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**IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE STATISTICS
IN THE UNECE/OECD REGION**

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Summary

The present note is an in-depth review of governance statistics. The purpose of the reviews by the CES Bureau is to improve coordination of statistical activities in the region, identify gaps or duplication of work and address emerging issues.

*The note summarises international activities related to governance statistics, and identifies issues and challenges. **The conclusions and recommendations from the review are presented in section V.***

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The notion of 'governance' is broad and complex, applied in a variety of context, and encompassing both technical and substantive aspects. The term is now embedded in the political lexicon of most countries, and figures prominently in national and international statistical agendas. This interest by the statistical community, partly prompted by the inclusion of a 'governance' goal in the UN 2030 Agenda, led to the creation of a UN City Group (Praia) on Governance Statistics in March 2015. This in-depth review on governance statistics, undertaken under the aegis of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES), takes stock of the statistical measures available in the region and identifies challenges to further progress.

2. This review adopts a narrow definition of governance, focusing on public institutions (i.e. excluding corporations and other private institutions) operating at the national level (i.e. excluding international or local institutions). As a first step towards reaching consensus on a conceptual framework that could be operationalised by official statistics, it suggests grouping the various aspects typically associated with the concept of governance under three broad domains: i) the high-level principles governing the operations of these institutions; ii) the processes through which decisions in these institutions are made; and iii) the valued outcomes that these institutions deliver to people. These domains include more specific dimensions and more detailed aspects within them. These domains link to specific government functions, and is best assessed by specific actors and measurement instruments. Principles are typically measured based on expert assessments provided by researchers; processes are best measured through administrative data and assessments provided by civil servants; finally, in the case of valued outcomes, individuals are the main unit of analysis, implying that household surveys conducted by national statistical offices (NSOs) and other data producers play the key role. In many cases, however, statistics from a diverse range of sources will need to be brought together to inform on the multidimensionality of governance.

3. Governance statistics in the CES region², while still rare, are collected through all these sources. The review highlights the special role played by administrative data, gathered by public agencies in the process of delivering and assessing various government functions. It describes (based on replies from NSOs to a dedicated questionnaire) the range of statistical information that is already available, noting the heterogeneity and limited comparability of this country-level information, as well as the lack of a common nomenclature across countries to describe the critical items at hand. The review then points to a range of more comparable data on governance. These are typically compiled by international organisations based on qualitative assessments — provided by either government officials or research networks. Household surveys, conducted by either non-official statistical producers or (less often) by NSOs, also play an important role in internationally comparative information.

4. Three conclusions emerge from this review. First, while several statistics relating to various aspects of governance are already available in the region, they differ in terms of the underlying concepts, the labels used to describe them, the range of institutions covered, and the detailed aspects (functions) considered. Therefore, developing a common conceptual framework is a prerequisite for gathering more robust and useful statistics in this field. Second, efforts should be devoted to assessing the quality of the statistics that already exist, as a preliminary step towards providing general advice and developing guidelines for statistical producers and users of governance statistics. The model currently used by the OECD with respect to measuring 'trust' (based on the assessment of various aspects of 'validity' of available measures) should be extended to other aspects of governance. Third, while politically sensitive, NSOs should consider governance statistics as part of their routine production, subject to the same quality standards and requirements that apply to other social, economic and environmental statistics.

² These include all countries who are member of either the UNECE region or of the OECD at the time of this review, i.e. 62 countries.

II. INTRODUCTION

5. In the past, the concept of ‘governance’ has been used in many contexts by diverse disciplines, encompassing different philosophies, actors, institutions, and sectors. In this process, no single definition of governance that is accepted across all disciplines has emerged. While the etymological roots of the term ‘governance’ are in the Latin word for steering a boat, and had some currency XVIIth century France, since the 1990s the term has been increasingly associated with policies aimed at creating institutional frameworks conducive to economic growth and development (Rothstein, 2015), i.e. ‘good governance’. While the notion is both new and contested (Plattner, 2013), researchers and international organizations have used it to refer to a plethora of different and partly overlapping concepts, such as political system, democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, freedoms, absence of discrimination, transparent administrative procedures, participation by ordinary citizens and civil society organisations, regulatory quality, effectiveness of public policies, or anti-corruption.

6. Much of the modern uses of term ‘governance’ were driven by concerns about the experiences of countries transitioning from authoritarian regimes to democracies, and of developing countries with weak institutional capacities. For example, the donor community has increasingly advocated basing foreign aid on information on how efficiently and effectively recipient governments use the resources they received. Additionally, it has been argued that good public governance is essential for assessing the investment-climate and orienting investment choices (UN, 2007). Governance indicators have been used by investors, donors and financial institutions to evaluate the stability and transparency of governments as well as the ease to conduct business affairs in different countries (Arndt and Oman, 2006).

7. However, today’s demand for robust governance indicators is not limited to developing and emerging countries, or to the concerns of foreign investors with respect to their entrepreneurial operations. Such demand is today as present in ‘old democracies’ as in new ones and it relates to an increasing dissatisfaction by ordinary people with how democracy works. Whether policy decisions are responsive to the needs and rights of citizens and whether growing economic inequalities are limiting the equality of people in front of the law and in the political system are essential questions in this regard. Further, how political and government institutions function matters for people’s political voice and agency, and is therefore a vital element of people’s overall well-being (Stiglitz et al, 2009).³

8. There are many international indicator sets focusing on public governance. Some of them are quite comprehensive – such as the World Bank’s “World Governance Indicators” (WGI) or Bertelsmann’s “Sustainable Governance Indicators” (SGI) — while others focus on selected aspects of governance — such as the “Rule of Law Index” (RoL) produced by the World Justice Project or Transparency International’s “Corruption Index” — or on a limited set of government services – such as the World Bank’s “Doing Business” indicators. Some of these sets collate information from many different sources while others build on data exclusively or primarily collected by the sponsoring organisation. Some of these sets rank countries according to their performance through a single composite score or through scoreboards. Only rarely, if at all, are these indicators based on data provided by official statistics.

9. The proliferation of these indicators, based on different definitions and multiple sources, has occurred in a context where the state as main actor responsible for the implementation of public policies has also been challenged, weakened or replaced. At the international level, financing institutions have often referred to ‘governance’ as part of a drive to reduce the scope of state activities (Smouths, 1998).

³ In this vein, the OECD identifies “civic engagement and governance” as one of the 11 dimensions of people’s well-being (OECD, 2013), and relies on indicators of voter turnout, participation in political activities, stakeholders’ engagement in the process of developing government regulations to benchmark countries’ performance. Measures of people’s trust in others, in national governments and in public institutions are also used by the OECD to monitor ‘social capital’, one of the key resources for sustaining future well-being (OECD 2015).

At the domestic level, the emergence of alternative delivery mechanisms (e.g. public private partnerships) and looser networks of organizations — including civil society, trade unions, business organizations and private companies — has multiplied the interactions of various actors with public institutions (Pierre 2000). While the delegation of traditional government functions to non-state actors has often been justified by the need to achieve greater effectiveness in service delivery (i.e. higher value-for-money), this situation has also created problems for accountability (e.g. where public interest ends and private ones begin) and led to conflicts of interest between the elected "principal" and the private "agent" executing the various tasks (Fukuyama, 2014). In this context, the term governance has also expanded its reach to a wide variety of areas such as “global governance” (to describe interactions between various states or regions, and the global institutions supporting these interactions), “network governance” (to describe interactions between the diverse organisations contributing to achieve a given goal), and governance of specific institutions (such as corporations and non-government organisations).

10. Currently, governance statistics lack a solid foundation within the official statistical system. No international standards or guidelines exist that could guide data collections in this field. Lack of common agreement about what exactly should be measured is surely the main problem: without theoretical and analytical clarity on what the concept of governance is, and about its constituent elements, its operationalization risks becoming a futile exercise. But even when the focus is narrowed down on specific aspects of a broader concept, very little systematic research on the validity of various measures exists, i.e. whether the concept measured by statisticians maps onto identifiable constructs for household survey respondents, whether different measures of the same concept provide consistent information, and whether these measures align with common understanding of their causes and consequences.

11. There are indications, however, that the long neglect of governance by official statistics is coming to an end. Following a public consultation on its “Measures of Australia’s Progress”, the Australian Bureau of Statistics identified ‘governance’ as a separate pillar of its work, on par with economic, social and environmental statistics. Other statistical offices, such INEGI in Mexico, have undertaken important investments to enhance their ability to measure the functioning of the judicial system, and of people’s access to various public services and institutions. At the international level, a UN City Group on Governance Statistics (Praia Group) was established by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2015, with the goal to develop a Handbook on Governance Statistics for National Statistical Offices by March 2018. The adoption by the UN General Assembly of a set of 16 Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015 — one of them about “Promot(ing) peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” — has heightened pressure on NSOs to identify indicators suitable for “global reporting”.⁴

12. In this context of growing international interest the Bureau of the Conference of European Statistician (CES) agreed, at its meeting in October 2015, to launch an in-depth review on governance statistics. This review, which was prepared by the Turkish Statistical Institute, INEGI (Mexico) and OECD, aims, inter alia, to contribute to the Praia Group’s work by reviewing the information on governance statistics that is currently available in countries participating to the CES. The review is organised as follows. A short executive summary of the full review is provided in Section I. Following this introduction (Section II), Section III outlines the scope and definition of the statistical area. Section IV describes the evidence on statistical activities gathered, grouped under two broad headings, namely country-level data, mainly sourced from administrative information; and comparative indicators based on either expert assessments or on non-official household surveys. In addition to desk top research, evidence on governance-related statistical activities is based on a questionnaire sent to NSOs

⁴ While, so far, 23 such indicators have been put forward by the Inter Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Indicators (IEAG), around 1/3 of them are currently classified as Tier III, i.e. indicators with no established methodology and standards and no regular collections. The UN Praia Group is currently supporting the IAEG by focusing its discussions on the Tier III governance indicators.

participating in the CES on 11 May 2016.⁵ Section V provides recommendations for further statistical work in this area.

