

**PUBLIC GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE
PUBLIC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE****Working Party on Open Government****A Roadmap for Assessing the Impact of Open Government Reform**

This document presents the OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Government, together with a roadmap for measuring inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impacts of open government reforms in the short-, medium- and long-term (2020 to 2024), as provided for in the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government.

Delegates were invited to discuss this document and provide comments during the meeting of the Working Party on Open Government on 18 May 2020. This revised document incorporates key comments received from delegates. The present document will be sent to PGC for declassification in order to enable consultation with external stakeholders. A further revised version of it will subsequently be uploaded.

David Goessmann: david.goessmann@oecd.org, +33 (0) 1 45 24 81 26

Alessandro Bellantoni: alessandro.bellantoni@oecd.org, +33 (0) 1 45 24 98 80

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1. Introduction

1. While initiatives to foster the open government principles of transparency, accountability, integrity, and stakeholders' participation have been a priority on countries' policy agendas and political discourse for at least the past decades, it is only in recent years that governments have started to move towards a more holistic and integrated approach to the promotion of openness. Open government initiatives – i.e. initiatives to foster transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation – are now being implemented by all OECD Members and most government institutions around the globe.

2. Building on successful practices and the experience gathered in the past decade, the global open government movement has started to become more mature. Along with the progressive improvement, consolidation, and institutionalisation of countries' open government agendas, there is an increasingly loud call for performance indicators to measure their contribution to broader policy goals such as trust in government and more generally to socio-economic outcomes. As countries are spending increasing amounts of public resources and investing more and more time in the promotion of openness, it becomes imperative to answer the following questions:

- Are the framework conditions for open government adequate? Which of them need to be strengthened in order to be more conducive to openness?
- How open have governments become? Which of the principles of open government have advanced the most?
- Have open government reforms delivered the outcomes and impacts they were designed for? Can they be strengthened? How?

3. OECD Members have been at the forefront of the global open government movement since its inception. The OECD Secretariat has actively supported them by conducting numerous policy reviews in Member and Partner countries and collecting data, evidence, and good practices from across the world to explore, substantiate, and strengthen the causal links between the open government reforms and policy outcomes. OECD work on open government culminated with the adoption of the *OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government* [[OECD/LEGAL/0438](#)] (the “OG Recommendation”) in 2017. The OG Recommendation is the first and only internationally recognised legal instrument in the area. It sets out an ambitious set of criteria for the design and implementation of successful open government agendas

4. The OG Recommendation further recognises “the need for establishing a clear, actionable, evidence-based, internationally recognised and comparable framework for open government, as well as its related process, output, outcome and impact indicators taking into account the diverse institutional and legal settings of the Members and non-Members”. In the OG Recommendation, the OECD Council instructed the OECD's Public Governance Committee (PGC) to monitor the implementation of the Recommendation and report to the Council thereon no later than three years following its adoption and regularly thereafter.

5. As part of this monitoring agenda, the OECD Council also instructed the PGC to develop a set of indicators on open government to increase the availability of standardised and comparable data on inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impacts. To support the PGC's work on monitoring implementation and developing indicators, an informal Expert Group on Open Government was established in 2017. In 2019, this Group was formalised

by the PGC and became the new **OECD Working Party on Open Government** (WPOG). It is within the framework of the WPOG that the present work on measuring open government reforms and developing indicators has been developed.

6. The main purpose of this paper is to show a clear roadmap for the development of open government indicators to respond to the Council's instruction in this regard in the OG Recommendation (Figure 1.1). By restructuring and systematising the ten provisions included in the OG Recommendation, as well as relevant elements from other OECD Recommendations, as a theory of change, the paper proposes an **OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments** which aims to clarify the relationships and interplays between all the elements involved in an open government culture of governance. The Framework describes how the principles of open government can be put into practice by public administrations to produce meaningful and measurable impacts for them and for citizens¹ and stakeholders. It also aims to support countries in taking a more integrated and structured approach to the promotion of openness that includes all of the key building blocks of a truly open government (e.g. open government data, open budgeting; open contracting; civic space; citizen participation; etc.) coordinated under the umbrella of a whole-of-government Open Government Strategy (see also [GOV/PGC/OG\(2020\)4](#)). As such, the work on open government indicators will also contribute to the WPOG's sub-set of activities on civic space – the set of legal, policy, institutional and practical conditions necessary for non-state actors to access information, speak, associate, organize and participate in public life – which were brought together under the **Observatory of Civic Space** in late 2019 [[GOV/PGC/OG\(2019\)1](#)].

7. The Framework first defines the preconditions enabling open government reforms to happen (*inputs*) and the processes that support the adoption and implementation of open government principles across government and that foster their application (*processes*). It also identifies several products (*outputs*) for each open government principle that citizens and stakeholders can benefit from. It then describes the way in which these outputs can produce results such as greater awareness of rights and of open government initiatives, actual exercise of such rights and participation, and satisfaction when interacting with the government on such opportunities (*outcomes*) and how all these eventually ends up improving citizens' trust in government and the quality of public institutions and countries' overall democratic life (*impacts*).

