

Government at a Glance 2023

Country Notes

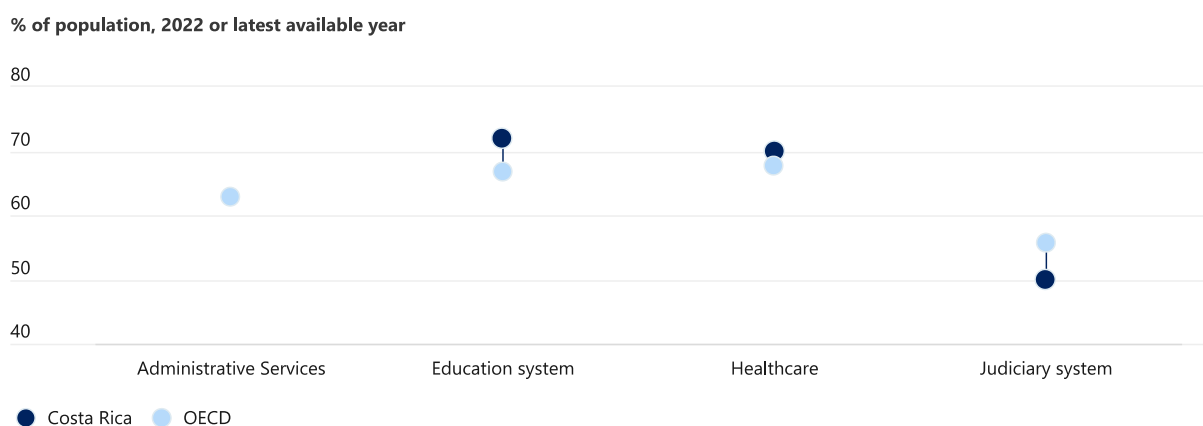
Costa Rica

Trust and satisfaction with public services

Trust in public institutions and satisfaction with public services are important yardsticks of the quality of public governance. They reflect people's perceptions of government competence in designing and delivering policies and services, and expectations on the behaviour of public institutions and their representatives. Although high trust in public institutions is not a necessary outcome of democratic governance, trust and satisfaction with public services facilitate effective governance, as they correlate with high rates of compliance with policies, participation in public life and social cohesion.

Satisfaction with public services in Costa Rica is close to OECD averages. A large majority is satisfied with the education system (72%) and the healthcare (70%), above the respective average values across OECD countries. Half of population in Costa Rica was satisfied with the judiciary system, which is slightly below the OECD average.

Figure 1. Satisfaction with public services, 2022



Achieving results with good governance practices

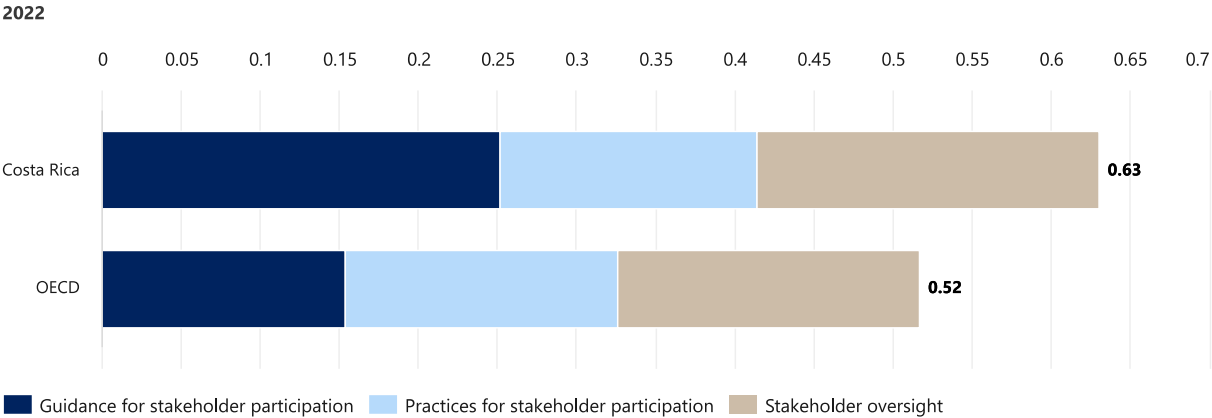
In an age of multiple crises, governments need to adopt more advanced practices to build trust in public institutions and enhance democratic resilience. Actions include building on democratic strengths, such as enhancing citizen and stakeholder engagement in decision making; reinforcing key competences to handle crises, such as budgeting and public financial management processes to address the green and digital transitions; and protecting against threats to democratic values, such as maintaining effective public integrity rules and promoting ethical use of artificial intelligence.

