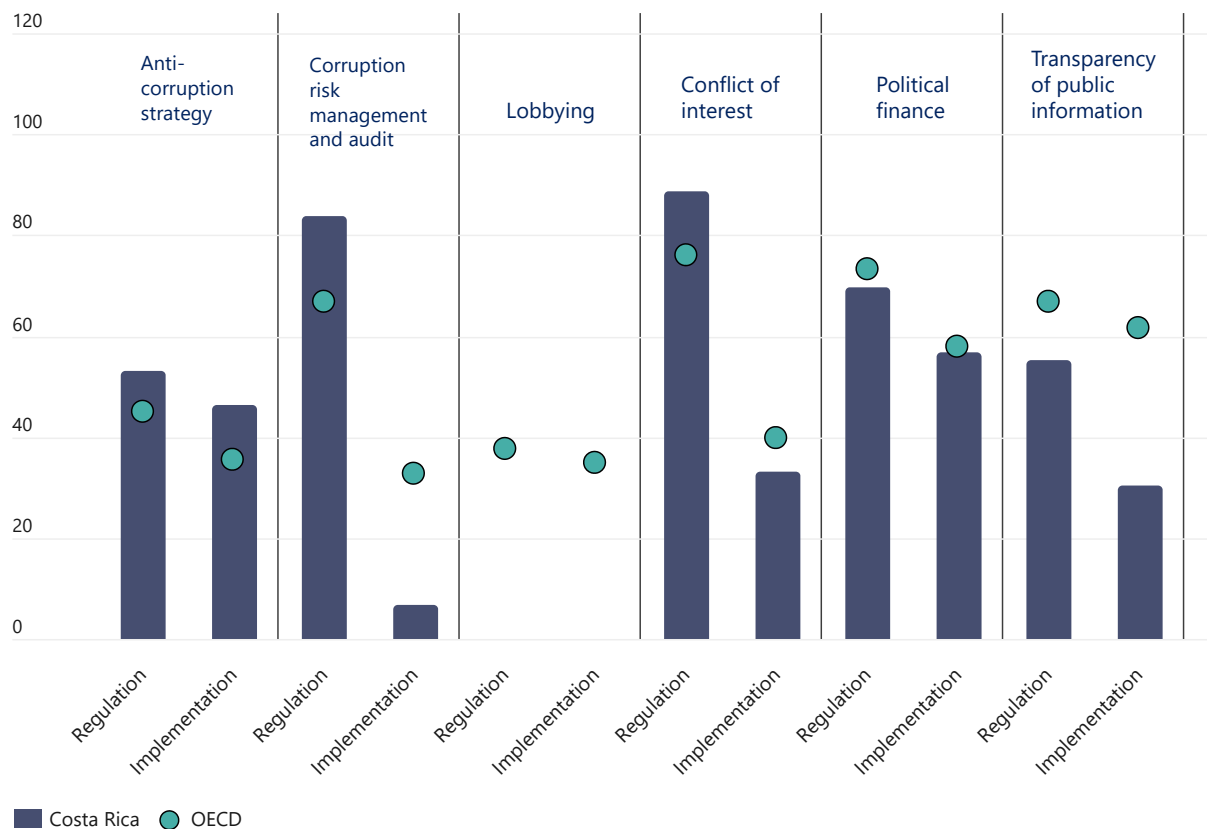
Strategy and institutions on anti-corruption and public integrity

Costa Rica has adopted the [National Strategy of Integrity and Prevention of Corruption 2021-2030 \(ENIPC\)](#) which was declared of public interest by the [Executive Decree 43248-MJP](#). The strategy was co-created by different ministries and government bodies as well as other key stakeholders. It includes an action plan, as well as a series of strategic objectives to mitigate public integrity risks in human resources, in public-private interactions, conflicts of interest, bribery and traffic of influence, and in the management of lobbying activities.

The Ministry of Justice is the guarantor of the implementation and fulfilment of the objectives of the ENIPC, and the Task Force of the ENIPC is responsible for overseeing implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the action plan. The [National Commission for an Open State](#) is responsible for the open data policy at the level of the central government. However, there is no central government institution responsible for developing internal control and internal audit systems. Further, no lobbying regulation has yet been enacted in Costa Rica.