8. The primary instrument to collect data on key elements of the Framework will be the **OECD Survey on the Governance of Open Government** (the "GOOG-Survey") which was developed for such a purpose. The initial draft GOOG-Survey was tested with 7 Member and Partner countries in 2019². OECD Surveys are commonly used to monitor the implementation of OECD Recommendations among the Member and non-Member countries having adhered to them (referred to as "Adherents"), complemented in some cases by other means (e.g. workshops, events, desk-research, existing data). This paper outlines how this data collection, led by the GOOG Survey and enriched with existing OECD data in areas such as budgeting, public procurement, public sector integrity and regulatory policy, as well as external sources, could lead both towards the design of

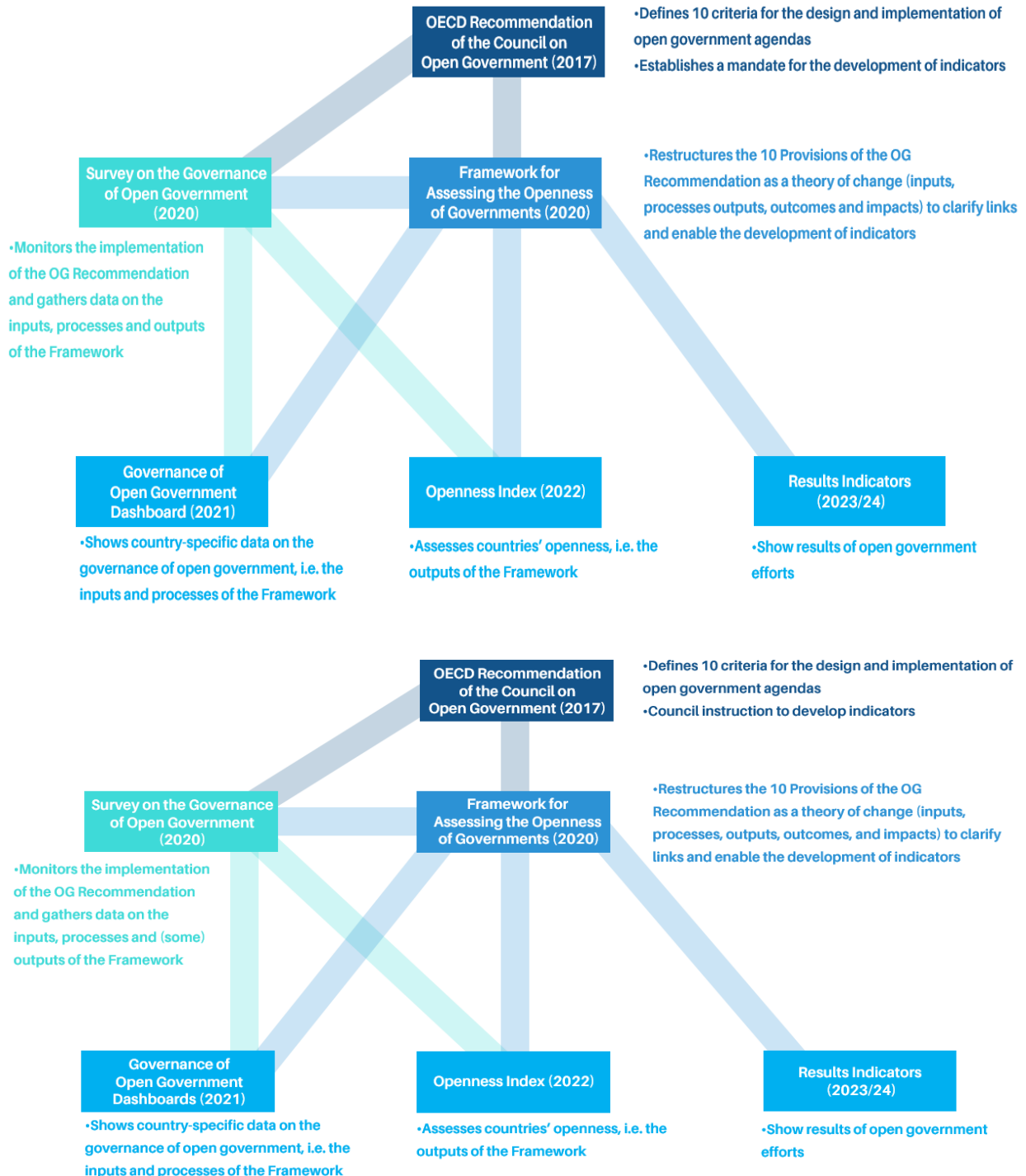
¹ In this paper, the term *citizen* is meant in the larger sense of 'an inhabitant of a particular place', which can be in reference to a village, town, city, region, state, or country depending on the context. It is not meant in the more restrictive sense of 'a legally recognised national of a state'.

² The GOOG-Survey was tested with the following countries: Brazil, Canada, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Morocco, and Tunisia.

different sets of indicators: 1) a ***Governance of Open Government Dashboard*** which shows the inputs and processes surrounding open government reforms; and, subsequently, 2) the first-ever ***OECD Openness Index*** which analyses the level of openness governments have achieved; and finally 3) ***Results Indicators*** showing the broader effects of openness on the relationship between governments and citizens and on the functioning of the state.

