

Government at a Glance 2021 Country Fact Sheet



Korea

Korea has one of the lowest levels of government expenditure among OECD countries. Korea spent 33.9% of GDP on public expenditures in 2019, below the OECD average of 46.6% (Figure 2.22). Social protection expenditures were 6.9% of GDP, around half the OECD average of 13.3% (Figure 2.25).

Chapter 2 – Public finance and economics



[Figure 2.22. General government expenditures as a percentage of GDP, 2007, 2019 and 2020](#)



[Figure 2.25. General government expenditures by function as a percentage of GDP, 2019](#)

Korea ranks first among 30 countries in the OECD digital government index. Korea outperformed in all six dimensions of the index in 2019, thanks to its comprehensive digital government strategy, long-standing institutional arrangements to implement digital government reforms, and tools to enable omni-channel service delivery (Figure 10.1).

Chapter 10 – Digital government



[Figure 10.1. OECD Digital Government Index, 2019](#)

Korea's gender parity in public administration and politics has shown slow but steady progress for over decades. In 2020, the share of women in senior management positions in the central government of Korea was the second lowest among OECD countries after Japan. However, there is a trend of an increase in the percentage from 6% in 2015 to 9% in 2020 (Figure 3.9). Compared to 32% on average in OECD countries, women held 19% of the seats in the unicameral parliament in 2021, showing an increase from 16% in 2012 (Figure 3.10). Also, progress towards gender parity has occurred in ministerial positions: The percentage of cabinet posts held by women has increased from 11% in 2012 to 28% in 2021 (Figure 3.11).

Chapter 3 – Public employment



[Figure 3.9. Gender equality in senior management positions in central governments, 2015 and 2020](#)



[Figure 3.10. Gender equality in parliament and electoral gender quotas, 2012, 2017 and 2021](#)



[Figure 3.11. Gender equality in ministerial positions, 2012, 2017 and 2021](#)

