

Government at a Glance 2023

Country Notes

Canada

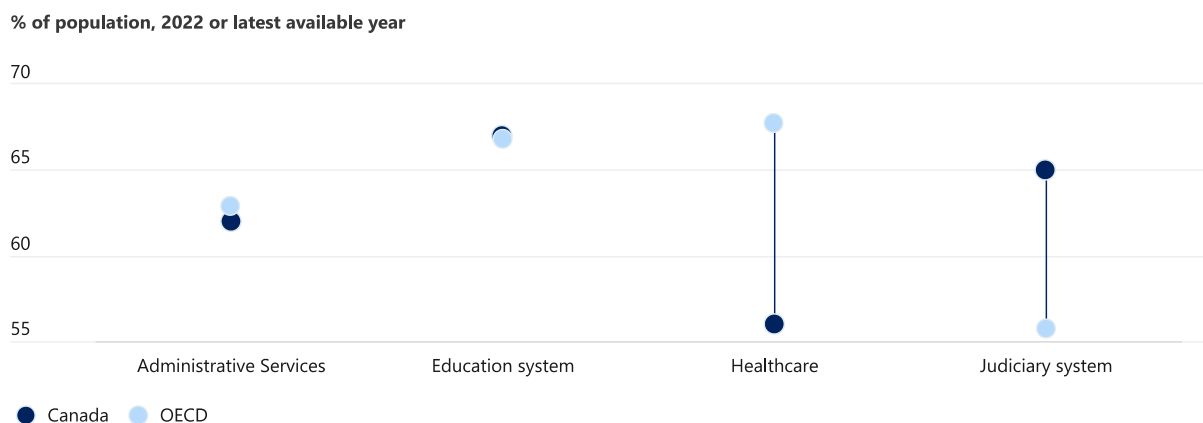
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Trust and satisfaction with public services

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.

A majority of Canadians are satisfied with public services, although in international comparison the results are mixed. More than two-thirds of Canadians are satisfied with the education system (67%) and the judiciary system (65%), the latter is 9 percentage points higher than the OECD average (56%). A majority is satisfied with healthcare (56%), though this is 12 percentage points below the OECD average (68%). Satisfaction with administrative services in Canada (62%) is very close to the OECD average (63%).

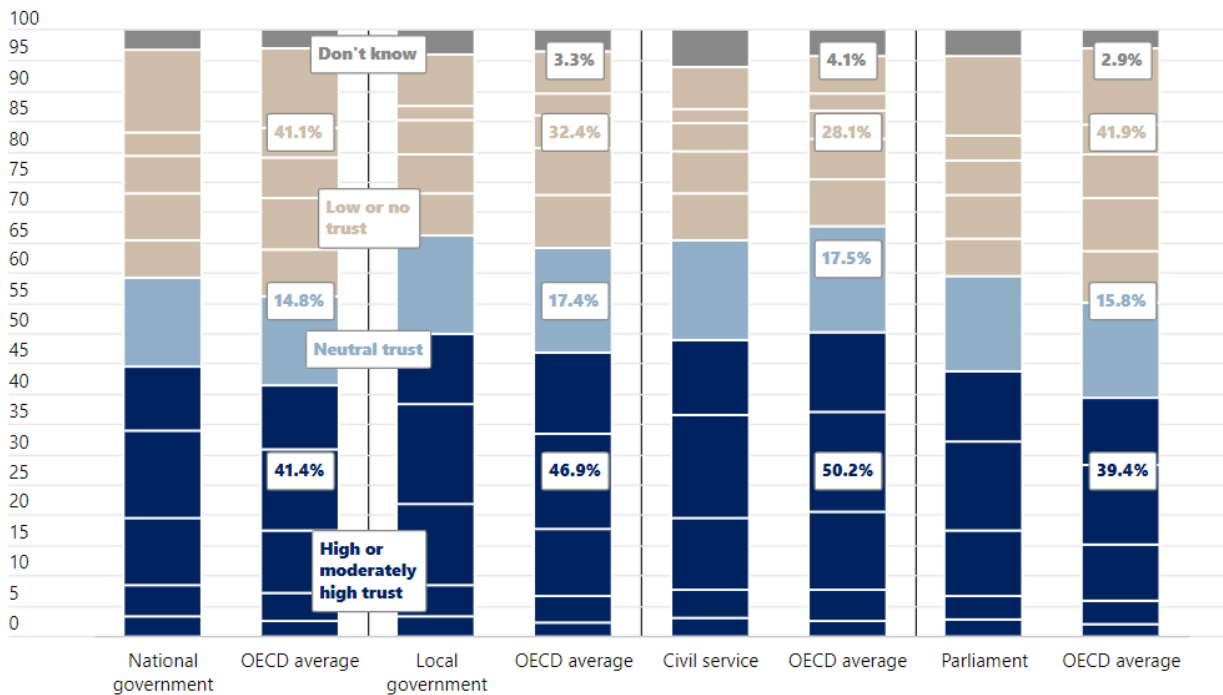
Figure 1. Satisfaction with public services, 2022