9. The *OECD Openness Index* will entail collecting data from several areas of government, given that open government is cross-cutting in nature. In a second step, after testing the Index for robustness, and identifying the right indicators to measure the conceptual aspects of open government detailed in this paper, the *OECD Openness Index* will allow to estimate how open government reforms contribute to specific outcomes and impacts (such as trust in government, etc.). This estimation of these effects will require the development of specific statistical models and the isolation of the effect of potential confounding factors (which are described in this paper) Figure 1.1 presents an overview of the suggested roadmap for the development of all these open government indicators.

Figure 1.1. The proposed roadmap and key elements of the process to develop open government indicators



Source: Authors' own elaboration

10. Accordingly, the paper is structured as follows:

- Section 2 starts by proposing operational dimensions of the concept of open government (i.e. a dimensions that can be a observed and measured), structured around the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation and based on the OECD definition³ as included in the OG Recommendation. Comparable measurements of countries' progress towards opening their governments, as well as measuring the impact of openness on a wider range of policy objectives, is only possible if there is a common definition of open government amongst practitioners.
- Section 3 introduces the *OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments*, which restructures the ten Provisions of the OG Recommendation into a theory of change and includes relevant elements of other OECD Council Recommendations. The framework is organised as a theory of change in order to show how the various provisions included in the OG Recommendation relate to one another (e.g. policy co-ordination can facilitate the effective implementation of legal requirements to engage stakeholders, by ensuring the cooperation between the involved institutions, dividing tasks, sharing information, etc.) and provide guidance to countries as they implement open government reforms. The section provides detailed explanations of all key building blocks of the proposed Framework (*inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impacts*, which are the "steps" of a theory of change).
- Finally, section 4 describes the proposed measurement roadmap that will enable the acquisition of a solid body of evidence on the design, implementation and evaluation of countries' open government agendas following the *OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments*. In short, the process will envisage, in a first stage, the collection via the OECD GOOG-Survey and secondary sources of data on the institutional, legal, and policy framework on open government, as well as relevant processes to mainstream a culture of open government across the government. These data will lead to an Open Government Dashboard that will focus on the governance aspects of open government reforms. In a subsequent stage, an OECD Openness Index will be compiled with the aim of showing how mainstreamed the principles of transparency, integrity, stakeholder participation and accountability are across all public administrations. The section highlights that the measurement of open government can be considered an agenda for the medium-term, as it intends to be participatory, and as such it requires building consensus between the Secretariat and the Working Party to identify key aspects that represent open government in practice (e.g. participatory budgeting, access to information, disclosure of lobbying registers). This consensus will then translate into indicators for which participating governments need to identify relevant data sources and establish the necessary mechanisms to collected and validate the data provided to the Secretariat.

³ The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government defines it as "a culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth".

2. Definitions and Key Principles: What does open government mean in practice?

11. Comparable measurements of countries' progress towards opening their governments, as well as measuring the impact of openness on a wider range of policy objectives, is only possible if there is a common definition of open government amongst practitioners (i.e. a consensus on what being *open* means in practice). Recognising that it is inherently difficult to establish a set of comparable indicators when there is no consensus on what constitutes *openness* (i.e. when can a government be considered *open*?), this section lays out a four broadly applicable dimensions of open government, taking as a basis the definition of open government proposed in the 2017 OECD OG Recommendation.

2.1. Defining open government

12. In the 1950s, when the concept of open government was first mentioned, it mainly referred to the disclosure of politically sensitive government information. The concept was, for example, used in the debates leading to the passage of the Freedom of Information Act in the United States (Yu and Robinson, 2012; OECD, 2016). In the following years, the American Congress started to also consider open-meeting laws to be under the umbrella of open government and the term increasingly became a synonym for all kinds of actions associated with governmental transparency (Yu and Robinson, 2012).

13. Following some years in which the term was rarely used, open government got new impetus in 2009 when the then President of the United States Barack Obama chose open government as the guiding principle of his Presidential mandate, stressing the importance of creating a new partnership between the executives and citizens (OECD, 2016). For instance, in the Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies of March 2009 President Obama declared that the United States' "[...] administration is committed to creating an unprecedented level of openness in Government. We will work together to ensure the public trust and establish a system of transparency, public participation, and collaboration. Openness will strengthen our democracy and promote efficiency and effectiveness in Government" (Obama, 2009)

14. An increasing number of governments and civil society organisations have joined the call for openness and a global open government movement that promotes a new relationship between government and its citizens emerged. These days, open government and its principles are key building blocks of the policy agendas of most countries and Presidents, Prime Ministers and other high-ranking public officials now commonly refer to it when talking about the solutions to address the most pressing policy challenges.