Government resources

Korea

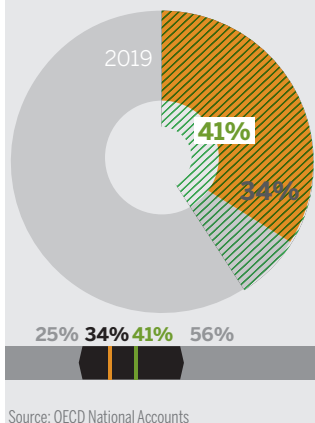
OECD

Range of OECD country values

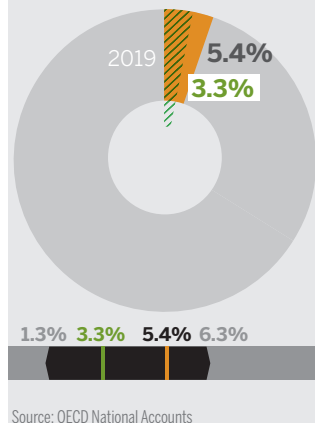
N. A. not available

Values have been rounded

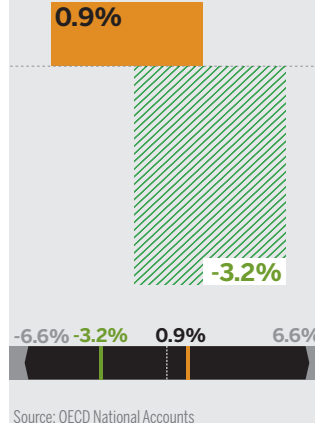
Government expenditures
(2019)
% of GDP



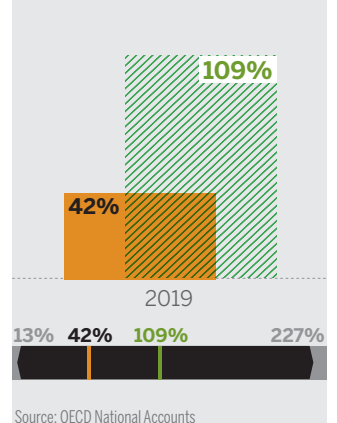
Government investment
(2019)
% of GDP



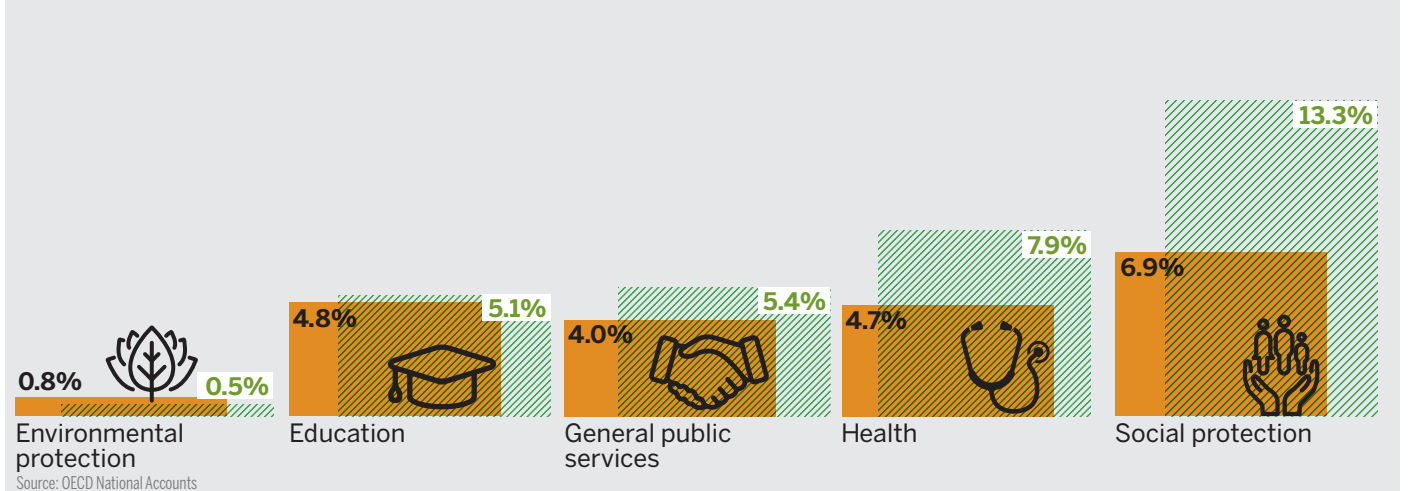
Fiscal balance
(2019)
% of GDP



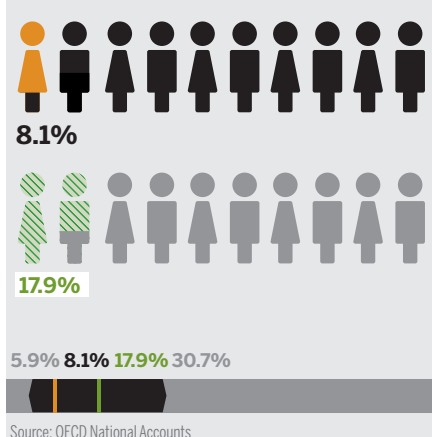
Government gross debt
(SNA definition, 2019)
% of GDP



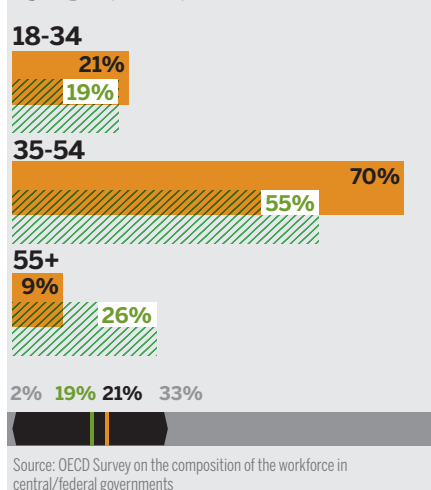
Government expenditures by selected functions (2019)
% of GDP



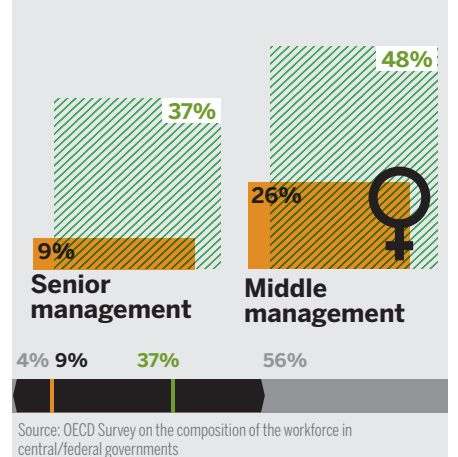
General government employment as a % of total employment (2019)