Trust in public institutions in Canada is generally above the OECD average. Slightly less than half of Canadians report high or moderately high trust in their federal government (45%) and 50% in their local government, ranking Canada above the OECD average (41% and 47%, respectively). Almost half have high or moderately high trust in the civil service (49%) in line with the OECD average and 44% trust the parliament, a share 5 percentage points higher than the OECD average (39%).

Figure 2. Trust in public institutions, 2021

% of population reporting high or moderately high trust in various public institutions, Canada, 2021



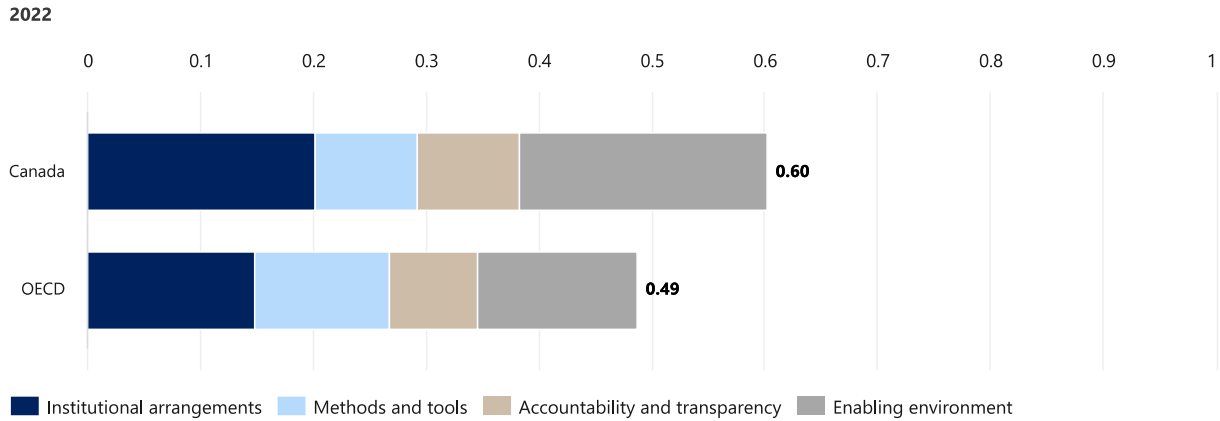
Achieving results with good governance practices

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.

Budgeting management processes, such as green budgeting, can help address the climate crisis and achieve environmental goals. While there has been a rapid increase in the number of countries implementing green budgeting mechanisms, these could be used more effectively. Green budgeting mechanisms include institutional arrangements to assess the environmental impacts of budgetary and fiscal policies, methods for evaluating their consistency, mechanisms to enhance transparency and accountability, and an enabling budgetary governance framework.

Canada performs above the average across OECD countries in green budgeting. It scores 0.60 on the OECD Green Budgeting Index, compared to the 0.49 OECD average (1 is the maximum possible score, indicating full application of green budgeting). Canada's performance across the four dimensions of the index is mixed. Its strongest performance is in the enabling environment (0.22) and institutional arrangements (0.20), which are both above the OECD average. However, there is room for improvement in methods and tools, and accountability and transparency, where the Canadian score is 0.09 (out of a maximum value of 0.25).