Citizen and stakeholder engagement in decision making helps to improve the design, implementation, and public acceptance of policies, infrastructure and services. The OECD Infrastructure Governance Index (IGI) on stakeholder participation provides an overview of countries' performance in developing national guidance for stakeholder engagement, promoting their effective participation, and ensuring stakeholder oversight over infrastructure projects.

Costa Rica is among the highest performers on the IGI on stakeholder participation. It scores 0.63, compared to the average value 0.52 across OECD countries (1 is the maximum possible score, meaning full application of IGI on stakeholder participation). Costa Rica fares above or close to the OECD average in each dimension of the index, with stakeholder participation guidance being the highest (0.25 out of a maximum value of 0.33).

Figure 2. Index on stakeholder participation in infrastructure decision making

From 0 (lowest) to 1 (highest), 2022



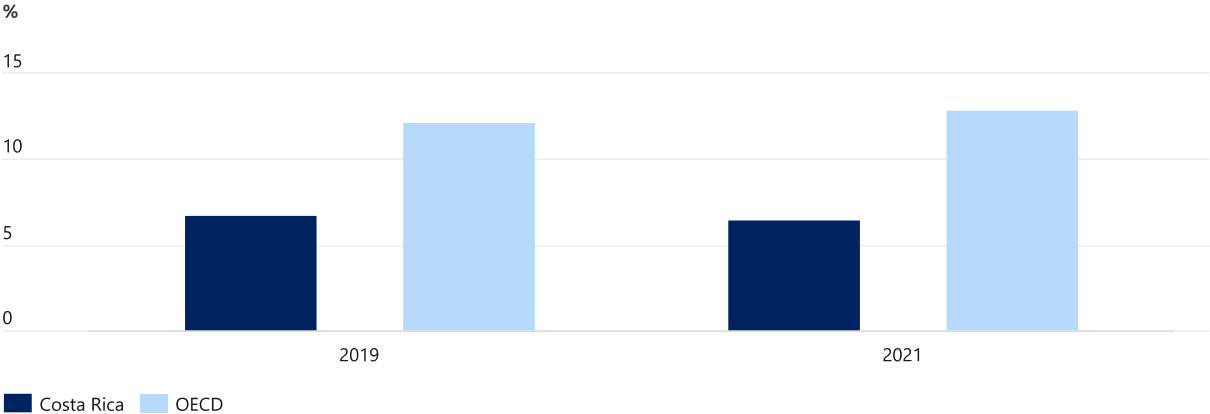
Financial contributions allow individuals and entities to support political candidates and parties. However, political finance needs to be adequately regulated to reduce risks of undue influence and policy capture.

In Costa Rica publicly owned enterprises and foreign states or enterprises are not allowed to finance political campaigns and parties. In addition, anonymous donations to political parties or candidates need to be registered or reported.

Public investment can enhance productivity and economic growth and help implement long-term policies, such as green energy infrastructure to support action on climate change. In turn, governments procure large amounts of goods, services and works to help them implement policies and deliver public services.

Costa Rica also spends less than average on public procurement, 6.5% of GDP in 2021, compared 12.9% on average across OECD countries. Costa Rica investment spendings as share of GDP in 2021 (2.0%) was lower than the OECD average (3.4%).