Overview

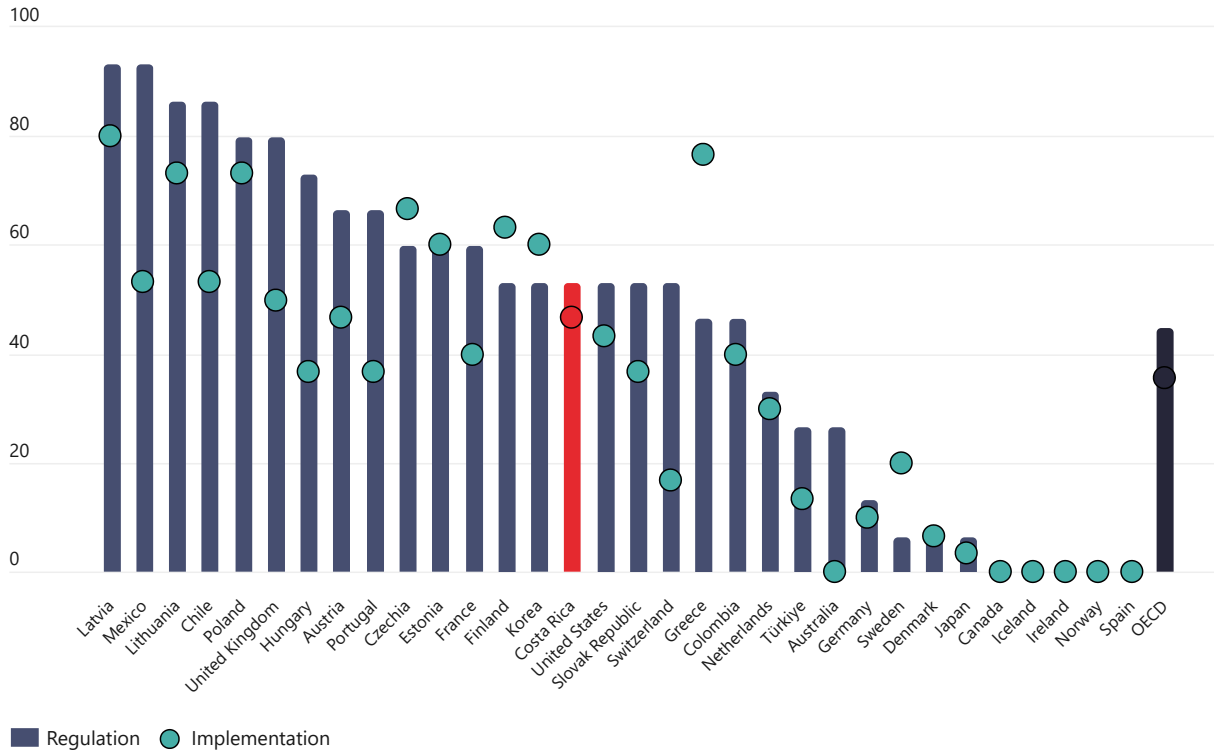
Figure 1. Overview



Greatest strengths	Areas to improve
Corruption risk management and audit - regulation	Lobbying - regulation
Conflict of interest - regulation	Corruption risk management and audit - implementation
Anti-corruption strategy	Public information