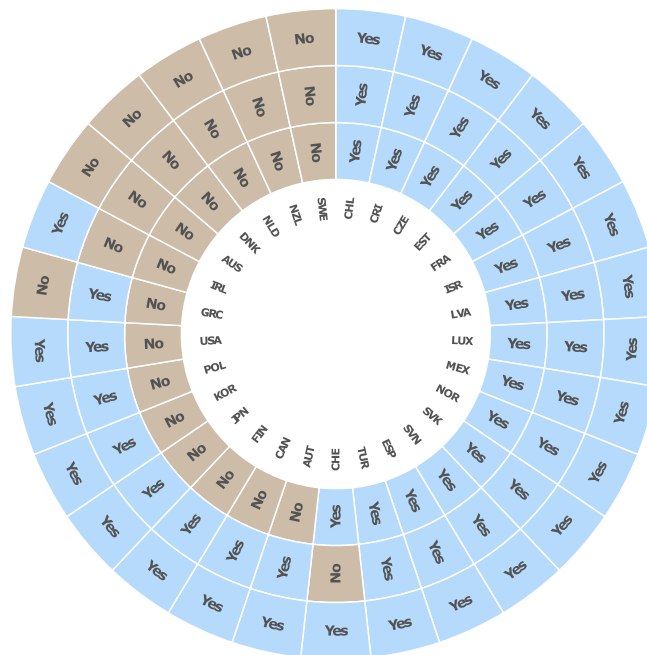
Figure 3. OECD Green Budgeting Index, 2022



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 Canada, publicly owned enterprises and foreign states, trade unions or enterprises are not allowed to finance political campaigns and parties. However, subject to some limits, anonymous donations of CAD 20 or less to political parties or candidates do not need to be registered or reported.

Figure 4. Regulation to ban financing political parties and election campaigns, 2022



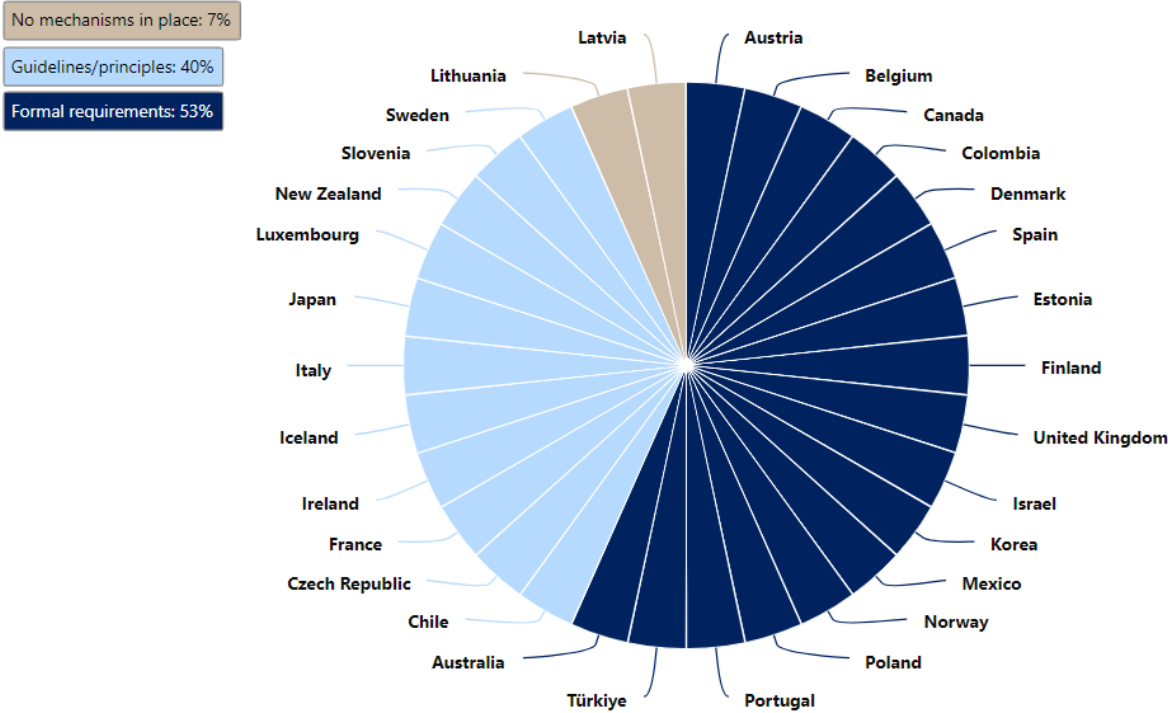
Inner ring: Ban on anonymous donations, and all contributions made to political parties and/or candidates must be registered and reported.
Middle ring: Ban on contributions from publicly owned enterprises.
Outer ring: Ban on contributions from foreign states or foreign enterprises.