15. While there seems to be a consensus about the need to foster openness, governments – both at central / federal and at subnational level – individual public institutions, international organisations and civil society organisations have all adopted their own – sometimes conflicting – definitions of what *openness* and *being open* means. Definitions of open government vary widely, not only across governments but also within them (e.g. OECD, 2016; Longo, 2013). Open government has become associated with a broad range of government goals and functions, including public participation, public sector innovation, open data, the use of ICTs, as well as the improvement of public services and of government efficiency (Kiss, 2019; OECD, 2016; Nam, 2012).

16. The abundance of different and sometimes conflicting conceptual understandings of open government can generate wrong expectations and frustrations and complicates cross-country comparisons. Without conceptual clarity, the concept of open government runs the risk to lose focus and become hollow and blurred (Yu and Robinson, 2012). The lack of conceptual clarity opens the door for *open washing* (i.e. the use of open government related activities and discourse to create a smokescreen while pursuing closed governance and decision-making processes).

17. The 2017 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government, the first internationally recognised legal instrument in the area, conceptually defined open government as:

“a *culture of governance* that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability, and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth”.

18. As mentioned in the OECD Report on Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward (2016), the purpose of this definition is “to support the ensuing national discussion and provide a reference model, (...) which can be adapted to countries’ specific historical, legal, social and economic contexts”. The following section will elaborate on the principles that the OECD definition of open government introduces (namely, transparency, integrity, accountability, and stakeholder participation).

2.1.1. The core principles of open government: transparency, integrity, accountability, and stakeholder participation

19. The OECD’s definition refers to four open government principles that are promoted by an open government culture: transparency, integrity, accountability, and stakeholder participation. These principles are, in practice, deeply intertwined and intrinsically related (OECD, 2020). Collectively, they contribute to the *openness* of government. Conceptually, the four core principles can be defined as (see OECD, 2016):

- **Transparency** is understood as promoting the disclosure and accessibility of relevant government data and information. Fung, Graham and Weil (2007) differentiate between two generations of transparency policies: the first generation refers to the disclosure of official records to ensure access to information for the public. This generation focuses on the access to information laws, which all OECD member countries have implemented (OECD, 2011). The underlying idea is that unimpeded access to information leads to better ways for citizens to hold government accountable. The second generation of government transparency, which Fung, Graham and Weil (2007) coined, “targeted transparency”, refers to the availability of information that serves a concrete purpose, with well-defined areas to which this information shall contribute.
- **Public integrity** refers to the consistent alignment of, and adherence to, shared ethical values, principles and norms for upholding and prioritising the public interest over private interests (OECD, 2017b).
- **Accountability** refers to the governments’ responsibility and duty to inform its citizens about the decisions it makes as well as to provide an account of the activities and performance of the entire government and its public officials. In a democratic system of governance, the population is the main source of legitimacy for government officials’ mandates. Citizens have thus the right to hold the government accountable for its actions in order to uphold and reinforce the

democratic order. At the same time, it should be the underlying culture of the governments to be accountable to their citizens, with or without citizens actively demanding it.

- **Stakeholder participation** includes all of the ways in which stakeholders can be involved in the policy cycle and in service design and delivery, including through the provision of information, consultation and active engagement. Stakeholder participation refers to the idea that in order to fully reap the benefits of active interaction with their population, governments should acknowledge the benefits that all stakeholders⁴, especially citizens, civil society organisations and the private sector have to offer in providing information and in consulting - and most importantly- engaging with them. Actively engaging citizens contributes to the well-targeted use of limited state resources and better public service design and delivery, for example through consulting citizens to identify their needs. Active participation goes beyond votes and elections and recognises the capacity of citizens to co-generate policy options. For an effective approach to citizen participation, governments need to share their agendas with all relevant stakeholders and show commitment that policy proposals generated jointly will have an impact on the policy cycle. At the same time, active participation requires that citizens accept and be prepared for their increased responsibility.

20. As mentioned by the OECD (forthcoming), embedding the principles of open government and their associated practices into processes and government decision-making, however, is not simply a technical matter of having the right legislation or processes in place. Rather, it is about transforming the entire *culture of governance* so that citizens are enabled and empowered (especially those whose interests are usually underrepresented in government institutions and processes) to scrutinise their governments and to participate in making decisions that matter the most to them. This culture of governance requires governments to be receptive to their citizens' demands and change their daily operations as to include them and serve their needs.

2.1.2. Open government as a culture of governance: the search for a common definition

21. The OECD OG Recommendation defines open government as a *culture of governance*. The prevailing governance culture of a country touches upon every institution and every individual civil servant and has deep implications for the relationship between public institutions and citizens. Some authors have also associated open government with a paradigm shift of governance (e.g. Prorok and Krabina, 2011) that replaces the New Public Management approach and provides a new holistic understanding of the way the state operates.