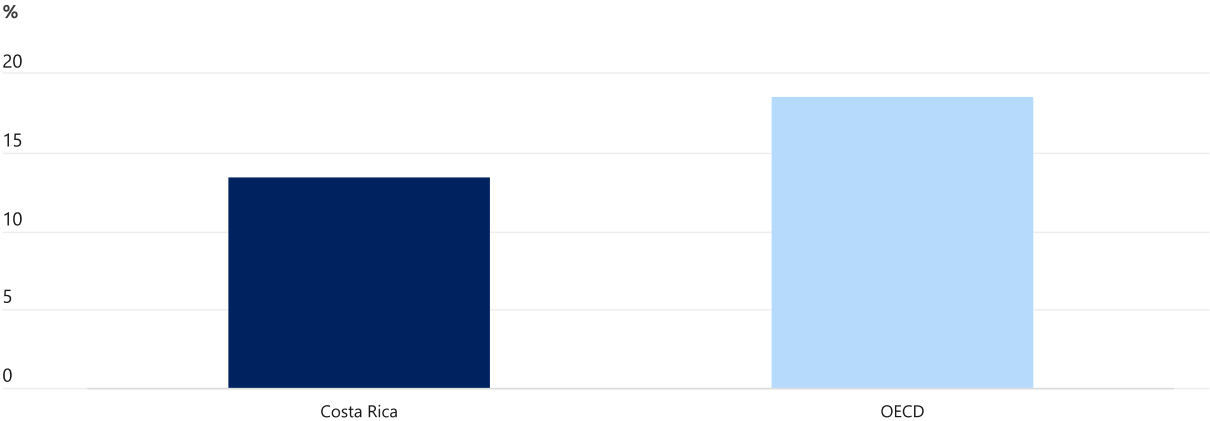
Figure 5. Government procurement spending as a share of GDP



The size of public employment varies significantly among OECD countries, ranging from around 10% to just above 30%.

The size of public employment as share of total employment in Costa Rica was 13.5% in 2021, which is smaller than the average across OECD countries (18.6%).

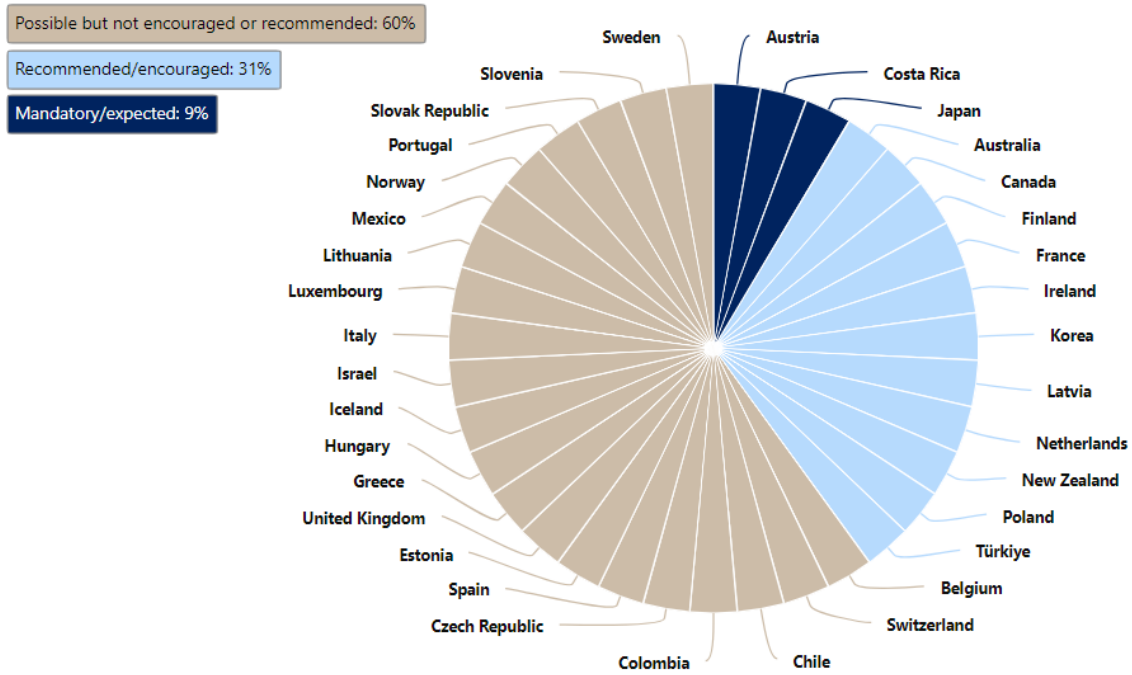
Figure 6. Public employment as a percentage of total employment, 2021



Governments use different mechanisms to harness and develop the capacity of their workforce. For example, internal mobility in public administrations helps to pool human resources across government and attract and retain civil servants.

Costa Rica is one of the three countries where internal mobility of civil servants is mandatory or expected. Similarly, internal mobility is also mandatory or expected for senior-level civil servants. Costa Rica has implemented the practice of developing individual learning plans for public employees.