III. SCOPE AND DEFINITION OF THE STATISTICAL AREA COVERED

III.1. Governance as multidimensional concept

13. There is not a single definition of the term ‘governance’.⁶ Researchers from many disciplines and international organizations have used it as an umbrella term encompassing diverse concepts such as democratization, rule of law, effectiveness of public policies, anti-corruption, respect for human rights, administrative procedures, civil society participation, freedom, regulatory quality, etc. Since the 1990s the term has been increasingly associated with ‘good governance’, i.e. policies aimed at creating institutional frameworks conducive to growth and development (Rothstein, 2015), and to the diffusion of new management models.⁷ But this definition, by itself, does not pass the test of clearly identifying what falls within, and what is outside, the boundaries of governance statistics.

14. For example, political scientists have identified diverse requirements of ‘good governance’ ranging from narrower notions of “impartiality” (a requirement that is independent of the actual content of policies, Rothstein and Teorell, 2008) and “effectiveness” in government decisions (Rotberg and Boardman, 2014); to broader notions of “state capacity, bureaucratic autonomy, quality of administrative procedures” (Hold and Manning, 2013), and “state building, rule of law, accountability” (Fukuyama, 2014), to longer lists of specific ingredients such as “(due) process, reconciliation, gathering actors, permanent interactivity” (Smouts, 1998) and democratic qualities such as “freedoms, rule of law, vertical accountability, horizontal accountability, responsiveness, equality, participation, competition” (Journal of Democracy, 2008).

15. Lack of common agreement about the definition and ingredients of governance entails several challenges for the measurement agenda. Lack of agreement about what exactly should be measured is the main problem: without theoretical and analytical clarity, the operationalization of the concept of governance risks becoming a futile exercise. The next sub-section provides a first attempt to deconstruct the broad concept of governance into its basic domains, distinguishing between various units of analysis

⁵ Overall, 29 NSOs answered to this questionnaire; country-responses are available at the wiki provided by UNECE for distributing all documents for the CES Bureau meetings.

⁶ The OECD refers to governance as “the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority necessary to manage a nation's affairs” (OECD, 2013); the World Bank to “The traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised” (Kauffman et al. (2010); the UNDP to “The system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector” (UNDP, 2000); the EU to “the rules, process and behaviours that affect the way in which powers are exercised (at the European level), in particular as regards openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence” (EC, 2003); the UN to “the formal and informal arrangements that determine how public decisions are made and how public actions are carried out from the perspective of maintaining a country's constitutional values” (UN 2007). The Commission on Global Governance used it to describe the “sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, private and public, manage their common affairs... a continuing process through which conflicting and diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest” (CGG, 1995).

⁷ These new management models emphasise the importance of horizontal organisations (rather than vertical ones), decentralisation (rather than centralisation), democratic participation (rather than rules based on authority), openness and transparency (rather than secrecy), relations based on trust (rather than arm-length relations), stakeholders (rather than shareholders and directors), legitimacy (rather than legality).

III.2. Deconstructing the concept of governance

16. The only option for operationalising complex concepts such as government is to "deconstruct" it. This implies two basic decisions, i.e. first, excluding entities whose measurement is more problematic; and, secondly, using a scheme to describe what falls within the boundary of the concept being analysed.

17. With respect to the first criterion, the choice made in this section is to restrict the reach of this review to **public institutions serving the common good of a community of people**. This implies neglecting private institutions (i.e. the internal organisation of corporate firms, and the rules and obligations on them posed by laws and public institutions) even when they have important bearings on the welfare of large communities. As most of public institutions have their roots in national states, this section further restricts attention to **national institutions**, i.e. excluding international or supranational ones. Even so, the field of enquiry remains vast, as national public institutions are executed at different geographical levels (i.e. federal, state and sub-national level) and relate to separate branches of government (i.e. executive, legislative and judiciary branches).

18. With respect to the second criterion, public institutions have been considered, at the most abstract level, as **guarantors** of the rights and well-being of the people being governed by these institutions. This perspective follows a long tradition that recognizes that a "key task of governments is to secure people the most central entitlements" (Nussbaum 2011). These entitlements are shaped, for instance, by the quality of decision-making processes and include among others, the existence and transparency of the electoral process, wide access to information, the maintenance of civil and political rights, the existence of limits (as expressed by the law) to the decisions made by public institutions or to the process of selecting, monitoring and replacing governments. While citizens' rights and institutional constraints are specific to a given country and period, all public institutions (whether operating in established democracies or in authoritarian regimes) owe their legitimacy to the presumption that they are acting to secure the constitutional entitlements of those being governed.

19. At a more detailed level, public institutions are expected to **make and implement decisions** conducive to economic development and societal well-being **in an effective and competent way**. For example, Fukuyama defines public governance as a "government's ability to make and enforce rules and deliver services" (2013) as reflected in the administrative procedures, state capacity and bureaucratic autonomy of various public institutions. In turn, Rothstein argues that the quality of government is best captured by the impartiality of institutions when they exercise government authority (Rothstein, 2011 and Rothstein et al 2015). All of these approaches presuppose that some practices will lead to better government performance; this implies that improving these processes and enhancing competences of staff administering them are fundamental aspects of good governance.

20. However, a governance machinery working properly and effectively cannot be an objective *per se*. Public institutions should deliver outcomes that are valued (i.e. recognised as important) by people, and these outcomes should improve people's lives.⁸ Rotberg, for example, argues that good governance is best measured by looking at government results, interpreted as service delivery outputs and outcomes (2010). Similarly, Ringen (2007) argues that "the way citizens experience delivery is in confidence, safety and trust: confidence in government, safety in the security of rights and liberties, trust in an order that enables people to trust each other". Additional measures that have a direct effect on people's lives are the quality of services delivered, the capacity to make choices and to express freely one's views and preferences.

⁸ An early formulation of what sovereigns provide to their subjects is given by Adam Smith (1772) who distinguished between three functions, i.e. "protecting society from the violence and invasion of other independent societies", "establishing an exact administration of justice (among every member of society)" and "maintaining those public institutions and public works which, though .. Advantageous to a great society are... of such a nature that (it) cannot be expected that any individual or small number of individuals should erect or maintain".

21. In the light of these various theoretical perspectives, the three domains used in this review to classify the various aspects of governance (i.e. the second criterion mentioned above) are (Figure 1):

- the high level **principles** governing the functioning of various public institutions, which are critical for establishing the legitimacy of the decision taken;
- the **processes** through which decisions are taken and implemented, which are important for the capacity of public institutions to undertake a given function; and
- the **outcomes** delivered by these institutions that are **valued as important** by members of a given community.

22. The three domains shown in Figure 1 are not fully independent of each other: typically, 'principles' frame 'processes', which in turn influence 'outcomes'. But each of them captures facets of governance that are conceptually different, and whose measurement requires specific tools (OECD, 2017).

Figure 1. Conceptual domains of governance



Source: OECD (2017).

23. Table 1 further details this conceptual framework by identifying the types of questions that each of the three domains address, the functions that they perform, and the units of analysis that are most relevant for measuring them. In the last column, the table presents more detailed dimensions within the three main domains, drawing upon some of the labels typically used in the governance literature. While the list of dimensions is not exhaustive, it illustrates most of the items discussed in this report.

Table 1. Deconstructing the concept of governance

| Domain | Question | Functions | Unit of analysis | Dimensions |
|-----------------|--|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Principles | What is expected from public institutions? | Guarantee that public institutions respond to shared societal values such as safeguarding freedom, maintaining peace and security | Public institutions and agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule of law • Existence of democracy |
| Processes | How do public institutions perform their role? | Making and implementing decisions that are needed for the appropriate regulation of economic and social life | Public institutions and agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of democracy • Administrative procedures • State capacity • Bureaucratic autonomy • Regulatory quality • Effectiveness • Accountability • Non-discrimination |
| Valued Outcomes | Why it is important? | Deliver services that improve the lives of people | People and citizens | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political efficacy • Civic engagement • Trust in institutions • Satisfaction with services delivered |

IV. STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES ON GOVERNANCE IN THE UNECE/OECD REGION

IV.1. Overview of measurement approaches

24. Each of the three domains identified in Section III calls for a different measurement approach, tailored to the underlying phenomena being captured and the most appropriate source of information. In general, although with some exceptions:

- Principles governing the functioning of various public institutions reflect the political and philosophical ideals of each society. Even within a concept broadly embraced such as democracy, several institutional set-ups may produce good outcomes, with notions on ‘ideal’ democracy varying across countries and periods. Most discussions about quality of democracy and other political regimes are fairly academic, as evidenced by collaborative projects such as ‘Varieties of Democracy’, Polity2, the World Justice Project, etc. All of these projects focus on the state and the quality of public institutions of each country, and assess countries’ performance based on the views of experts. Conversely, neither public servants nor statistical offices are generally well placed to rate political institutions as they could be faced with conflicting interests when assessing the system they are serving in. While the subject matter itself is inevitably subjective, academics and research institutions tend to be better placed to pass judgement on the principles to which public institutions adhere as well as how these principles are operationalised in practice.
- Processes can be measured through indicators of how public institutions function. In most cases, this assessment will require technical knowledge about the rules and operations of various parts of the governance machinery. Moreover, the purpose of measurement in this case is to evaluate the process by which public institutions transform resources into outputs (e.g. goods and services) delivered to citizens. Evidence on these processes help governments to improve their practices and to use their resources in a more efficient and effective way. In order to measure this domain of governance, civil servants are typically best placed to provide the required information based on administrative sources. Some comparative information in

this area is currently collected by international organizations, as in the case of the OECD “Government at a Glance” series.

- Finally, in the case of valued outcomes, citizens are the preferred unit of observation, as they alone can judge how governance affects their lives and shapes their destinies. NSOs and other (non-official) producers of household-level based statistics are best placed to measure valued outcomes in ways that that could be compared across countries, periods and demographic groups.