22. In order to achieve an open government culture of governance, cultural changes in public institutions and civil society must be made. As outlined by Ingrams (2019), a deep cultural shift is needed, otherwise "open governments will continue to paradoxically co-exist alongside closed societies." Each of the principles of open government plays its role in supporting governments' move towards an open government culture of governance,

⁴ The OG Recommendation defines "stakeholders" as "any interested and/or affected party, including: individuals, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and political affiliations; and institutions and organisations, whether governmental or non-governmental, from civil society, academia, the media or the private sector".

which involves changes in individual and institutional values, beliefs, norms of conduct, and expectations, which are materialised in new policies, services and public goods, among others. A culture of governance, as such, is difficult to pin down and measure, since it is composed of tangible and non-tangible aspects, and mediated through several interrelated and superposed processes. Box 2.1 shows that the principles of open government defined in the previous section are embedded in most OECD Council Recommendations, which shows its cross-cutting nature.

Box 2.1. The inclusion of open government principles in selected OECD Council Recommendations

The principles of open government are relevant for any policy area. This cross-cutting nature of the dimensions of openness is reflected in the inclusion of relevant principles and provisions on transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation in a number of OECD Council Recommendations, in addition to the OG Recommendation. This box provides an overview of provisions on the principles of open government in selected OECD legal instruments. Annex A of this paper elaborates on these elements.

- **The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Regulatory Policy and Governance [OECD/LEGAL/0390] (2012):** Provision 2 recommends that Members “Adhere to principles of open government, including transparency and participation in the regulatory process to ensure that regulation serves the public interest and is informed by the legitimate needs of those interested in and affected by regulation. This includes providing meaningful opportunities (including online) for the public to contribute to the process of preparing draft regulatory proposals and to the quality of the supporting analysis. Governments should ensure that regulations are comprehensible and clear and that parties can easily understand their rights and obligations”.
- **The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Integrity [OECD/LEGAL/0435] (2017):** Integrity being a principle of open government, most elements of the Integrity Recommendation are of importance. In particular, Provision IV “recommends that Adherents enable effective accountability”. To this end, Adherents should “Encourage transparency and stakeholders’ engagement at all stages of the political process and policy cycle to promote accountability and the public interest, in particular through (...)” (Principle 13).
- **OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies [OECD/LEGAL/0406] (2014):** Paragraphs 1 and 2 recommend that governments develop and implement digital government strategies which “Ensure greater transparency, openness and inclusiveness of government processes and operations by (...)” that that they “Encourage engagement and participation of public, private and civil society stakeholders in policy making and public service design and delivery, through (...)”.
- **The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Budgetary Governance [OECD/LEGAL/0410] (2015):** Paragraphs 4 and 5 recommend that Adherents develop and implement budgetary governance frameworks in which Adherents should “Ensure that budget documents and data are open, transparent and accessible, through (...)” and “Provide for an inclusive, participative and realistic debate on budgetary choices, by (...)”.
- **The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life [OECD/LEGAL/0418] (2015):** Provision I (4) recommends that Adherents “Consider integration of the gender perspective in all phases of the budget cycle, as appropriate, so that transparency regarding gender-relevant resource allocation decisions is maximised.”
- **The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Water [OECD/LEGAL/0434] (2016):** Paragraph 9 of section D on “Ensuring Good Water Governance”

recommends that Adherents “Mainstream integrity and transparency practices across water policies, water institutions and water governance frameworks for greater accountability and trust in decision-making” while paragraph 10 recommends that they “Promote stakeholder engagement for informed and outcome-oriented contributions to water policy design and implementation”.

- **The OECD Recommendation of the Council on the Governance of Critical Risks [OECD/LEGAL/0405] (2014):** Provision II.3 recommends that Adherents “Engage all government actors at national and sub-national levels, to coordinate a range of stakeholders in inclusive policy making processes (...)”. In addition, Provision IV recommends that Adherents “demonstrate transparency and accountability in risk-related decision making by incorporating good governance practices and continuously learning from experience and science. In particular, they should “Ensure transparency regarding the information used to ensure risk management decisions are better accepted by stakeholders to facilitate policy implementation and limit reputational damage (...) (Provision VI.1).
- **The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement [OECD/LEGAL/0411] (2015):** The Recommendation includes provisions regarding each of the principles of open government. Provision II recommends that “Adherents ensure an adequate degree of transparency of the public procurement system in all stages of the procurement cycle” while Provision III recommends that “Adherents preserve the integrity of the public procurement system through general standards and procurement-specific safeguards”. In addition, Provision VI recommends that “Adherents foster transparent and effective stakeholder participation” and Provision XII recommends that “Adherents apply oversight and control mechanisms to support accountability throughout the public procurement cycle, including appropriate complaint and sanctions processes”.
- **The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Principles on Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying [OECD/LEGAL/0379] (2010):** The Principles stipulate that “Countries should provide a level playing field by granting all stakeholders fair and equitable access to the development and implementation of public policies” (Principle 1), that “Countries should provide an adequate degree of transparency to ensure that public officials, citizens and businesses can obtain sufficient information on lobbying activities” (Principle 5) and that “Countries should enable stakeholders – including civil society organisations, businesses, the media and the general public – to scrutinise lobbying activities” (Principle 6).
- **The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Principles for Public Governance of Public-Private Partnerships [OECD/LEGAL/0392] (2012):** Principle A1 recommends that “The political leadership should ensure public awareness of the relative costs, benefits and risks of Public-Private Partnerships and conventional procurement. Popular understanding of Public-Private Partnerships requires active consultation and engagement with stakeholders as well as involving end-users in defining the project and subsequently in monitoring service quality.”
- **The draft OECD Recommendation of the Council on Governance of Infrastructure:** The draft Recommendation includes provisions relating to effective stakeholder engagement implementing a whole of government approach to manage threats to integrity including through ensuring an adequate degree of

transparency throughout the project life-cycle and that disclosure of relevant information is timely and available to the public.