Strengthening information integrity has become particularly complex in the digital age. While digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI) provide enormous opportunities, including in expanding and protecting the exercise of some democratic rights and freedoms, their use also brings challenges for governments such

as ensuring that they enhance people’s willingness and ability to engage constructively in democratic life and that they benefit society as a whole.

Canada along with 16 other OECD countries, has introduced laws and regulations (formal requirements), to ensure the ethical management and use of algorithms for AI by public institutions.

Figure 5. Mechanisms used to ensure the ethical use of artificial intelligence in government, 2022

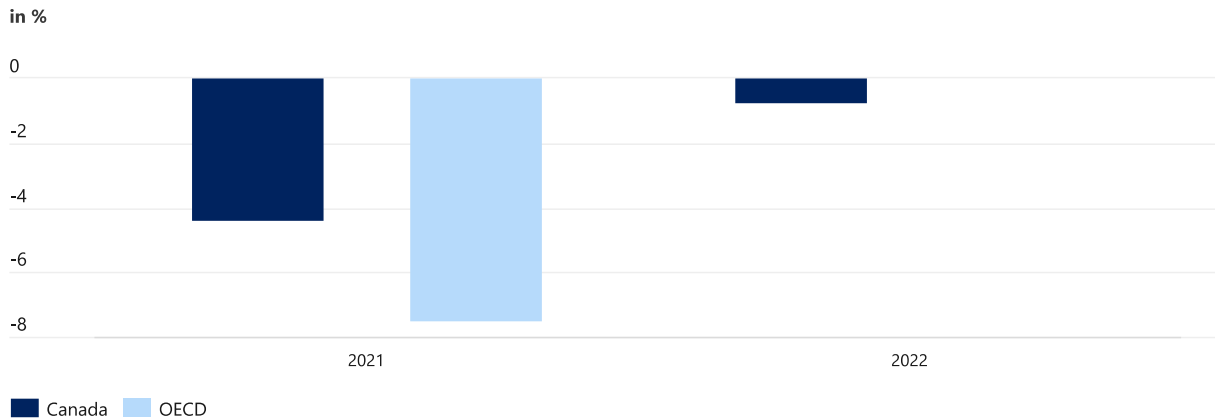


What resources public institutions use and how they are managed

After stark deterioration due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which required emergency measures and direct support mechanisms to business and people, public finances show positive signs, but the recovery remains fragile. The fiscal balance is the difference between a government’s revenues and its expenditures in a year. When the government spends more than it collects, it has a fiscal deficit. When it spends less, it has a fiscal surplus.

In 2021, Canada had a fiscal deficit of -4.4% of GDP, lower than the average of -7.5% across OECD countries. In 2022, the deficit was reduced to -0.7%. In 2021, public debt as share of GDP (120.9%) was very close to the OECD average (120.8%). The debt ratio was reduced to 100.8% of GDP in 2022.