25. This section reviews the type of empirical evidence on governance that is available in CES countries.⁹ It considers, first, governance data collected at the country-level (Section IV.2): much of this information is sourced from administrative data (IV.2.a), sometimes complemented by additional sources, and covers a broad range of aspects (IV.2.b). As no statistical standards in this field exist, much of these data are, however, not comparable across countries. Because of this, Section IV.3 looks at information that is more comparable across countries, namely quantitative assessments provided by experts (IV.3.a), and household survey data conducted by various non-official producers (IV.3.b). For each of these sources, the review describes the nature of the information and takes stock of what is already being collected in the region.

IV.2. Country-level data

26. Most of the governance statistics currently produced in countries are based on administrative data. For this reason, this section first describes the features of administrative data that make them, potentially, best suited for this task. The section then presents information on governance statistics produced in individual countries, based on the replies provided by NSOs to a questionnaire prepared to support this review.

IV.2.a. Administrative records

27. National statistical offices (NSOs) produce statistics aiming to achieve the highest possible quality: this implies meeting criteria of timeliness, relevance, accuracy, comparability, coherence, accessibility and clarity, based upon cost-efficient methods of data-collection and processing that minimize the burden on participants (UNECE, 2007). To accomplish this goal, NSOs rely on three sources: censuses¹⁰, surveys of households and businesses, and administrative records (INEGI, 2012). While censuses and surveys are explicitly designed to meet statistical needs on a particular topic, the distinctive feature of administrative records is that they are not primarily conceived to meet a statistical goal, but as part of the procedures that government agencies, within their jurisdiction and powers, routinely follow as part of their operations.

28. Decisions about the use of administrative records for the purpose of measuring governance must be based upon judgments about the relevance, validity and timeliness of the information that these records provide. In the case of governance, these decisions are especially complex due to the diversity of definitions of governance proposed by the literature. Despite these problems, administrative records have a special role to play when measuring governance due to their basic function of controlling and identifying various governmental procedures. The observance and enforcement of these procedures, as well as the fact that these administrative records often reflect the direct contact between citizens and government agencies, allows producing statistics and indicators about several key aspects of governance, such as the number and quality of the services delivered and the processes followed by these agencies.

⁹ These include all countries who are member of either the UNECE region or of the OECD, i.e. 62 countries.

¹⁰ A census produces statistics by collecting data from every one of the units that are within the scope of the study (INEGI, 2012). They include population, economic, government, and agricultural censuses.

29. Identifying the best type of administrative data to measure each governance dimension depends on the object of study. For example, rule of law encompass measures of public security, justice (civil, criminal and military), open government, and constraints on government powers; these could be assessed through administrative records. Similarly, open government could be measured by analysing the quality of data published by public institutions or by the existence of mechanisms that foster citizen engagement in open debates by using the records kept by the government. Table 2 lists the types of administrative data that could be used to assess a number of dimensions of governance: a broad conclusion is that administrative data are especially useful for measuring aspects of governance falling under the domain of processes.

Table 2. Types of administrative data that could be used to measure governance

| Domains of governance | Dimensions of governance | Types of administrative data that could be used |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule of law • Existence of democracy | Records in: courts and tribunals; electoral offices; human rights councils; police and prosecutors offices; transparency units; specialized state attorneys; regulatory commissions |
| Processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of democracy • Administrative procedures • State capacity • Bureaucratic autonomy • Regulatory quality • Effectiveness • Accountability • Non-discrimination | Permits, licences and government authorizations; expenditure budget, public finance accounts; audits, government procurement; results-based budgeting; human, financial and infrastructure military resources; telecommunications information; Human Resource Management agencies; records from regulatory agencies; -records from Ministry of Finance and line Ministries; records from criminal and administrative courts and tribunals |
| Valued outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political efficacy • Civic engagement • Trust in institutions • Satisfaction with services delivered | Questionnaires completed by users of various public services (other than surveys); records of electoral offices; records of courts and tribunals on human rights infringements |

30. In theory, administrative records have several advantages, relative to censuses and surveys, when it comes to measuring governance:

- **When administrative processes are thorough, administrative data will also be consistent and high quality.** The administrative agency responsible for the registers, or at least of its key variables, can – in partnership with the national statistical office – set up the mechanisms needed so that the statistical requirements match with the main purpose of the administrative record.
- **Complementary between administrative records and surveys.** A register-based statistical system may compensate the unwillingness of respondents to participate in surveys, in particular when participation to the survey is voluntary or when the questionnaire probes respondents on sensitive aspects which could lead to biases in survey estimates. In addition, administrative records can be used when designing a survey, to reach some sub-groups of the population, to generate ex post stratification weights, or when editing the data collected to improve their quality.
- **Synergies between institutions.** Administrative records refer to particular events or processes. But the requirements of a register-based statistical system go well beyond

collecting and handling data from each register one by one. Institutional partnerships between various agencies are needed when treating registers from different agencies as part of a unified system; creating these partnerships may require modifying all stages of statistical production (data collection, data processing, quality control, dissemination) used by each agency (UNECE, 2007). Technological improvements can diminish production costs and increase the timeliness of information.

31. Despite the importance of register-based data on governance, there are also important challenges to be faced when considering using this information.

- **Generalized distrust towards authority.** In these cases, citizens will be reluctant to provide reliable information to the administrative agency. This implies that, in these situations, data from administrative records will need to be reviewed carefully. Conversely, in a climate of trust, administrative records can become instruments by which governments promote an overall commitment to good government (IRMT, 2000).
- **Difficulty of aligning administrative definitions across levels of government and ensuring international comparability.** In many situations, variables from administrative records may not match the needs of the NSO, but only provide close approximations. For example, administrative registers may refer to *de jure* requirements, rather than *de facto* conditions, or its temporal references may be inaccurate (UNECE, 2007). Because of these considerations, efforts and resources are needed to harmonise governance concepts and statistics at the sub-national, national, and international level.
- **Combining information from objective and self-reported data.** While some surveys may ask about people's perceptions, administrative records typically capture objective facts or events. This implies that it is important to avoid confounding information about institutions with indicators related to the effects of these institutions (Bersch and Botero, 2014). Clearness in concepts and indicators is essential to avoid introducing biases; care is also needed when survey data are used to complement the information provided by administrative records.

32. To summarize, administrative records can provide quality information on governance if conditions are met to guarantee a feasible process through time. If an administrative system is already in place, data gathering is low cost. Nevertheless, costs will be high if such a system does not exist yet. In this case, data from surveys or censuses of administrative units can provide a better alternative. In the case of Mexico, INEGI collects census data on government units at the national and sub-national level, which allow producing statistics about the management and performance of public institutions as an alternative to the current lack of a register-based statistical system.

IV.2.b. Governance statistics collected by countries

33. Looking beyond the potential of administrative data, it is important to understand what types of official statistics on governance are currently produced in CES countries. For this purpose, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) – in cooperation with the OECD and INEGI — prepared a detailed questionnaire. This questionnaire was addressed to NSOs, asking them to report on statistical activities undertaken either by the statistical office or by other public or non-public agencies. This questionnaire includes one general section, asking questions on the availability of statistics in the three broad governance domains described in Section III (i.e. principles, processes and valued outcomes), and ten sections covering specific governance dimensions (rule of law; quality of democracy; administrative procedures; state capacities; bureaucratic autonomy; government effectiveness; voice and accountability; regulatory quality; corruption and transparency; trust that decisions are taken in the

public interest).¹¹ While these 10 dimensions do not fully match those used in other sections of this review, the information collected serves the purpose of providing a broad overview of the types of official statistics on governance that are typically available in the region.

34. Overall, 29 NSOs answered the questionnaire.¹² Key features of these answers are described below, while detailed NSOs answers are available in the various tables included in the Annex to this review.

General section

35. The general questionnaire included an open-ended question on whether NSOs compile statistics on governance, leaving it to NSOs to describe these aspects in their own words; and three questions on whether they compile statistics in the three broad domains used in this review, i.e. " how public institutions respond to shared societal values such as safeguarding freedoms, maintaining peace and security"; " how public institutions make and implement decisions that are needed for the appropriate regulation of economic and social life"; and on "the services and functions delivered by public institutions aimed at improving people's lives". For each item, the questionnaire also asked about the main data sources to compile these statistics.

36. Overall, 16 NSOs indicated that they collect statistics on various aspects of governance. The range of aspects covered is very broad and diverse, ranging from elections and electoral participation (Norway, Sweden) to social participation (Hungary), functioning of public administration, administrative procedures, police-related, justice and criminal courts data (Canada), compliance costs and administrative burden of legislative proposals (Canada), delivery of public services and users' satisfaction with them (Mexico), infrastructural capacity (Norway), and experiences and perceptions of corruption and trust (Mexico) (Table A.1). In terms of the three broad domains of this review:

- Only Mexico and Germany indicated that they compile statistics on how public institutions respond to shared societal values.
- Six countries — Australia, Armenia, Chile, Germany, Luxembourg and Mexico — indicated collecting statistics on how public institutions perform their role.
- Finally, four countries — Armenia, Chile, Germany and Mexico — answered that they compile statistics on public services and functions aimed at improving people's lives.

37. While this information provides a high-level perspective on the key aspects of governance that NSOs report as being covered by the statistics available in their countries, this assessment differs in some respect, from the one emerging from the more detailed questionnaires described in the next section, suggesting that NSOs differ in the way they interpret the meaning of various governance concepts. In terms of data-sources for these statistics, 11 NSOs mentioned household surveys as source, 8 referred to business surveys, and 10 to administrative records. Finally, 10 NSOs indicated that they compile statistics on various aspects of governance based on data collected from other public agencies, mainly Ministries, while only the Mexican NSO answered that it undertakes a specific government census.

Questionnaire on specific aspects of governance

¹¹ The questionnaire also included a section on 'maintaining individuals' freedoms and enhancing their well-being'. Answers to this section are not described here, as the information collected solely referred to the availability of statistics on people's subjective well-being.