Figure 7. Mobility of civil servants across public administrations in central government, 2022



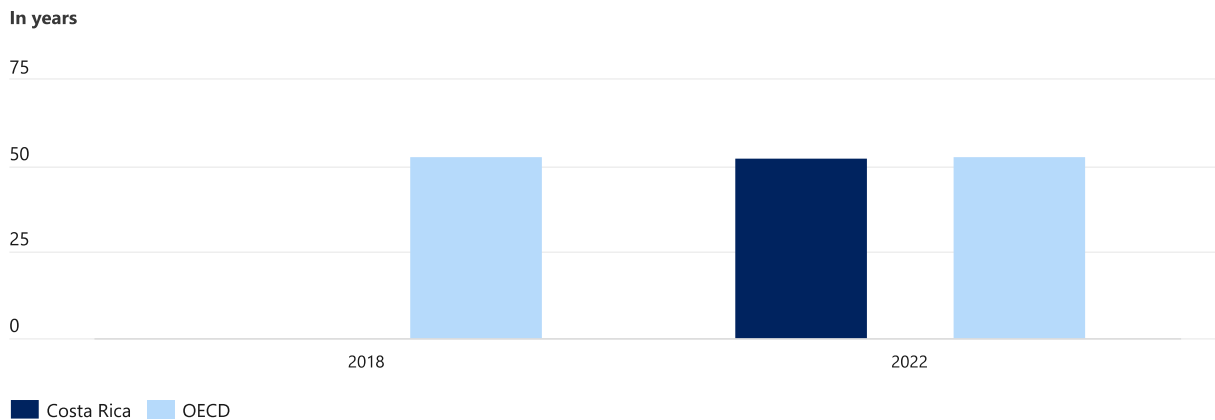
Equal representation of women and men in the public sector is a key indicator of progress towards gender equality, diversity and better representation. In 2020, a majority of employees in the public sector in OECD countries were women (58.9%), with large differences among countries. However, women are often under-represented in managerial positions.

Gender equality in ministerial positions in Costa Rica is above the OECD average, with 46% of positions held by women compared to the average of 36%.

Young people are under-represented in public and political life across the OECD, with the risk that their voice and interests are not sufficiently taken in consideration in policymaking.

The average age of cabinet members in Costa Rica is 52, which is slightly lower than the OECD average of 53.

Figure 8. Average age of cabinet members, 2018 and 2022



About the report

Government at a Glance presents the most up-to-date internationally comparable data on how public administrations function and perform in OECD countries, accession countries, and other major economies. Country factsheets highlight key indicators against the OECD average. Data included in the factsheets are derived from the new Government at a Glance data portal, which allows for a more user-friendly and interactive way of comparing countries with each other and the OECD average. The factsheets do not provide a comprehensive picture of public governance performance, but rather a snapshot of key indicators in the three sections of the publication: a) trust and satisfaction with public services; b) achieving results with good governance practices and c) what resources public institutions use and how they are managed.

Figure notes

People who express satisfaction with public services: for the judiciary and the courts the data reflect the proportion of citizens who express having confidence in the institution. Data on satisfaction with administrative services come from the OECD 2021 Survey on the Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions. Data on satisfaction with the education and health systems and confidence in the judiciary are from the Gallup World Poll. Data for satisfaction in administrative services are not available for Costa Rica.

Data on public finance and economics are derived from the System of National Accounts (SNA) and were extracted on 5 May 2023.

Fiscal balance as reported in SNA framework, also referred to as net lending (+) or net borrowing (-) of government, is calculated as total government revenues minus total government expenditures.

Government gross debt is reported according to the SNA definition, which differs from the definition applied under the Maastricht Treaty. It is defined as all liabilities that require payment or payments of interest or principal by the debtor to the creditor at a date or dates in the future. All debt instruments are liabilities, but some liabilities such as shares, equity and financial derivatives are not debt.

Public employment refers to employment in the general government as defined in the System of National Accounts (SNA). Data on employment in general government were extracted on 17 April 2023.

Data on employment in general government for Iceland, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Türkiye and the United States are from the International Labour Organization (ILO), ILOSTAT.

Data show women as a share of cabinet members who head ministries as of 1 January 2023 (excluding ministers without portfolios).

The data on age of cabinet members reflects the situation as of 20 December 2022.

OECD average refers to the unweighted average with the exception of public finance indicators.

For more information see

www.oecd.org/governance/government-at-a-glance.htm