Anti-corruption strategy

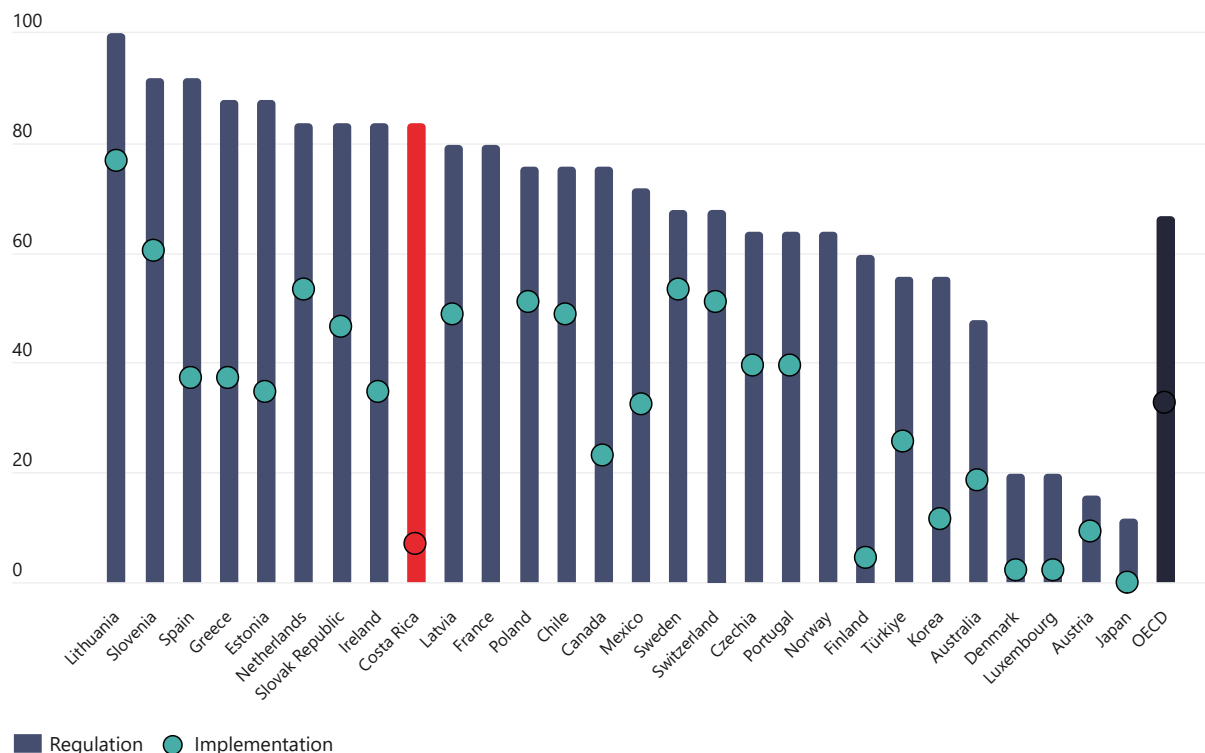
Figure 2. Anti-corruption strategy



Costa Rica's National Strategy of Integrity and Prevention of Corruption 2021-2030 includes outcome-level indicators for public integrity objectives, including set targets for these indicators. The Strategy underwent mandatory inter-governmental and public consultation processes. While the Ministry of Justice is the guarantor of the fulfilment of the objectives of the Strategy, the Task Force of the ENIPC is responsible for its implementation. However, associated action plans do not link objectives with identified lead organisations, nor do they relate to specific financial plans. Further, monitoring reports on the action plan(s) have not yet been published.