¹² These are: Armenia, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Mexico, Mongolia, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine. The analysis of country-responses provided in this section is limited to the 27 countries that answered within the mid-August cut-off date used for this review; as a result, answers provided by Georgia and the Philippines are not considered here.

38. For each of the 10 sections of the questionnaire on specific aspects of governance, the questionnaire asked for information on: i) the availability of statistics; ii) the agency responsible for their compilation and disseminations (NSOs, other government agencies, ministries, non-public bodies); and iii) the data sources underlying these statistics (surveys of households or businesses, administrative data, expert assessments, censuses of public administrations, or some combination of these sources). More detailed information on how NSOs answered these questionnaires is provided in the Annex.

Rule of law

39. For the purpose of the questionnaire, rule of law was defined as the authority and importance of law in society. According to this notion, the law should govern and no one, including the government, should be above it. Rule of law is implemented through codified procedures guaranteeing access, equality, predictability, reliability and accountability. Rule of law, which also includes people's access to justice, is a key aspect of governance and a crucial ingredient for maintaining peace and order, and for fostering investment and development.

40. Most NSOs who answered the questionnaire indicated collecting some statistics on this aspect. This applied in particular to information on “public security” (13 countries), “civil/criminal justice” (12), “open government” (6), “military justice” (2), and “constraints on government powers” (2). Only 4 NSOs answered that they collect no data about the rule of Law. Responsibility for collecting these data tends to be shared between NSOs and other government agencies (OGAs), with administrative records used as the main data source. Only a few countries (e.g. Mexico) indicated that they also collect rule of law data through household and business surveys, expert assessments and censuses (Annex Table 1).

Quality of democracy

41. For the purpose of this questionnaire, quality of democracy was defined as covering all provisions about people's rights to physical integrity, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom (and density) of associations, impartiality of the judiciary system, and other features of the parliamentary and judicial systems. These features are generally embodied in constitutions or international conventions/agreements. The quality of democracy questionnaire asked about availability of statistics in seven areas: “right to physical integrity”, “freedom of thought, conscience and religion”, “freedom of association”, “density of association”, “violation of human rights”, “constitutional provisions for impartial courts” and “effective independence of the judiciary”.

42. Overall, based on the answers received, availability of statistics is highest for “violation of human rights” (7 countries) and lowest for “constitutional provisions for impartial courts” (with only one NSO reporting collecting statistics). Sweden was the only country indicating collecting statistics in all the areas of quality of democracy. Responsibility for compiling these statistics is equally shared between NSO (in half of the countries) and other government agencies (in the other half). Most countries rely on household surveys as data-source for compiling statistics on quality of democracy, although Brazil reported using a combination of sources, i.e. household and business surveys, administrative records and expert assessments (Annex Table 2).

Administrative procedures

43. For the purposes of this questionnaire, administrative procedures were defined as the rules and procedures for managing an organisation, aiming to establish efficiency, consistency, responsibility and accountability. The questionnaire asked about availability of statistics in three areas: building and safety; public expenditure management; and e-government.

- With respect to building and safety, 19 countries reported compiling statistics on the "number of building permits issued", in most cases based on administrative records collected by either NSOs (14) or other government agencies (9). Four countries reported compiling statistics on "number of trade permits issued" (based on administrative records), while six countries

indicated having statistics on the "number of building permits issued (all types)", mainly gathered by NSOs (5, as compared to 3 other government organisations) and typically sources from administrative records (Annex Table 3A).

- With respect to public expenditure management, 7 countries reported compiling statistics on "budget process clearly defined", with information collected by 2 NSOs and 3 other government agencies, and mainly sourced from administrative records. Statistics on "effective monitoring and implementation of the budget mechanisms" were reported to be collected in 6 countries (with responsibility equally shared between NSOs and OGAs), and sourced from administrative data. Statistics on "robust budget principles with regard to constitution related laws" were reported as being collected in 6 countries (with responsibility shared between NSOs and OGAs), and mainly sourced from administrative records (Annex Table 3B).
- With respect to e-government, 12 countries reported compiling statistics on the number of "individuals interacting with public agencies via internet", with responsibility for data collection mainly resting with NSOs (12) based on data drawn from household surveys (9). Statistics on "enterprises interacting with public agencies via internet" are compiled in 10 countries, mainly by NSOs (9) and sourced from either households (9) or business surveys (5). Nine countries reported compiling statistics on "public expenditure on ICT", in most cases under the responsibility of the NSOs (9), with data sourced from a combination of administrative records (6) and business surveys (4) (Annex Table 3C).

State capacities

44. State capacity is one of the key characteristics of political systems. For the purposes of the questionnaire, state capacity was defined as the ability of government to administer its territory effectively. The questionnaire on state capacity included separate sections on three aspects: military capacity; infrastructural capacity; and bureaucratic and administrative capacity.

- With respect to military capacity, the questionnaire asked about the availability of statistics on defence budgets, military manpower, military infrastructure, combat research institutions, and defence industry. Availability of statistics in this area is highest for defence budgets (14 countries), followed by military manpower (10). Most of these statistics are compiled by other government agencies other than NSOs and sourced from administrative records (Annex Table 4A).
- With respect to infrastructural capacity, the questionnaire asked about availability of statistics on numbers of fixed-telephone lines, mobile cellular subscriptions, broadband subscriptions, internet users, consumption of electric power consumption, intellectual property rights (patent, trademark, copyright), transport statistics (air, land, sea, railway), and withdrawals of freshwater (from agriculture, industry, domestic use, etc.). Availability of statistics is highest in the case of number of internet users (22), fixed-telephone lines (20), broadband subscriptions (20), mobile cellular subscriptions (19), with responsibility for compiling these statistics mainly resting with NSOs in the case on internet users, or shared between NSOs and other government agencies in the case of fixed-telephone and broadband subscriptions. Transport statistics are less widely available, and mainly compiled by NSOs (Annex Table 4B).
- With respect to bureaucratic and administrative capacity, the questionnaire asked about availability of statistics on the capacity to raise taxes, to steer the economy and society, to build legitimacy and to enforce decisions through coercive means. In all these cases, availability of statistics is low; with only 3 countries reporting compiling statistics on coercive capacity, mostly collected by other government agencies based on administrative records (Annex Table 4C).

Bureaucratic autonomy

45. Bureaucratic autonomy is a key aspect of state capacity, i.e. of whether governments are able to provide basic services that markets would under-provide, to regulate private activities that entail externalities or information asymmetries, and to engage in social regulation and redistribution (Fukuyama, 2014). The questionnaire asked for information about the availability of statistics pertaining to the structural, financial and legal autonomy of various government agencies.

46. The questionnaire focused on some key requirements of an autonomous bureaucracy, i.e. the presence of qualified staff, stability of careers, funding for research, organisational identity, the degree of politicisation, the existence of an independent leadership and of adequate financial resources. Overall, only 8 countries reported compiling statistics on bureaucratic autonomy, in most cases pertaining to the presence of qualified staff (6) and of funding for research (4). (Annex Table 5).

Government effectiveness

47. For the purposes of this questionnaire, government effectiveness was defined as the extent to which the goals of government have been met; these goals could relate to the quality of services delivered, the competence of the civil service, and other aspects. The literature on government effectiveness has highlighted the importance of three aspects of government effectiveness, namely users' satisfaction with services delivered, the extent to which agencies are organised in effective ways, and whether agencies responsible for public service delivery are independent from political interference.

- With respect to users' satisfaction with services, statistics are more common in the case of health services (16 countries), followed by public security (15), and the judiciary system (14). Only 4 countries reported collecting statistics on satisfaction with lighting services and garbage collection. In most countries, NSOs are responsible for collecting these types of data, which are typically sourced from household surveys; only a few countries rely on surveys of business or experts assessments, and no country on administrative records and censuses. (Annex Table 6A).
- With respect to the extent to which agencies are organised in effective ways, 8 countries reported collecting data on the effectiveness of the judiciary system, 7 countries reported collecting statistics on the efficacy of public security system and local government, while only 2 countries reported collecting statistics on the media and labour unions. Responsibility for the collection of most of these statistics typically rests with other government or non-government agencies, and sourced from household surveys or experts assessments (Annex Table 6B).
- On whether agencies responsible for public service delivery are independent from political interference, 7 countries reported collecting statistics in this field, with Sweden collecting data on a broader range of aspects (6). (Annex Table 6C).

Voice and accountability

48. Voice refers to the capacity of people to express their views and to the variety of channels (formal and informal) through which they do it: these can include complaints, organised protests, lobbying, participation in decision making, service delivery or policy implementation (Goetz and Gaventa 2001). Accountability refers to the obligation of an organisation to be accountable for its activities, accept responsibility for them, disclose the results in a transparent manner, being responsible for money or other entrusted property. Voice and accountability are separate but related concepts: in some contexts, voice can lead to greater accountability, while in most cases lack of voice will lead to a lack of accountability (O'Neil, Hudson, Foresti 2007). The questionnaire on voice and accountability included

three parts on political rights (electoral process, pluralism, political participation¹³), civil liberties (freedom of expression and belief, associational and organisational rights, rule of law) and accountability (open budgets).

- In the case of political rights, availability of statistics is highest for electoral process and pluralism, with 8 countries collecting statistics about free and fair national elections, and 7 on universal suffrage and financial support to political parties: most of these statistics are compiled by other government agencies based on administrative records. Statistics on political participation are also collected by most countries: 15 countries reported compiling statistics about voter turnout for national elections, 14 in the case voter turnout at local elections, and 12 for statistics on the number of women in parliament: in most cases, responsibility for collecting these statistics falls on other government agencies at the national or regional level, with minimal involvement of NSOs; most of these statistics are sourced from administrative records (Annex Table 7A).
- In the case of civil liberties, 5 countries reported compiling statistics on citizens' basic security, mainly undertaken by other government agencies. These statistics are predominantly based upon "other sources", with no detail on the method used (Annex Table 7B).
- In the case of accountability, 5 countries reported compiling statistics about availability to the public of key budget documents; in most cases, responsibility for collecting this information belongs to other government agencies, although the NSO plays a significant role in Armenia (Annex Table 7C).