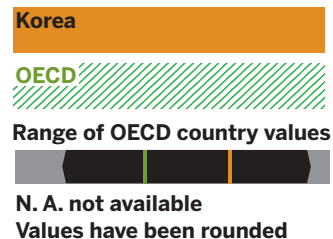
Central government workforce by age (2020)



Share of women in management positions in the central government (2020)

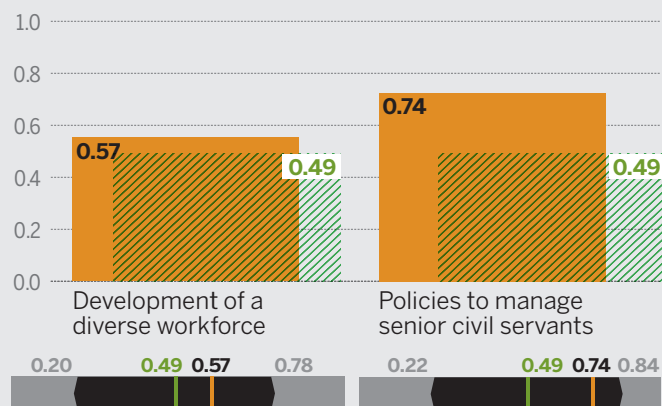


Public governance practices



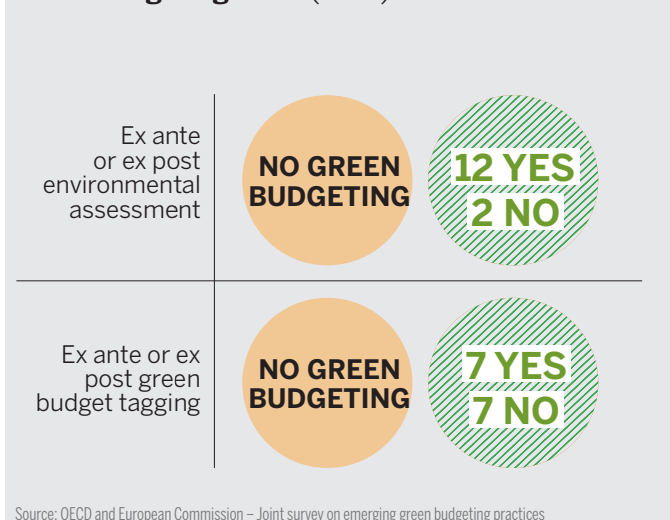
Composite indices of public service leadership and capability (2020)

From 0 (worst) to 1 (best)