Corruption risk management and audit

Figure 3. Corruption risk management and audit

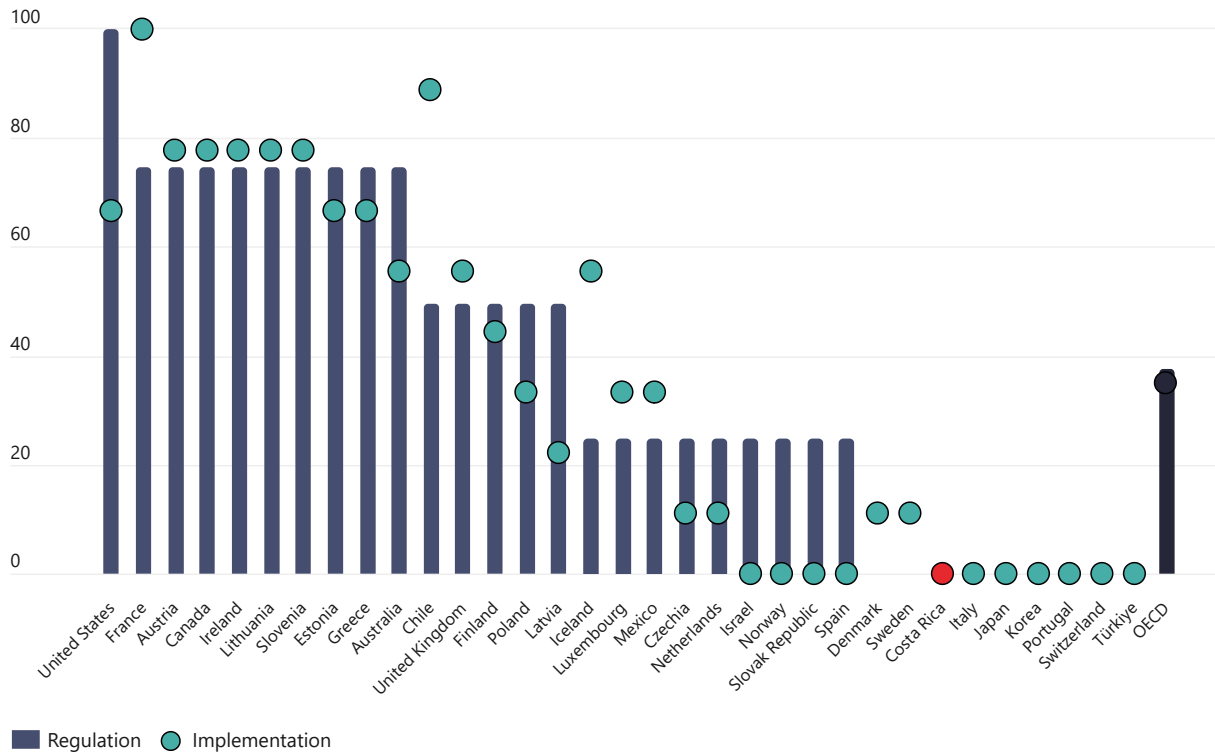


As measured against OECD standards on risk management, which includes internal control and internal audit, Costa Rica fulfils 84% of criteria for regulations but only 7% for practice, compared to the OECD average of 67% and 33%, respectively. The country's General Law on Internal Control (8292) defines internal control policies according to international standards, the managerial responsibility for implementation of internal control, objectives and annual reporting activities. Further, the General Guidelines on Principles and Ethical Statements provide standards of conduct for ministers, members of parliament, civil servants and other political appointees. Although the risk management regulations include internal control standards for the public sector, their implementation is not harmonised, with no central function developing internal control systems and no reviews of existing systems. Additionally, there is no comprehensive reporting on internal control and internal audit, and a low use in practice of risk management tools in budget organisations.

Internal audit units are staffed according to legal requirements in Costa Rica, but they fail to submit annual activity reports or to conduct external quality assurance of the internal audit function. While all public organisations in Costa Rica fall under the remit of internal audit, there is no data available on the number of organisations having been audited in the past five years. Additionally, Costa Rica does not track the adoption or implementation of internal audit recommendations.