23. Open government entails a change in the government in order to transform its relationship with citizens, by letting them understand how it works and working with them to improve public policies, services and a wide range of governmental processes (e.g. procurement) aimed at serving citizens. The initial opening of the government to citizens generates a potential for incremental changes that can potentially alter the core functioning of public institutions and democracy itself. In this sense, open government produces iterative loops that blur the traditional distinctions between provider and user, representatives and electorate, by allowing citizens to co-produce policies, services, etc. This means that the government opens up to citizens by providing them with information and data as well as opportunities to co-create, and citizens feed the government with new ideas, products and services that continuously transform the government. As open government is an ambitious concept that touches upon every single aspect of governance and aims to lift the barriers between citizens and public institutions, it has been challenging to move from individual and anecdotal case studies to an international framework.

24. The OECD's definition of open government that is outlined below therefore focuses on concrete and tangible elements of this culture, which can be measured, in order to provide an approximation of the extent to which open government principles have been adopted by governments. This definition captures the transformation of the interactions between stakeholders and the government following the implementation of open government initiatives.

2.2. Operationalising the OECD definition of open government

25. Taking the OECD's definition of open government as a basis, and the four principles of transparency, accountability, integrity and participation described above, this paper proposes four tangible dimensions of an open government culture of governance. Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2 show the suggested operational dimensions of openness, both from a government and from a citizen perspective. In this definition, the term "government" refers to both elected and politically appointed officials as well as the public administration including all public institutions that form part of a country's executive branch of the state, at all levels.

26. According to this paper, a government can, hence, be considered "open" when:

- **It makes information and data publicly available so that citizens and stakeholders can use them to see, understand, and monitor its activities and decisions (principle of transparency).** The public has access to, understand and can use relevant information and data the government creates and collects (e.g. on actions, processes, decisions, etc.). This information provides the basis for informed participation in policy processes and service delivery and it can allow citizens to hold the government to account (if appropriate mechanisms exist, see below).
- **It hears the views, perspectives, and inputs from citizens and stakeholders Citizens and stakeholders can influence the activities and decisions of the government (principle of participation).** They can – equally and without discrimination – participate in and contribute ideas and evidence to government policy-making and service-delivery.

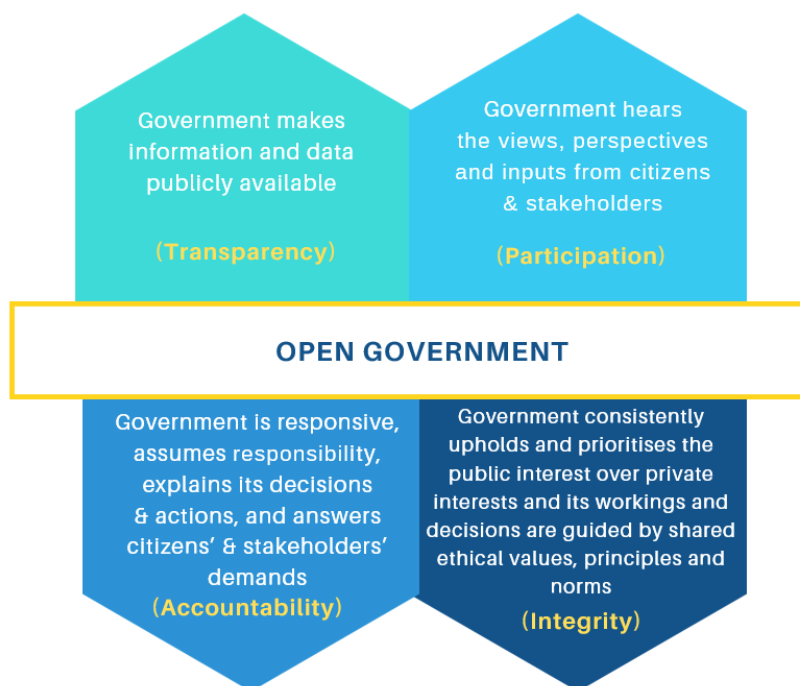
- **It is responsive, assumes responsibility, explains its decisions and actions, and answers citizens’ and stakeholders’ demands. Citizens and stakeholder can demand answers and hold the government to account (principle of accountability).**
- **It consistently upholds ethical standards and prioritises the public interest over private interests and its activities and decisions are guided by shared ethical values, principles and norms (principle of integrity).** Citizens and stakeholders can expect the government to act in an **integer manner** and government can expect citizens to do the same.

27. It is important to note that the framework that is discussed below considers that none of these dimensions by itself is sufficient for openness. It is only when the four dimensions / principles interact and build on each other, that a government can achieve openness.