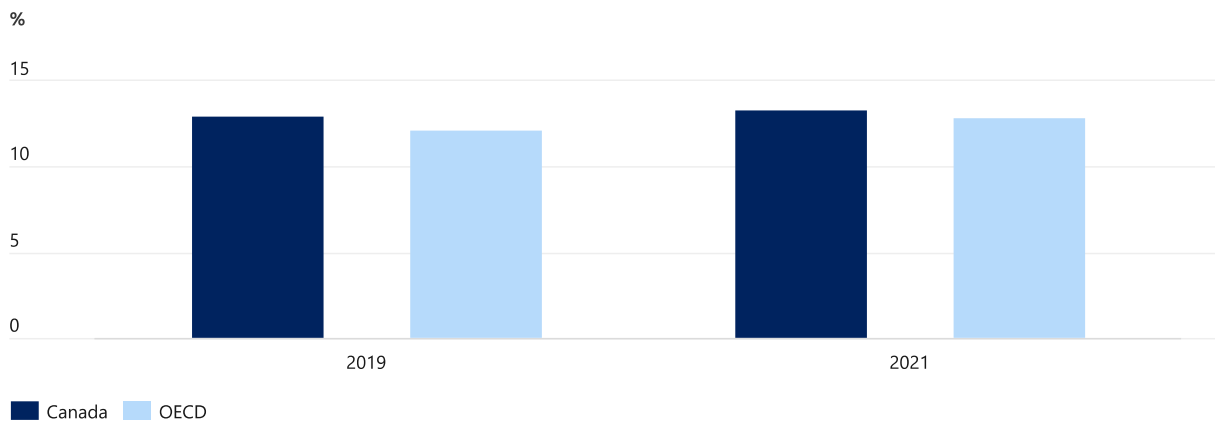
Figure 6. General government fiscal balance as a percentage of GDP



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.

Canada spent 13.4% of GDP on public procurement 2021, which is slightly above the OECD average (12.9%). Canada’s investment spending as share of GDP (3.5%) in 2021, was slightly higher than the OECD average (3.4%).

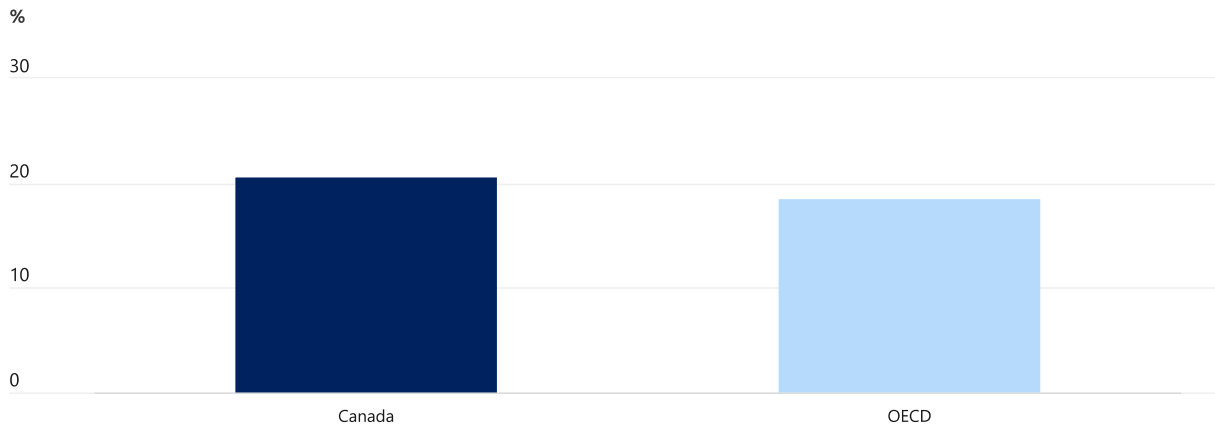
Figure 7. Government procurement spending as a share of GDP



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 Canada was 20.7% in 2021, which is larger than the average across OECD countries (18.6%).