Lobbying

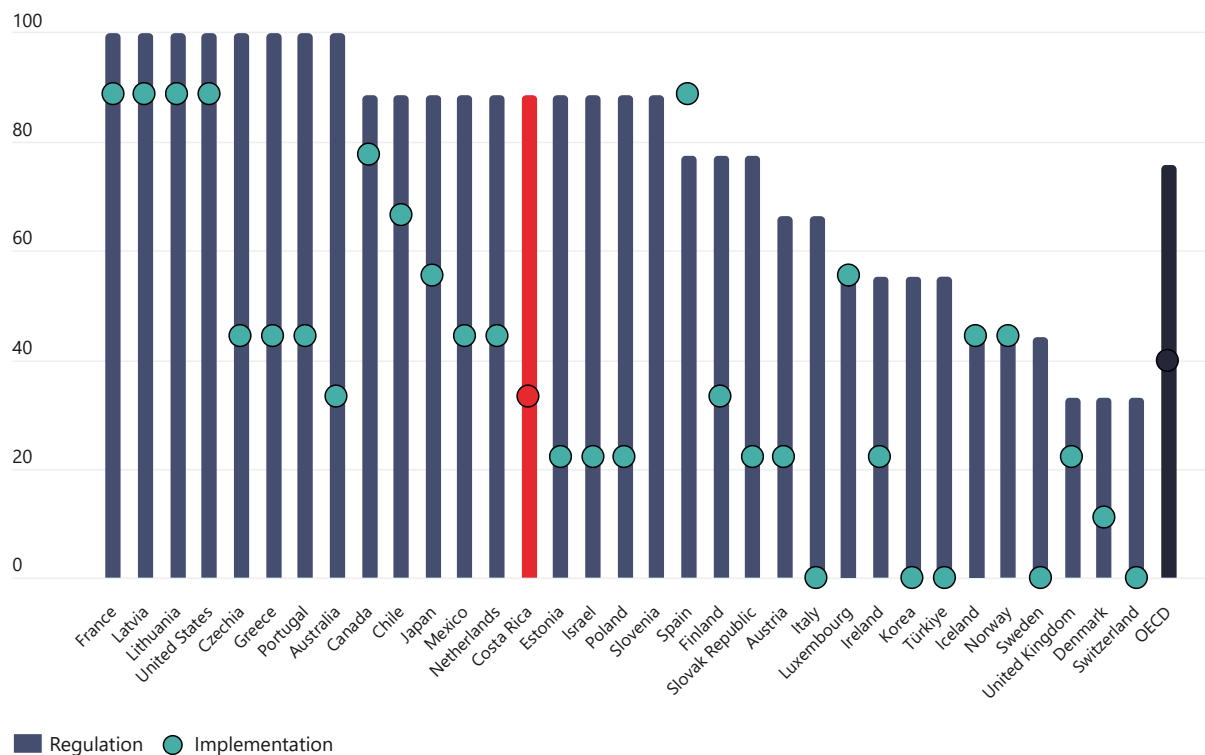
Figure 4. Lobbying



As measured against OECD standards on lobbying, Costa Rica fulfils no criteria for regulations nor for practice, compared to the OECD average of 38% and 35%, respectively. To date, lobbying activities are not regulated by law in Costa Rica, nor are there cooling-off periods for public officials and lobbyists, nor a supervisory function in central government to oversee transparency of lobbying activities. Further, Costa Rica does not have an established lobbying register to disclose information such as domains of intervention, types of lobbying activities and related budgets and expenses.

Conflict of interest

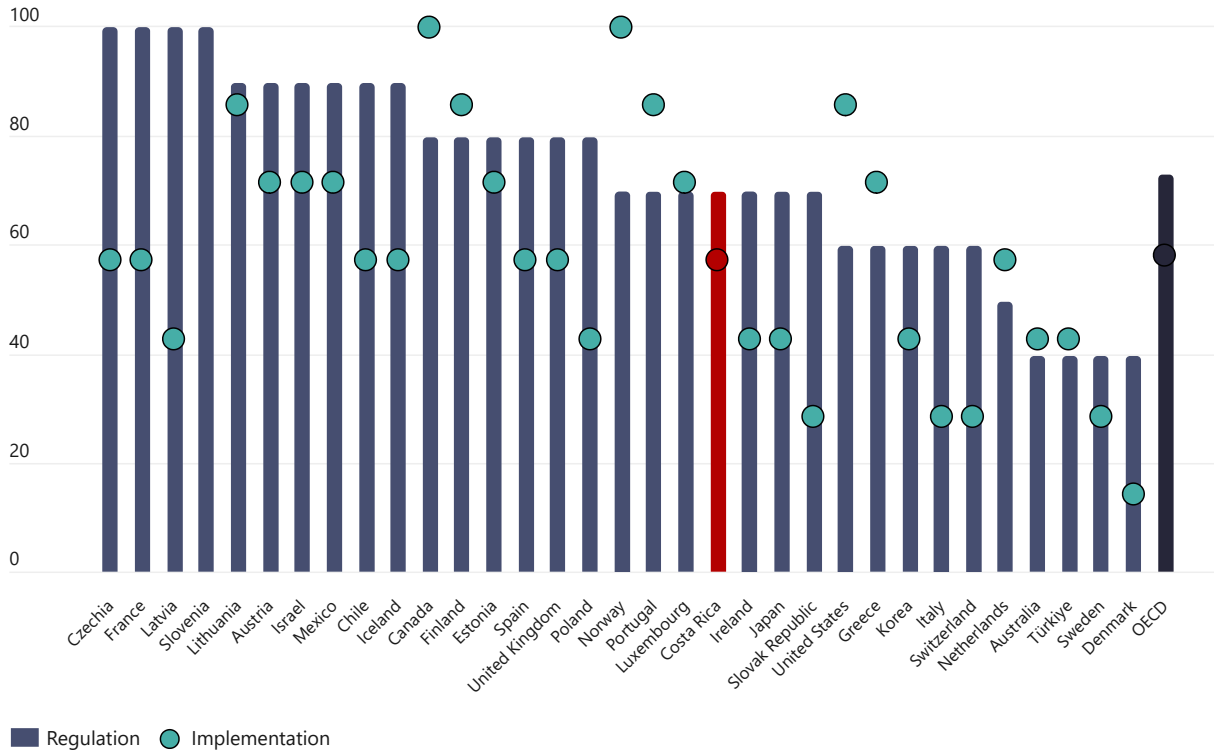
Figure 5. Conflict of interest



As measured against OECD standards on conflict of interest, Costa Rica fulfils 89% of criteria for regulations but only 33% of criteria for practice, compared to the OECD average of 76% and 40%, respectively. The country's Law against Corruption and Illicit Enrichment in Public Function (No. 8422) presents a comprehensive framework. It lists incompatibilities between public functions and other public or private functions and defines institutional responsibilities. Any member of government, parliament, or of the highest body of the judiciary, as well as public employees in high-risk positions and top-tier civil servants must submit interest declarations. All submitted declarations are verified, but there is no data provided on the submission rate of these interest declarations, and no information on sanctions for non-compliance.