Regulatory quality

49. Regulations are essential to the proper function of economies and societies. In designing these regulations to ensure quality, governments should consider their impacts, costs and effects. The concept of regulatory quality covers both the process of developing and enforcing regulations, and their outcomes in terms of achieving their stated goals. The questionnaire on regulatory quality had two parts: regulatory quality assessments (i.e. whether statistics are compiled to assess the quality of new regulations) and regulatory efficiency (i.e. effects on business practices and market competition).

- Only 7 countries reported compiling statistics for assessing the quality of regulations. Among these, only Sweden collects data on both costs and impacts of new regulations. Two countries reported compiling data on the administrative burden of a regulation; 6 have been using "regulatory impact assessments" and 4 have relied on "consultations with stakeholders" to assess quality of regulation. Statistics on regulatory quality are mainly compiled under the responsibility of other governmental institutions rather than NSOs (Annex Table 8A).
- Compiling statistics on regulatory efficiency seems to be more common: 9 countries compile data on the impact of regulation on starting a new business, the degree of state control of business operations, taxation and barriers to competitions: indicators of how cumbersome is the administrative process for 'starting a business' (number of procedures, time requires, costs

¹³ Measurement of political participation is discussed by the CES "In-Depth Review of the Statistics on Political Participation and Other Community Activities Including Volunteer Work" prepared by INEGI in 2013 [ECE/CES/BUR/2013/FEB/2]. This review discussed the different ways in which people "become involved in political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and other community activities and actions", grouping them under three main headings: i) volunteer work; ii) Participatory actions (i.e. non-work activities); and iii) Donating money or goods to a charitable organization or a cause. Political participation may be considered as encompassing both participatory actions and donations. The distinction between "political" and "other types of activities" is, however, not clear-cut.

and required minimum capital) are the most common. Statistics on regulatory efficiency are mainly collected by other governmental institutions (Annex Table 8B).

Corruption and transparency

50. Although there is no universal definition of corruption, most definitions emphasise the misuse of public office for private gain. All forms of government are susceptible to corruption, whose manifestation range from uses of influence and patronage to bribery and other crimes. The questionnaire asked about availability of statistics on people's and firms' perceptions of corruption, perceptions about the transparency of government actions, on experts' or civil servants' assessment of how widespread corruption is, the number of investigations about corruption by criminal police and the number of corruption cases in courts

51. Among the 27 countries that answered the questionnaire, 9 countries reported collecting statistics on people's perceptions of corruption through household surveys. Among these, 7 reported collecting statistics about firms' perceptions of corruption through business surveys, 7 reported collecting data about the number of ongoing corruption investigations by the police, 9 about the number of corruption cases in courts, 4 about perceptions of transparency of government actions through household surveys, 2 about perceptions of transparency of government actions through business surveys, 2 about evaluations of civil servants and other experts about corruption in public institutions and agencies, while 1 (Sweden) mentioned research among groups of civil servants on the extent to which they are exposed to attempts at corrupting their decision-making (bribery/improper offers/friendship corruption). Overall, 8 countries answered that they do not collect any type of statistics on corruption. While statistics on perceptions of corruption and evaluations of transparency rely on surveys of households and businesses, often undertaken by NSOs, other government agencies rely heavily on administrative data on the number of corruption cases in law courts or open corruption investigations by the criminal police (Annex Table 9).

Trust that decisions are taken in the public interest

52. For the purposes of this questionnaire, trust in public institutions was defined as having a positive view about the actions of organisation, based on either personal experience or perception. While trust is a fully subjective phenomenon, in the context of governance statistics it represents the confidence of citizens and businesses that government decisions are taken in the public interest, and that governments do what is right and are perceived to be fair. The questionnaire asked about availability of statistics on trust in 17 different types of public institutions.

53. Statistics on trust in various institutions are quite common, especially in case of trust in the justice system (13 countries), government (12), parliament (12), public security system (11), political parties (10) and social security/ social protection systems (8). Conversely, only few countries collect statistics on trust in labour unions (4), in the honesty of elections (2), or in the inclusiveness of government policies (1). Only 3 countries reported not collecting any data on trust. In most countries, collection of statistics on trust is undertaken by public opinion companies, rather than by NSOs or other government agencies, although in some countries NSOs and other government agencies are also responsible. Statistics on trust are predominantly drawn from surveys of households and, in fewer cases, from surveys of businesses or experts assessments. (Annex Table 10).

Overall assessment

54. According to the answers provided by NSOs, several countries collect data on various aspects of governance, which can provide a basis for harmonization efforts by the statistical community. However, NSOs in many occasions use different terms when referring to the same topic, or use the same term with a variety of different meanings, implying that they differ in terms of their understanding of what belongs to governance, as well as how it is, or should be, measured. There are also differences in answers between the more open-ended questions to the general questionnaire (where NSOs were asked

to indicate the broad governance aspects covered by national statistics) and the more detailed questions on specific aspects of governance (e.g. an NSO may have replied that no statistics are available on voice and accountability in the general questionnaire, but then indicate that statistics on political participation are available). Reaching a consensus on the conceptual boundaries of the concept at hand, identifying a limited number of aspects of governance where credible measures are more easily defined, and identifying the best source (e.g. administrative records, household surveys) for each of these should be a priority for future statistical work.

IV.3. Internationally comparable data

55. While official statistics on governance available in various countries refer to concepts defined in different ways in each country, comparable statistics on governance are produced outside the official statistical system. These data are typically compiled by international organisations and research networks, based on responses provided by experts to comprehensive questionnaires prepared by various agencies or on household surveys undertaken by research projects or private companies.

IV.3.a. International organisations

56. There are many international indicator sets focusing on public governance, many of them compiled by intergovernmental organisations. Data collection initiatives on governance undertaken by intergovernmental organisations in CES countries include:

- The **European Union Commission** collects governance statistics through a range of vehicles: For example, both the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) and the (non-official) Eurobarometer surveys include question on aspects such as trust in public institutions and satisfaction with services. Similar questions, plus additional governance topics like corruption, are featured in the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS), conducted by Eurofound, and in the European Quality of Government Index (EQI) project, funded by the EU Commission for Regional Development (REGIO).
- The **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)** assists the United Nations Secretariat and UN agencies and programmes with democracy-building initiatives. As part of its work, IDEA gathers comparative knowledge on electoral institutions and processes. One of the organisation's most widely used statistics is that on voter turnout, which IDEA computes based on data from NSOs and electoral management bodies.
- The **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** has been issuing its publication *Governance at a Glance* bi-annually since 2009. This flagship publication compares country's public institutional performance drawing on a dashboard of detailed indicators pertaining to government inputs (e.g. public employment), activities (e.g. budgeting), outputs (e.g. access to education) and outcomes (e.g. income inequality). This information is gathered through questionnaires addressed to country-representatives in Centre of Government offices.
- The **World Bank's** Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) present a comprehensive cross-country data set that consists of composite indicators for six broad dimensions of governance: voice and accountability, political stability and the absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, corruption and transparency. These indicators are based on hundreds of variables obtained from 31 different data sources ranging from household surveys to data provided by non-governmental organizations, commercial providers of statistics, and public sector organizations. The World Bank also compiles a separate data set on regulatory quality through its "Doing Business" indicators.

57. However, most of these projects do not follow a well-defined measurement framework. Also, while some of them are quite comprehensive (e.g. the World Bank's World Governance Indicators), others focus on specific governance aspects (e.g. the voter turnout data of IDEA); similarly, while some of the data sets collate information from many different sources, others build on data submitted by government officials, or compiled of household survey data. Several of these sets rank countries according to their performance based on a single composite score but most rely on scoreboards.

58. Most of the activities undertaken by international agencies in the field of governance statistics are about collecting existing data or generating indicators of governance performance. Conversely, developing methodological guidance in this field is the goal pursued by the UN City Group on Governance Statistics, established by the UN Statistical Commission in 2015. The main deliverable from this group is the production of a Handbook of Governance Statistics aimed at national statistical offices, covering concepts, measurement methodology and the dissemination of statistics in this field. The Praia Group held two meetings so far, and aims to complete its work by 2018.

IV.3.b. Expert assessments

59. Expert assessments of various aspects of governance are undertaken in the CES region by research networks, think-tanks, and international organisations. Experts are typically professionals working in this area (e.g. lawyers, researchers, academics, etc.) or high-level civil servants with a good knowledge of and reputation on the issues at stake.

60. Several reasons exist for relying on experts as source of information on governance. First, for certain aspects of governance, experts are best placed to provide the information required (e.g. detailed information about budgeting or procurement that may not be available from other sources) and to make informed judgements (e.g. on whether elections are fair). Second, indicators based on expert assessment can be more easily used for cross-country comparisons than the data independently collected by various administrative agencies, as they are based on a common reporting template. Third, indicators developed through expert assessment are typically less costly to collect, especially when compared to data collected through household surveys (Kauffman 2007). Conversely, drawbacks of this approach are that little information may be available about the criteria used for selecting experts, the standards guiding their assessment (leading to results that can change depending on the expert being interviewed), and differences between the views of experts and those of ordinary people on the same phenomena. More generally, questions remain open about the capacity of expert assessments to describe the concept under study, and the extent to which these measures are consistent with those generated by other experts and through other sources (e.g. household surveys or administrative data). A key concern by users is whether indicators based on expert assessment are valid and reliable, which requires empirical analysis.¹⁴

61. This section describes different types of governance measures based, primarily or completely, upon expert assessments. This review is not exhaustive, and limited to the projects that disclose their sources and methods, and that have a broad international coverage.