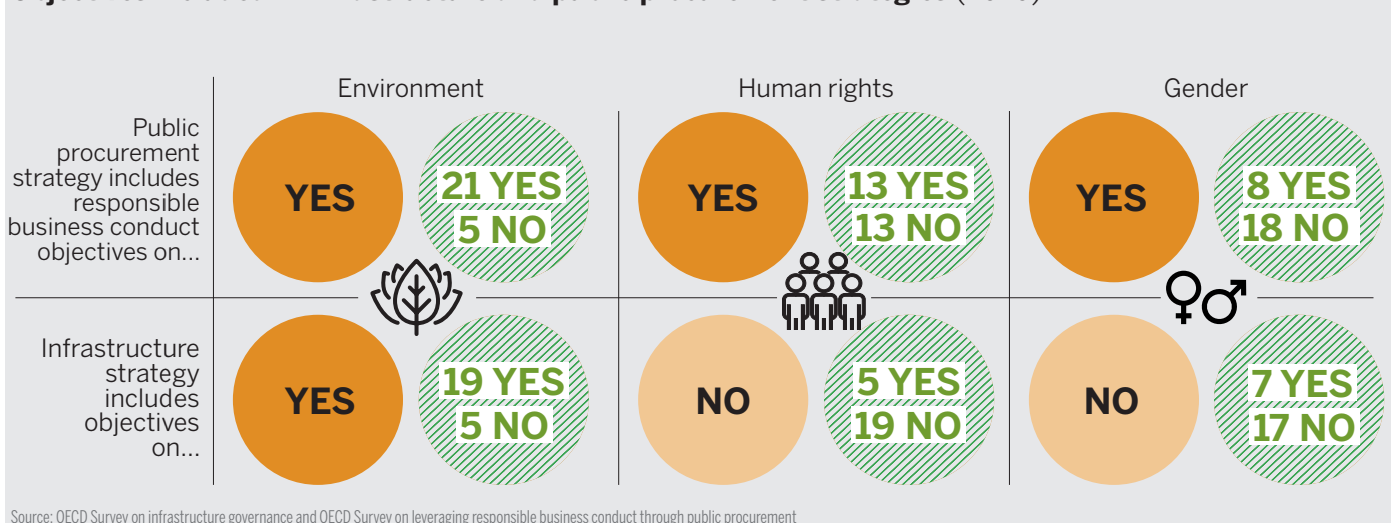


Source: OECD Survey on the composition of the workforce in central/federal governments and OECD Survey on public service leadership and capability

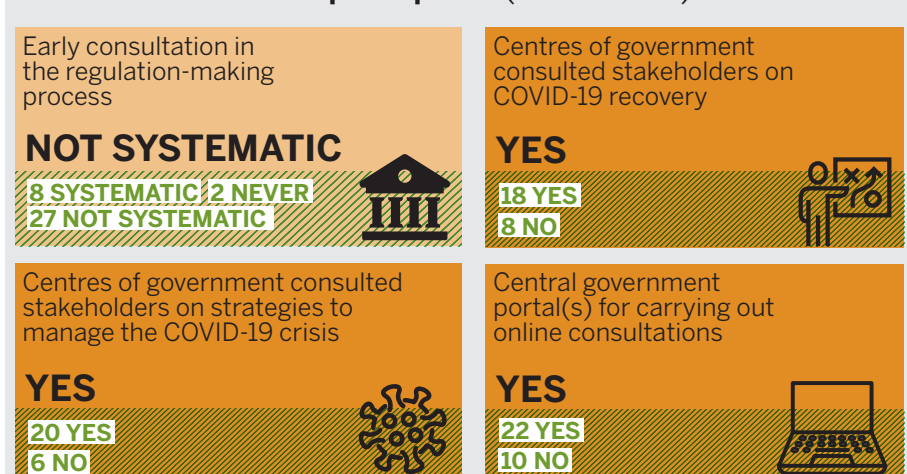
Green budgeting tools (2021)



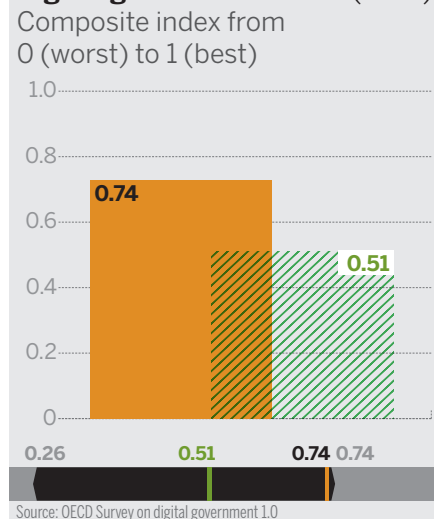
Objectives included in infrastructure and public procurement strategies (2020)



Citizen and stakeholder participation (2020 or 2021)



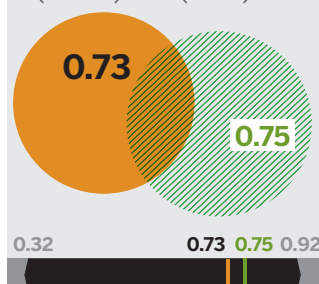
Digital government index (2019)



Government results

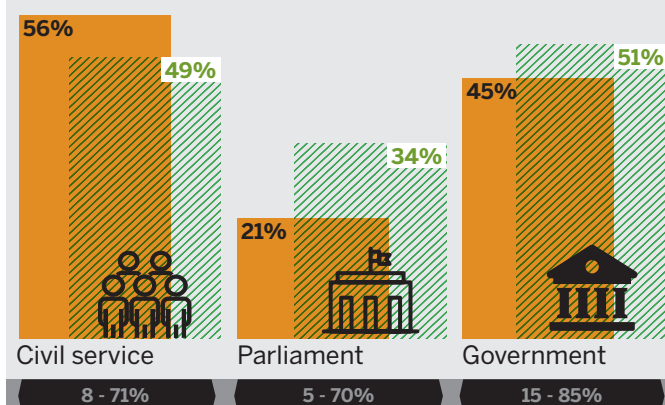
Government provides information on law enforcement, due process and respect of human rights (2020)

Composite index from 0 (worst) to 1 (best)



Source: World Justice Project, Rule of Law Index 2020

Citizens who express trust in public institutions (2020)



Source: Gallup World Poll, World Values Survey and European Values Study.