Political finance

Figure 6. Political finance

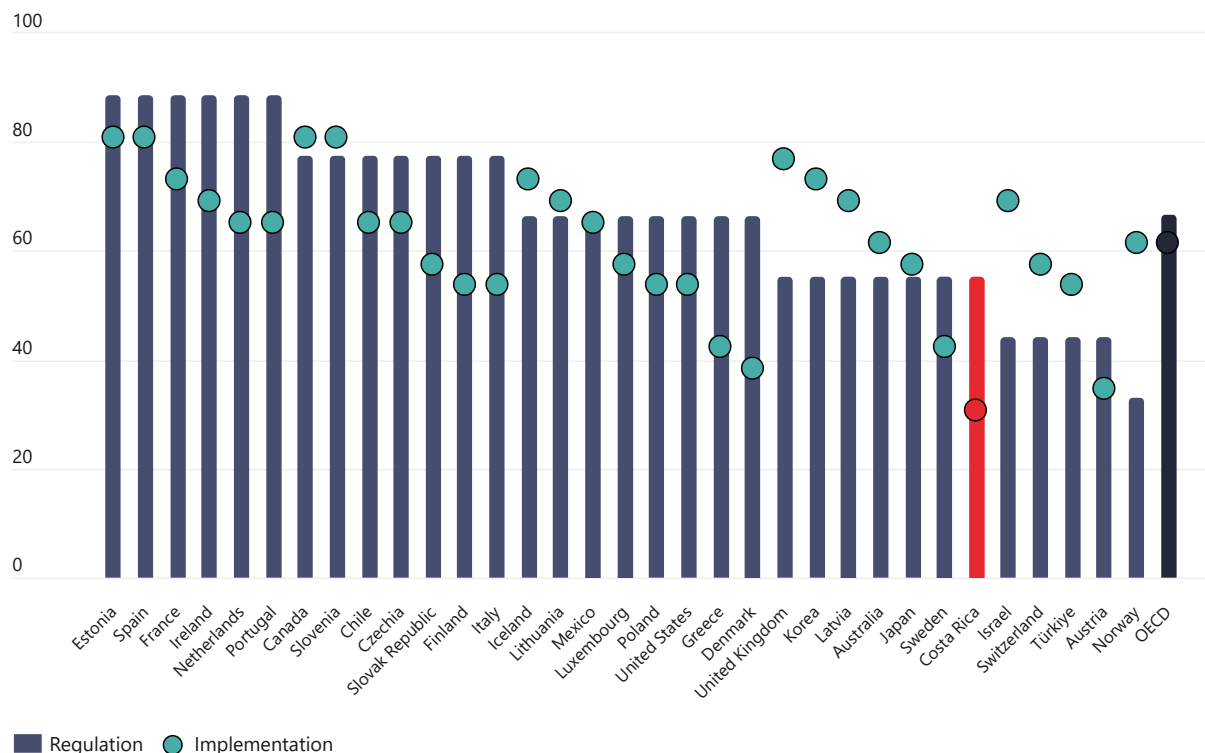


As measured against OECD standards on political finance, Costa Rica fulfils 70% of criteria for regulations and 57% for practice, compared to the OECD average of 73% and 58%, respectively. The Electoral Code defines sanctions for breaches of political finance and election campaign regulations and bans anonymous donations as well as contributions from foreign states or enterprises and publicly owned enterprises. Further, parties and/or candidates must report their finances during electoral campaigns and make financial reports public.

In practice, financial reports from all political parties are publicly available, on a single platform and in a user-friendly format, although there is no data available on whether parties submitted their annual accounts within the timelines defined by the national legislation.

Transparency of public information

Figure 7. Transparency of public information



As measured against OECD standards on public information, which includes access to information and open data, Costa Rica fulfils 56% of the criteria on regulations but only 31% for practice, compared to the OECD average of 67% and 62%, respectively. In Costa Rica, everyone, including non-citizens and legal persons, has the right to access information in all forms available, although no primary legislation establishes that government data is “open by default”. In terms of competences, responsibility for the open data policy and its monitoring lies with the National Commission for an Open State – as the central government unit – but there is no supervisory body responsible for managing potential issues related to access to public information. Datasets such as government sessions agendas, ministers’ agendas and aggregated data on lobbying on public decision making are not published online.