62. Expert assessment indicators are typically based on two types of respondents: i) **academics and researchers**; and ii) **government officials**. Each of these groups of respondents will provide different perspectives on the issues at hand. In general, indicators based on expert-assessments are produced by international government organizations (IGO), think-tanks and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Because experts are well placed to assess detailed aspects of governance, summary

¹⁴ For example, Razafindrakoto and Roubaud (2010) compared data on perceived corruption from expert assessments and household surveys in eight Sub-Saharan countries, concluding that expert assessments overestimate corruption, as their views are biased by ideology or by their perception of the general economic condition of the country. Conversely, a similar analysis by Charron (2015), using household survey data covering 24 European countries, concluded that measures of the prevalence of corruption from household surveys and from expert assessments are highly correlated.

information across these aspects is often presented through composite indicators, with single scores used to rank countries on a specific aspect, or to shed light on the relative performance of a given country in the broad area of governance, democracy or political systems.

- At the most aggregated level assessments **by academics or researchers** typically refer to governance 'principles' (e.g. adherence to democratic principles, existence of open elections) and, more rarely, to government 'processes' (e.g. presence of corruption, openness and transparency of government operations); in some cases, however, experts may also provide information about the 'valued outcomes' that various agencies deliver to citizens (e.g. people's access to the justice system, or whether it performs its functions effectively). Furthermore, in some cases, the indicators produced by the sponsoring organisation combine expert assessments and survey data, with the two measures usually weighted equally.¹⁵ Measures based on the assessment of academics and researchers could also reflect the specific agenda of the sponsoring organisation, implying that scrutiny is needed to understand the motivations of data producers.
- Conversely, **government officials** are typically best placed to provide informed answers about detailed aspects of the functioning of government institutions (i.e. 'processes'). Answers from designated government officials may also have a claim to represent the 'official' position of the government on the phenomenon of interest. Public officials can report on the processes followed by public agencies but they may also experience conflicts of interests when evaluating the performance of government on a given area, because of incentives to present their country better than it actually is. Biases can also occur as government officials may interpret differently the same question, calling for additional methodological checks. Finally, even when indicators based on assessments by government officials are presented as composites, these tend to be narrowly defined and used to describe specific aspects of how government works in a specific area.

63. Key comparative features of the expert assessments considered in this section are provided in Table 3. While differing in terms of a variety of features, the projects reviewed are quite representatives of the type of assessments available in this field. Information on each of them is provided below.

64. Five of the initiatives in Table 3 rely on the assessments of professionals and researchers, and are undertaken by academic research organisations, private foundations and non-government organisations:

- The *Varieties of Democracy* (Vdem) project, led by the Kellogg institute (University of Indiana) and the University of Gothenburg, has developed a comprehensive dataset of democracy and political system in various countries. While the concept of democracy differs from that of governance, in practice most of the aspects covered by Vdem are relevant for any assessment of governance. At its most aggregate level, Vdem produces seven composite indicators measuring the most important types of democracy according to theory: electoral, liberal, majoritarian, consensual, participatory, deliberative and egalitarian. To construct these measures, the project relies on country experts who answer a detailed questionnaire and code several variables, therefore providing subjective ratings of latent characteristics of democracy. On average, five experts per country, working independently, answer the same questionnaire. The project has regional managers and country coordinators in charge of deciding the list of experts (typically through a system of referrals).¹⁶ The project uses a calibrating method (i.e.

¹⁵ Combining several sources to produce an indicator can reduce the impact of the biases affecting each source but it also implies, in practice, that a greater weight is attributed to the views of an expert relative to those of a person participating in a survey.

¹⁶ The regional manager is commonly an academic with high reputation, while experts are academics with expertise on a specific country and on the subject of democracy. Experts are selected based on biographical sketches, publications, website information, current location, highest educational, current position and area of documented expertise. Five core criteria are considered for recruitment of these experts: i) expertise in the country

based on item response theory) to account for differences in how experts apply ordinal scales and for variations in raters' reliability (i.e. random error), which allows to assign weights based on the integrated assessment of different respondents. The Vdem dataset currently covers 206 sovereign and semi sovereign political units; indicators have been extended back to 1900 by historians.

- *Bertelsmann Sustainable Governance Indicators* are produced by the Bertelsmann Foundation¹⁷ for 41 OECD and EU countries with the objective of assessing the viability of countries' governance systems. At its highest level, the Sustainable Governance Indicators consist of three composite indicators: i) a policy performance index; ii) a democracy index; and iii) a governance index. The policy and governance indexes combine quantitative data (mainly extracted from OECD and EU sources) with qualitative indicators, while the democracy index is based purely on information provided by experts. Each country is evaluated through a questionnaire sent to a minimum of two country-experts (academics or practitioners with relevant qualifications) covering a wide range of areas including budgetary policy, labour market policy and the electoral process; a regional coordinator (a staff of the foundation) completes the country-questionnaire. The questionnaire is completed by a first expert and then reviewed by a second expert (who also provides his own score); their assessments are then combined by the regional coordinator who establishes a country score; this is followed by an inter-regional meeting where different regional coordinators discuss assessment criteria and calibrate results; finally, the SGI board evaluates and approve the final results. In order to construct the indexes, all scores are standardized through a linear transformation, and then aggregated through a simple additive weighting process.

and topic; ii) connection to the country coded; iii) willingness to devote time and perform the task carefully; iv) impartiality; and v) diversity of background.

¹⁷ Bertelsmann Foundation is a German private foundation founded by a philanthropist; one its goals is to contribute to social reform but also “ensuring the continuity of Germany’s political and social structures”.

Table 3. Characteristics of the experts assessments considered in this review

| Name of the indicators/databse | Organisation responsible | Country coverage | Frequency | Inception | Number of experts | Background of experts | Dimensions of governance covered | | |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| | | | | | | | Principles | Processes | Valued outcomes |
| Varieties of democracy | V-Dem institute /Kellog Institute (Indiana)/University of Gothenburg | 206 (sovereign/semi sovereign political units) | Yearly (data goes back to 1900) | 2014 | 5 external experts per country; network of 2000 country experts | Academics | Quality of Democracy (for seven types of democracy); rule of law | Civil society participation; Public sector corruption | Freedom of association; Freedom of expression; - Equal distribution of resources; Private freedoms; Alternative sources of information |
| Sustainable Governance Indicators | Bertelsmann Foundation | 41 (OECD and EU countries) | 2009, 2011, 2014 and 2015 | 2009 | 2 external experts per country | Academics | Quality of Democracy; Good governance; Rule of law | Electoral process; Openness; Corruption prevention; Executive capacity (e.g. inter-ministerial coordination, societal consultation); - Executive accountability | Civil rights; Political liberties |
| Rule of law index | World Justice Project | 102 countries | Yearly | 2009 | On average 25 external experts per country | Academics, practitioners (lawyers) | Constraints on government powers | Absence of corruption; - Open Government; Regulatory enforcement | Access to Civil justice; - Quality Criminal justice; Fundamental rights; Order and security |
| Civil liberty and Political rights indices | Freedom House | 202 sovereign and semi sovereign political units | Yearly | 1972 | 1 external expert per country | Country analysts | Quality of Democracy | | Political rights; Civil liberties |
| Corruption Perception Index | Transparency International | 168 countries | Yearly | 1995 (changes in methodology limit comparability) | Aggregation of several external sources based on expert assessment | Academics/practitioners/country analysts | | Public sector corruption (misuse of public resources) | |
| Government at a Glance | OECD | 34 countries plus 5-8 key partners | Bi-annually | 2009 | 10-15 experts per country (1 expert per area) | Civil servants | | Public Procurement; Budgeting; Regulatory Governance; Open Government; Digital Government; Public Sector Integrity; Human Resource Management Practices | |

- The *World Justice Project* (WJP) is an independent, non-profit, multidisciplinary organization (started under the sponsorship of the American Bar Association) that “seeks to increase public awareness about the foundational importance of the rule of law, stimulate policy reforms, and develop practical on-the-ground programs that enhance and extend the rule of law”. The main output from this project is the Rule of Law (RoL) index, currently covering 102 countries, which assesses the situation of rule of law in each country based on eight criteria: i) constraints on government powers; ii) absence of corruption; iii) open government; iv) fundamental rights; v) order and security; vi) regulatory enforcement; vii) civil justice; and viii) criminal justice. A specific index is created for each criterion. The questionnaire sent to experts is based on perceptions but also includes questions based on hypothetical scenarios. Indicators are constructed by combining data from household surveys (based on 1,000 respondents in the three largest cities of each country) and an average of 25 experts per country.¹⁸ Scores from household surveys and experts are aggregated, most commonly with equal weights¹⁹, and then normalised.²⁰
- The Transparency International's²¹ *Corruption Perception Index* aims at measuring perceived corruption in the public sector based on expert opinions. The index, currently available for 168 countries, relies on a wide array of external data sources aggregated using a simple average of all the variables with re-scaled scores; no primary data are hence produced by Transparency International (TI). In order to be assigned a score, a country needs to have at least three data sources available, from which to calculate an average. The sources used to calculate the 2015 version of index are detailed in Table 4. According to TI, a source is used in the construction of the index when data are: i) based on a reliable methodology from a credible institution; ii) addresses corruption in the public sector; iii) granular (i.e. the scale used must allow for sufficient differentiation); iv) comparable across countries; and v) available over several years.²²
- *Freedom House*²³ *Civil Liberties and Political Rights Indices* are numerical ratings (supported by descriptive texts) for 195 countries and 15 territories. The indicators, which have been produced since 1972, rely on the assessment by analysts who perform on-ground research, consult local

¹⁸ Experts are, ideally, professionals with expertise in civil and commercial law, criminal justice, labour law and public health who interacts regularly with state institutions and could provide information about the efficacy of courts, strength of regulatory enforcement and reliability of accountability systems. Concretely the selection of experts is done through two methods. The first method relies on a two-stage process; in the first stage, a large number of organizations (law firms, universities/colleges, research organizations and NGOs) are selected; in the second a random sample of experts within selected organization is drawn and the questionnaire is sent to them. The second method builds on the WJP network of practitioners and academics, to whom the questionnaire is sent. Respondents are primarily law professors and practicing attorneys with significant practical experience selected from universities, directories of law firms, research organizations and NGOs, as well as through referrals from the WJP network of practitioners

¹⁹ However, some subcomponents of the indexes (e.g. delay of administrative procedures and limitation of government powers by supreme audit institution) are based exclusively on expert assessments.