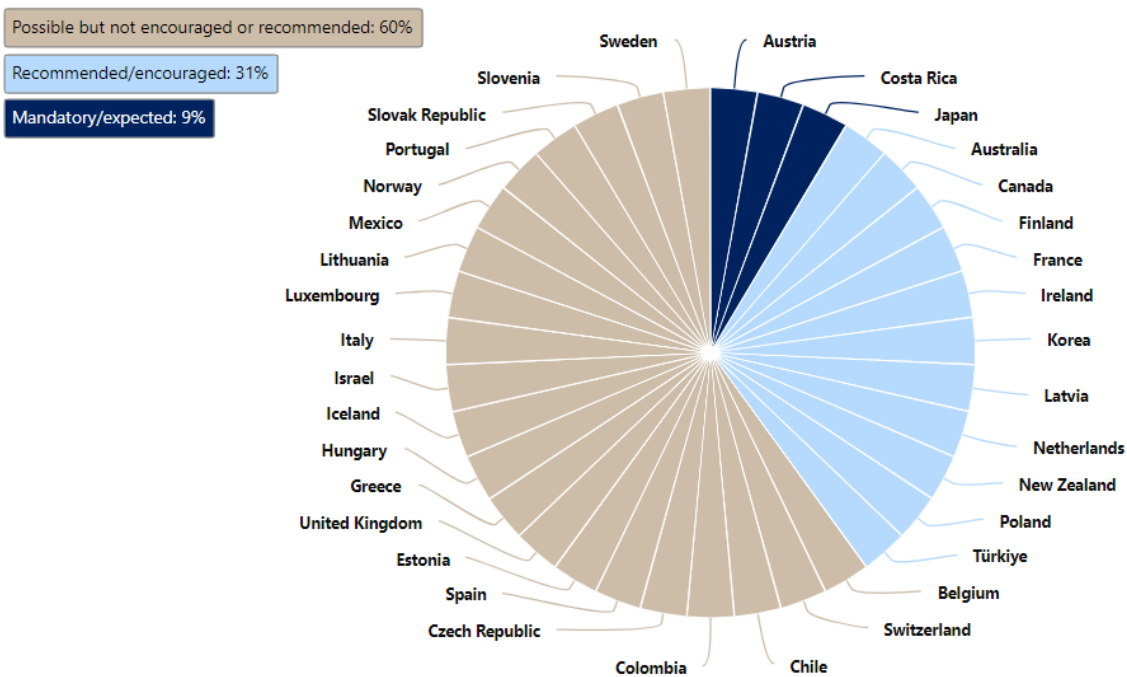
Figure 8. Public employment as a percentage of total employment, 2021



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.

In Canada internal mobility of civil servants is recommended and encouraged. In addition, internal mobility is mandatory for senior level civil servants. Canada has implemented the practice of developing learning plans for public employees.

Figure 9. Mobility of civil servants across public administrations in central government, 2022

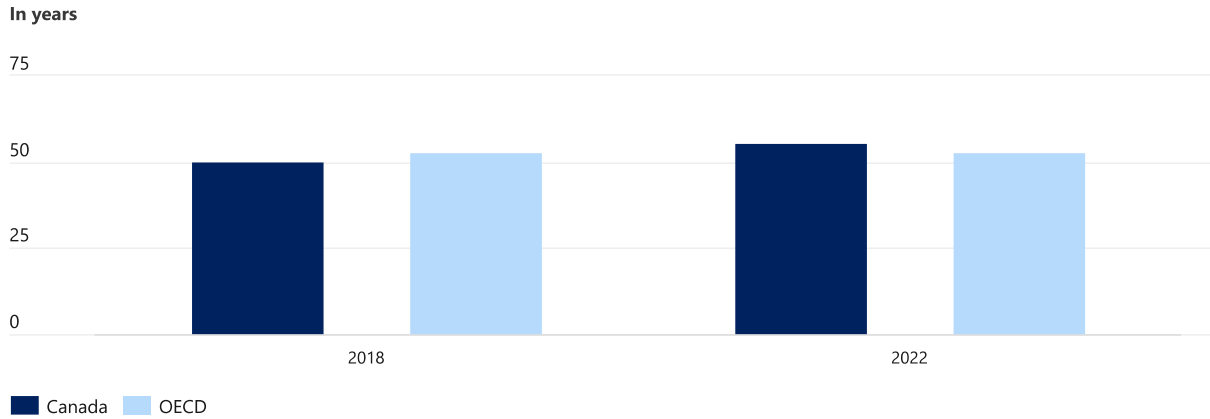


With 49% women in ministerial positions, Canada has achieved gender parity, and is above the OECD average (36%).

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 Canada is 56 years, 3 years older than the OECD average (53 years).

Figure 10. 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 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