Korea

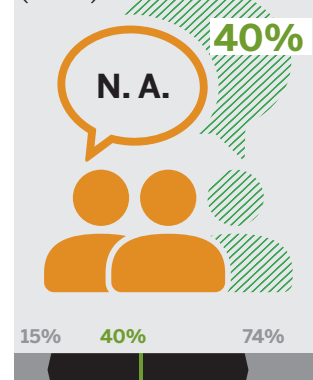
OECD

Range of OECD country values

N. A. not available

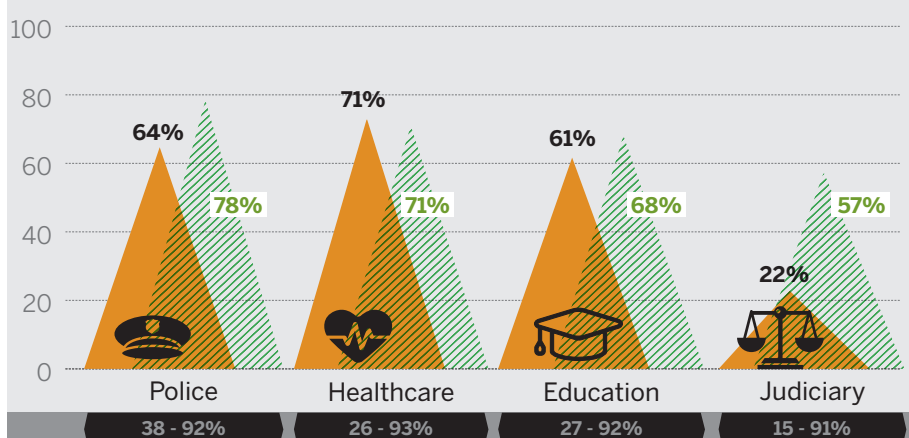
Values have been rounded

Citizens who believe they have a say in what government does (2018)



Source: OECD calculations based on rounds 8 and 9 of the ESS and the 2017-2020 round of the World Values Survey

Citizens who express satisfaction with public services (2020)



Source: Gallup World Poll

Income inequality before taxes and post taxes and transfers (GINI index, 2018)



Source: OECD Income Distribution Database

Figure notes

- Data on Public finance and economics, which are based on the System of National Accounts (SNA), were extracted on 11 May 2021 and data on General government employment were extracted on 12 April 2021. Data on Government gross debt and expenditures by selected functions refer to year 2018. The range of country values refers to year 2019.
- 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.
- The range of country values for the central government workforce by age refers to the 18-34 group.
- Data on trust in the civil service and parliament are 2018 for most countries.
- The range of country values for share of women in management positions in the central government refers to senior management.
- Citizens who express satisfaction with public services: for the judiciary and the police, the data reflect the proportion of citizens who express having confidence in the institution.
- The range of country values for income inequality before taxes and post taxes and transfers refers to GINI after taxes and transfers for the working age population.

Government at a Glance 2021

Published every two years, **Government at a Glance** provides reliable, internationally comparable indicators on government activities and their results in OECD countries.

The 2021 edition includes input indicators on public finance and employment; while processes include data on institutions, budgeting practices and procedures, human resources management, regulatory governance, public procurement, the governance of infrastructure, public sector integrity, open government and digital government. Outcomes cover core government results (e.g. trust, political efficacy, inequality reduction) and indicators on access, responsiveness, quality and citizen satisfaction for the education, health and justice sectors. Governance indicators are especially useful for monitoring and benchmarking governments' progress in their public sector reforms.



Each indicator in the publication is presented in a user-friendly format, consisting of graphs and/or charts illustrating variations across countries and over time, brief descriptive analyses highlighting the major findings conveyed by the data, and a methodological section on the definition of the indicator and any limitations in data comparability.

The Excel spreadsheets used to create the tables and figures in Government at a Glance 2021 are available via the StatLinks provided throughout the publication: <https://doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en>

For more information on the data (including full methodology and figure notes) and to consult all other Country Fact Sheets: www.oecd.org/gov/govataglance.htm