²⁰ An external statistical audit of the WJP Rule of Law index conducted by the EU Joint Research Centre (JRC) in 2014 concluded that the index is statistically coherent, with no dimension unduly dominated by any of the underlying components; and that country-ranks are fairly robust to methodological changes related to the estimation of missing data, weighting or aggregation rule.

²¹ Transparency International is a voluntary association registered in Germany; its members are several country organisations and, in addition, a few individuals.

²² The CPI is considered in this section as most of the used to compute the index rely on expert assessments.

²³ Freedom House is an independent “watchdog organization” based in the United States and dedicated to the expansion of freedom and democracy around the world. The organization advocates “U.S leadership and collaboration with like-minded governments to oppose vigorously dictators and oppression”. The objective of this project is to assess the condition of political rights and civil liberties around the world.

professionals, and collect and analyse information from news articles, NGOs, governments and other sources. There is only one analyst per country²⁴. However, scores are based on a multi-layered process of analysis and evaluation by Freedom of House staff: first, country analyst suggests numerical scores for the relevant components of the index; second, scores are reviewed in regional meetings by the analyst, regional experts and an in-house staff; third, a cross-regional evaluation is conducted to guarantee comparability and consistency in the scores. Country-scores are presented as reflecting the consensus of analysts, advisers and Freedom of House staff.

Table 4.

Data sources used to construct Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index

| Data producer | Indicator name |
|---|--|
| African Development Bank | Governance Ratings 2014 |
| Bertelsmann Foundation | Sustainable Governance Indicators 2015 |
| Economist Intelligence Unit | Country Risk Ratings 2015 |
| Freedom House | Nations in Transit 2015 |
| Global Insight | Country Risk Ratings 2014 |
| Institute for Management Development | World Competitiveness Yearbook 2015 |
| Political and Economic Risk Consultancy | Asian Intelligence 2015 |
| Political Risk Services | International Country Risk Guide 2015 |
| World Bank | Country Policy and Institutional Assessment 2014 |
| World Economic Forum | Executive Opinion Survey (EOS) 2015 |
| World Justice Project | Rule of Law Index 2015 |

Source: Authors based on transparency.international.org

65. The last project included in Table 3 is based on assessments provided by government officials. The OECD report *Government at a Glance* relies on an indicator set published bi-annually since 2009, containing information on public institutions in OECD member and partner countries. This indicator set focuses on how governments work perform from an internationally comparative perspective, and aims to: i) allow countries to benchmark their performance to other countries; ii) measure their own progress over time; iii) provide evidence to policy makers; and iv) allow countries to identify where further progress is needed or where problem areas are in order to address those. The OECD publication is based on a dashboard of detailed indicators pertaining to government inputs (e.g. public employment), activities (e.g. budgeting), outputs (e.g. access to education) and outcomes (e.g. income inequality), with information gathered through detailed questionnaires addressed to country-representatives in Centre of Government offices.²⁵ The indicators in *Government at a Glance* are constructed on the basis of several questionnaires sent to government experts. As respondents are government officials who have expertise in the relevant fields, the indicators presented in *Government at a Glance* may be considered as reflecting the 'official' position of government. Information provided by these country experts is reviewed by topic experts in the OECD Secretariat, and any discrepancies are brought to the attention of national governments. Expert-

²⁴ No information about the profile of analysts and the process for selecting them (or about whether the scores undergo changes during the multi-step process) is provided by Freedom House. Having only one analyst per country may increase the risk and size of any potential bias.

²⁵ While *Government at a Glance* is not based on an explicit definition on what 'good governance' is, principles are reflected in the choices of indicators presented and in how those indicators are built.

assessments by government officials are commonly accompanied by fact-checking, aimed at verifying the accuracy of responses. This data validation processes takes place through different mechanisms.

- **Internal consistency:** questionnaires are designed in such a way that similar questions are included in different parts of the questionnaire; by contrasting different answers, consistency of the responses can be verified. In addition, questionnaires incorporate filters to guide respondents through a specific survey-flow, based on answers that they provided previously.
- **External consistency:** whenever available, responses provided by experts are compared with other sources of information capturing the same concept. Within the questionnaires, experts are asked to provide evidence in the form of additional documents (e.g. laws, background documents, etc.), or examples on how public agencies are implementing what they mention in their answers.
- **Consistency over time:** answers are compared with those from previous years. While assessments may change over time, changes need to be explained and documented.
- **Clear and concrete coding criteria:** efforts are made to provide clear coding criteria aimed at minimizing the subjectivity and degree of interpretation that is left to the coder.
- **Additional statistical methods,** such as outlier detection, may be used to assess data quality.

66. A small excerpt of the Budget Practices and Procedures questionnaire, used to develop indicators included in *Government at a Glance* is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Example of the questionnaire used by the OECD for compiling Governance at a Glance indicators: Budget Practices and Procedures

PART I - GENERAL INFORMATION

*** 1a. Where is the function of the Central Budget Authority (CBA) located in your government?**
Please select one.

a. Ministry of Finance/Economy

b. President's Office

c. Prime Minister's Office

d. Independent agency

e. Other central government institution

f. CBA is split between two or more Ministries/Agencies, please specify organisations and provide web links to each:

Additional comments:
Please use this space as needed to clarify your responses above.

*** 1b. If yes to 1a,b,c or e, please provide the formal name of the Central Budget Authority (CBA) organisation in your country along with a corresponding web link:**

*** 2. Please indicate whether the head of the CBA is:**
Please select one

a. A senior civil servant (e.g. a government official who ordinarily remains in this position when there is a change in Government.)

b. A political appointee (e.g. a person who generally does not remain in this position when there is a change in Government).

c. Other, please specify:

Source: OECD, Government at a Glance questionnaire.

67. While all measures based on expert assessment may be considered as non-statistical indicators, they provide critical information on several aspects of government performance, and are used extensively in discussions on the subject. One general problem with indicators based on expert-assessment is that the different aspects and dimensions that are understood as lacking a common definition of governance: as a result, indicators with similar labels (e.g. rule of law, democracy, corruption) may refer to slightly different concepts. Indicators based on expert assessment are also developed using different methodologies, which is reflected in the diversity of sources used (e.g. experts only, or combinations of experts-assessment and survey data), the number and criteria used to select experts, the topics that experts are asked to assess, the type of aggregation and validation mechanisms used, as well as the country coverage of the resulting measures. Most commonly, measures based on expert assessment are presented as composite indicators comprising several sub-components that can be analysed independently. In most cases, experts are required to combine expertise on the subject matter with detailed knowledge of the country assessed. In all projects reviewed in this section, whether they rely on experts from academia or government, the institution responsible for publishing the indicators assess the information provided by experts with a critical eye, and is responsible for adjusting and validating the resulting measures.

68. The most salient difference among the projects reviewed in this section is that between assessments carried out by government officials or by researchers/practitioners.²⁶ In general, indicators based on assessment by academic experts tend to refer to principles (e.g. democracy, the rule of law), while those based on government officials tend to refer more to processes (e.g. efficiency). Differently from surveys, measures based on assessment by academic experts' relate to abstract concepts that require a large amount of contextual information. Questionnaires sent to academic experts on a specific topic tend to be long and include questions that are highly theoretical or based on hypothetical scenarios. In other contexts, experts may complement their assessment with media reports, interviews with local contacts and other actors (e.g. NGOs). In the case of government experts, the information requested tends to be specific and can relate to the day-to-day working of a government institution (e.g. the centre of government) or the functioning of a government process (e.g. budgeting, procurement, integrity). These government officials are often asked to provide specific examples or evidence on how government works.

69. Dedicated work is necessary to assess the validity of measures based on expert assessment, e.g. whether expert-based indicators for the same phenomenon sourced from different projects lead to similar conclusions: conclusions in this respect will generally depend on the specific aspect of governance and on the projects considered.

IV.3.c. *Non-official household surveys*

70. Beyond expert assessments, household surveys represent another source of comparable data to assess a country's quality of governance and the ways it affects people's lives and well-being. By asking citizens about their experiences, expectations and opinions on various aspects of government performance, household surveys provide information on governance from the perspective of the very people on behalf of whom public institutions are working.

71. While only few household surveys conducted by NSOs include questions on governance, there is significant experience in this field through non-official household surveys, some of which started to collect

²⁶ The difference between the two could be described using the dichotomy between *tin openers* and *dial types* (Carter and Klein, 1992) indicators: *dials* imply an explicit normative standard about what constitutes good or bad performance, with indicators constructed to compare reality against this normative standard; *tin openers* aim to prompt interrogation and inquiry, and provide an incomplete or inaccurate picture. While *dials* tend to be relatively narrow and are used to trigger concrete actions, *tin openers* are useful to attract attention and as communication tools. Indicators based on assessment by government officials tend to be *dials*, while measures based on the assessment by academic experts tend to be *tin openers*.

relevant information since the early 1980s (Table 6). Several limitations, affect the quality of data from non-official surveys: for example, most of these surveys have small sample sizes and low response rates, rely on inadequate sampling frames, and on minimal resources for survey development and cognitive testing (OECD 2013b). But, despite these limits, non-official household surveys provide comparative experience and evidence on the type of questions that could be included in larger-scale official surveys.

72. Eight non-official household surveys that include questions related to governance, and cover the majority of CES countries, are reviewed here.²⁷ Some of these surveys include in-depth *ad hoc* modules dedicated to governance (e.g. Eurobarometer has featured special Barometers on corruption and discrimination in the past). However, for the purposes of this review, only the core/repeated survey modules are considered, as these allow for monitoring of changes over time.

73. Table 6 lists the main characteristics of the non-official surveys, such as the year when the survey was first fielded, its frequency, survey-mode, and sampling frame. The table also describes the key aspects of governance covered by these non-official surveys (which range from preferences about democracy, civic engagement, experience with corruption and service delivery to trust in public institutions), clustered under the three dimensions used in this review (i.e. 'principles', 'processes', and 'valued outcomes'). Table 7 provides additional information on how each aspect is assessed and measured.²⁸

In terms of coverage of various governance aspects, two features stand out from Table 7:

- First, although to different extent, all three governance domains are covered by non-official surveys. Hence, *a priori*, household surveys are a tool that could be used to measure all governance dimensions, either as a primary sources of information (for those aspects where only people can provide relevant information) or alongside other measurement instruments.
- Second, survey questions have been used more extensively for some dimensions than for others. The non-officials surveys reviewed in this section only rarely probe respondents on principles (e.g. democratic preferences), while questions are more common in the case of processes (e.g. non-discrimination, absence of corruption, quality of democracy) and, in particular, of valued outcomes. Here, non-official surveys feature a range of questions on civic engagement (e.g. membership of political organizations and participation in political action), political efficacy (e.g. interest in politics and political agency), trust in a range of public institutions, satisfaction with public services such as health-care, education, and transport. Thus, household surveys could be particularly useful when considering how public institutions perform their role, and which valuable outcomes are achieved.

74. As in the case of expert assessments, further work on the validity of the various survey measures of governance is needed to confirm their suitability to measure the concepts they aim to assess.

²⁷ The featured non-official surveys include surveys undertaken by academic networks (e.g. ISSP, WVS, ESS) surveys initiated by commercial providers (e.g. GWP), as well as surveys conducted by public institutions (e.g. Eurobarometer) or in response to a specific mandate from a public agency (e.g. the European Quality of Life Survey and the European Quality of Governance Survey).

²⁸ Assigning questions to a particular aspect involves, to some degree, a subjective decision. Further, while the various questions broadly capture the same overall aspects, question wording and response scales differ across surveys. Moreover, many questions items are either not repeated in every wave or asked in a slightly different manner. All these factors limit comparability across surveys and time.

Table 6. Non-official household surveys collecting comparable information on governance

| Name of survey | Country coverage | Aspects of governance covered | | | Inception | Frequency | Modules | Sample size | Interview mode | Organisation responsible |
|--|---|-------------------------------|---|---|-----------|----------------|---|--|---|---|
| | | I. Principles | II. Processes | III. Valued Outcomes | | | | | | |
| European Values Study | Total: 47 countries UNECE: 42 OECD: 26 | Democratic preferences | Quality of democracy | Civic engagement, political efficacy, trust in institutions, satisfaction with services | 1981 | Every 9 years | Slightly adapted questionnaire each wave | 1000 per country | Face-to-face | EVS Foundation |
| World Values Survey | Total: 97 countries UNECE: 42 OECD: 27 | Democratic preferences | Absence of corruption, quality of democracy | Civic engagement, political efficacy, trust in institutions, satisfaction with services | 1981 | Every 5 years | Slightly changed core module in each wave | Minimum 1000 per country | Face-to-face | Global network of social scientists, Secretariat at the Institute for Comparative Survey Research, Austria |
| Eurobarometer | Total: 34 countries UNECE: 34 OECD: 25 | | Absence of corruption, non-discrimination, quality of democracy | Civic engagement, political efficacy, trust in institutions, satisfaction with services | 1973 | Every 6 months | Standard Barometer, plus Special Barometer, Flash Barometer and Qualitative Studies | 1000 per country (except small countries) | Face-to-face | European Commission Directorate General for Communication |
| International Social Survey Programme | Total: 45 countries UNECE: 31 OECD: 31 | Democratic preferences | Absence of corruption, non-discrimination, quality of democracy | Civic engagement, political efficacy, trust in institutions, satisfaction with services | 1984 | Annual | Rotating | Between 1000-3000 per country | Face-to-face | Global network of research organizations, Secretariat at GESIS-Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Germany |
| European Social Survey | Total: 36 countries UNECE: 35 OECD: 27 | | Non-discrimination, quality of democracy | Civic engagement, political efficacy, trust in institutions, satisfaction with services | 2002 | Every 2 years | Core, plus two rotating and one supplementary module | Minimum 1500 per country (800 in countries with less than 2 million inhabitants) | Experimenting with: face-to-face, telephone, Internet and paper self-completion | City University London |
| European Quality of Life Survey | Total: 33 countries UNECE: 32 OECD: 23 | | | Civic engagement, trust in institutions, satisfaction with services | 2003 | Every 4 years | Core, with new items and modules being added as the survey evolves | Between 1001-3055 per country | Face-to-face | Eurofund |
| Gallup World Poll | Total: 166 countries UNECE: 53 OECD: 34 | | Absence of corruption, quality of democracy | Civic engagement, trust in institutions, satisfaction with services | 2005 | Annual | Core | 1000 per country | Telephone (if penetration higher than 80%), face-to-face | Gallup Inc. |
| European Quality of Governance Survey | Total: 30 countries UNECE: 30 OECD: 23 | | Absence of corruption, non-discrimination, quality of democracy | Satisfaction with services | 2010 | Every 3 years | Core | 400 or more per region, Europe-wide total 85 000 | Telephone | University of Gothenburg, funded by EU Commission |

Table 7. Dimensions and aspects of governance addressed by non-official household surveys

| Domain | Question | Dimension | Description |
|-----------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| Principles | What is expected from public institutions? | Democratic preferences | Attitudes towards democracy and authoritarianism |
| Processes | How do public institutions perform their role? | Non-discrimination | Perception of fair and equal treatment by public officials and politicians |
| | | Absence of corruption | Perception of corruption (in government and specific service sectors) Personal experience with corruption |
| | | Quality of democracy | Satisfaction with democracy Respect for human rights Freedom of the press Free and fair elections Privacy and government surveillance |
| Valued outcomes | Why it is important? | Civic engagement | Membership in political parties and labour unions Participation in political action (e.g. signing petitions, contacting officials, demonstrating) |
| | | Political efficacy | Believes in personal agency in the political sphere |
| | | Trust in institutions | Trust in a range of specific public institutions (e.g. parliament, government, courts, police, media) Approval of current leadership |
| | | Satisfaction with services | Satisfaction with public services in a range of sectors (e.g. health, education, transport, police force) |

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

75. This review has highlighted that a variety of governance statistics are already collected by many data producers in the countries represented in CES. These statistics range from aggregate democracy indicators compiled by experts or academics, to surveys of public officials conducted by international organisations, to administrative data collected by various public agencies as part of their daily functioning, to data from household surveys conducted by commercial providers and research institutes. Within the official statistical system, several NSOs compile statistics on multiple aspects of governance through censuses, surveys, or based on the processing and standardisation of administrative records.

76. However, this review has also identified several challenges that the statistical community will need to address before governance data are collected in reliable and standardized ways that are fit-for-purpose in terms of informing policy and the population at large:

- First, a **conceptual framework for governance statistics is still lacking**. No universal definition of 'governance' currently exists, implying that various agencies and researchers interpret it in their own way, referring to (partially overlapping) items such as effectiveness, impartiality, accountability, democratic quality, non-discrimination, state capacity, etc. Even when the same term is used by various actors it may have different meaning while, conversely, different actors may use different term to describe the same phenomena. Reaching agreement on the conceptual

scope of governance statistics, identifying its main domains and dimensions, defining boundaries separating what is included and what is excluded from the remit of governance statistics should be a priority task for the statistical community. While this review has relied on the distinction between the three domains of principles, processes, and valued outcomes to describe and classify governance statistics, a broader framework will need to be discussed by the statistical community in order to reach the necessary consensus. The Praia Group on Governance Statistics should play the key role in that process.

- Second, once concepts are clear, a **statistical framework will need to be developed**. A statistical framework brings together a conceptual framework relating to the variable of interest, the measurement instruments required for quantifying it, and the statistical infrastructure needed to ensure that data are collected in a way consistent with quality standards. Building such a statistical framework will require aligning different aspects of governance with the measurement tools best apt at quantifying them. While administrative data have a special role to play in measuring governance, special efforts are needed to create systems apt to providing statistics meeting standard quality requirements of timeliness, frequency, and comparability. Other measurement instruments such as surveys of households and business, as well as measures drawn from expert assessments by public officials and researchers, also play an essential role in meeting demands for broader and more comparable statistics in the governance field.
- Third, as conceptual and statistical frameworks are created, a critical task is that of **identifying good-quality measures that could be used to populate these frameworks**. This is a complex and labour-intensive endeavour, which requires assessing the validity of the measures that already exist. Establishing the validity of a statistical measure is especially complex when it comes to broad concepts such as governance, as it requires reviewing the information that is already available to assess the different facets of their validity.²⁹ The OECD is currently engaged in such exercise with respect to the narrower concept of "trust", which encompasses both people's trust in others and their confidence in various public institutions. Similar analysis will be required for other aspects (such as corruption, access to justice and other basic services, or rule of law) in order to identify a narrow set of measures that could be considered as falling within the remit of official statistics.

²⁹ While many of the aspects of governance can only be measured through subjective self-reports, and cannot be compared with objective measures of the same concept, the literature on the validity of subjective measures suggests three types of validity that a good measure should satisfy (OECD 2013b): i) face validity (i.e. do respondents and/or data users understand what they are asked to report and do they judge that the items are appropriate, given what they are told about the objectives of the assessment?); ii) convergent validity (i.e. does the measure correlate well with the other measures of the same underlying concept?); and iii) construct validity (i.e. does the measure perform in the way suggested by theory and common sense?; in other words, does the measure have the expected relationship with the factors determining the underlying concept being measured, and with outcomes thought to be influenced by the measure in question?)

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