28. The four dimensions further build on those that make up the basis of democracy, including respect for fundamental rights and freedoms (such as freedom of expression/speech, assembly, association; the right to privacy; press freedom; an open internet; and an enabling environment for Civil Society Organisations to flourish), that are covered by the work of the [OECD Observatory of Civic Space](#), as well as free elections, and the rule of law.

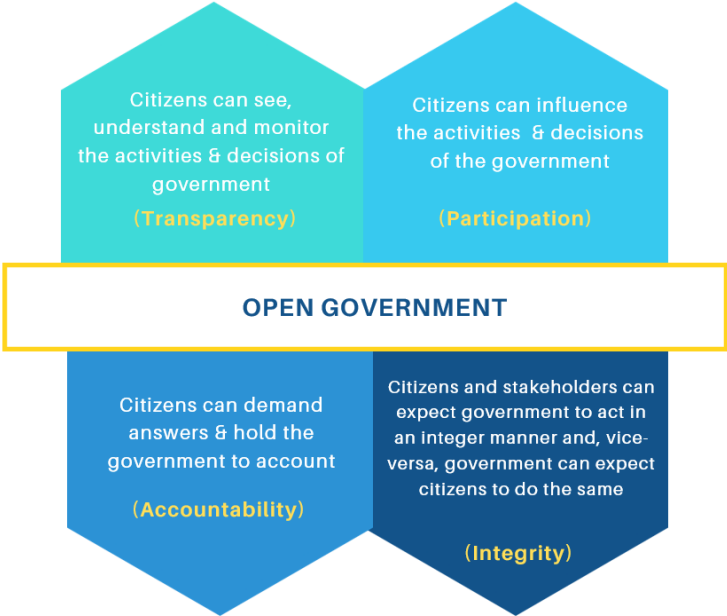
29. The remainder of this paper should be read with these conceptual considerations in mind.

Figure 2.1. The operational dimensions of the OECD definition of open government: openness from a government perspective



Source: Authors’ own elaboration.

Figure 2.2. The operational dimensions of the OECD definition of open government: openness from a citizen perspective



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

3. From the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government to the OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments

30. This section starts by presenting the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government [[OECD/LEGAL/0438](#)] and its 10 Provisions. It then suggests an *OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments* which organises and systematises the Provisions included in the OG Recommendation and key principles of other relevant OECD Recommendations as a theory of change. The Framework makes it possible to map assumptions on how open government initiatives impact their beneficiaries (i.e. citizens and stakeholders). The section presents the different elements that are considered as part of the Framework and how they relate to the OG Recommendation and, when relevant, to other Recommendations, starting with the assumed impacts, followed by outcomes, etc.

3.1. The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government

31. The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government, the first and only international legal instrument in the area, is the result of decades of country experience on open government and its principles. It was adopted by the OECD Council in December 2017 and includes 10 provisions which establish criteria to help adhering countries to design and implement successful open government agendas (Box 3.1). The OG Recommendation is novel in different ways:

- It recognises the need for an integrated and holistic approach to the promotion of the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability, and stakeholders' participation and provides an umbrella for initiatives that are led by different institutions and have diverse constituencies (e.g. access to information, open data, lobbying transparency, participatory budgeting; etc.).
- It combines elements of the governance of an open government agenda (Provisions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10) with the practical implementation of open government principles (Provisions 7, 8 and 9).
- It recognises the multi-faceted nature of the concept of open government and its benefits both for improving the functioning of the state, as well as for the delivery of policies and services in all sectors.
- It acknowledges that open government is a shared responsibility of all branches and levels of government and envisions the move towards the concept of open state (Provision 10).
- It recognises the need for establishing a clear, actionable, evidence-based, internationally recognised and comparable framework for open government, as well as its related process, output, outcome and impact indicators.

Box 3.1. The 10 Provisions of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government

RECOMMENDS that Adherents develop, adopt and implement open government strategies and initiatives that promote the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in designing and delivering public policies and services, in an open and inclusive manner. To this end, Adherents should:

1. take measures, in all branches and at all levels of the government, to develop and implement open government strategies and initiatives in collaboration with stakeholders and to foster commitment from politicians, members of parliaments, senior public managers and public officials, to ensure successful implementation and prevent or overcome obstacles related to resistance to change;
2. ensure the existence and implementation of the necessary open government legal and regulatory framework, including through the provision of supporting documents such as guidelines and manuals, while establishing adequate oversight mechanisms to ensure compliance;
3. ensure the successful operationalisation and take-up of open government strategies and initiatives by: (i) Providing public officials with the mandate to design and implement successful open government strategies and initiatives, as well as the adequate human, financial, and technical resources, while promoting a supportive organisational culture; (ii) Promoting open government literacy in the administration, at all levels of government, and among stakeholders.
4. coordinate, through the necessary institutional mechanisms, open government strategies and initiatives - horizontally and vertically - across all levels of government to ensure that they are aligned with and contribute to all relevant socio-economic objectives;
5. develop and implement monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms for open government strategies and initiatives by: (i) Identifying institutional actors to be in charge of collecting and disseminating up-to-date and reliable information and data in an open format; (ii) Developing comparable indicators to measure processes, outputs, outcomes, and impact in collaboration with stakeholders; and (iii) Fostering a culture of monitoring, evaluation and learning among public officials by increasing their capacity to regularly conduct exercises for these purposes in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.
6. actively communicate on open government strategies and initiatives, as well as on their outputs, outcomes and impacts, in order to ensure that they are well-known within and outside government, to favour their uptake, as well as to stimulate stakeholder buy-in;
7. proactively make available clear, complete, timely, reliable and relevant public sector data and information that is free of cost, available in an open and non-proprietary machine-readable format, easy to find, understand, use and reuse, and disseminated through a multi-channel approach, to be prioritised in consultation with stakeholders;
8. grant all stakeholders equal and fair opportunities to be informed and consulted and actively engage them in all phases of the policy-cycle and service design and delivery. This should be done with adequate time and at minimal cost, while avoiding duplication to minimise consultation fatigue. Further, specific efforts should be dedicated to reaching out

to the most relevant, vulnerable, underrepresented, or marginalised groups in society, while avoiding undue influence and policy capture;

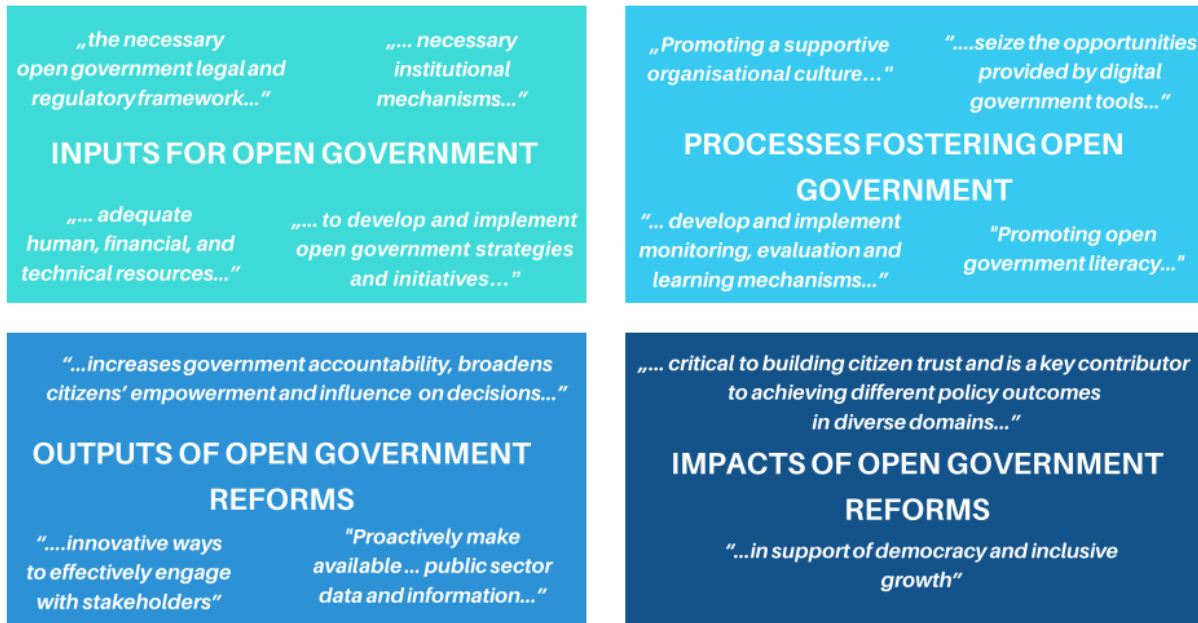
9. promote innovative ways to effectively engage with stakeholders to source ideas and co-create solutions and seize the opportunities provided by digital government tools, including through the use of open government data, to support the achievement of the objectives of open government strategies and initiatives;

10. while recognising the roles, prerogatives, and overall independence of all concerned parties and according to their existing legal and institutional frameworks, explore the potential of moving from the concept of open government toward that of open state.

Source: OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017) [[OECD/LEGAL/0438](#)].

32. The 10 Provisions of the OG Recommendation capture all necessary elements for the development of a culture of open government and for its mainstreaming across government. In order to see the relationship between the Provisions, they need to be re-organised in a way that lends itself to measurement. In addition, some of the Provisions need to be expanded and detailed in order to be assessed and measured. For example, the concept of civic space – anchored in provisions 2, 8 and 9 in particular - has been expanded from a traditional open government focus on access to information and participation, to cover areas such as civic freedoms, press freedom, and the CSO enabling environment, as enablers of open government reforms. In order to clarify which elements can contribute to a change towards an open government culture of governance, this paper suggests clustering key dimensions of the Provisions in a different way, as shown in Figure 3.1. In a second step, this approach will enable the design of a Framework that is based on a theory of change and which shows relationships and interplays between Provisions.

Figure 3.1. Reorganising the Provisions of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government



Source: Authors’ own elaboration.

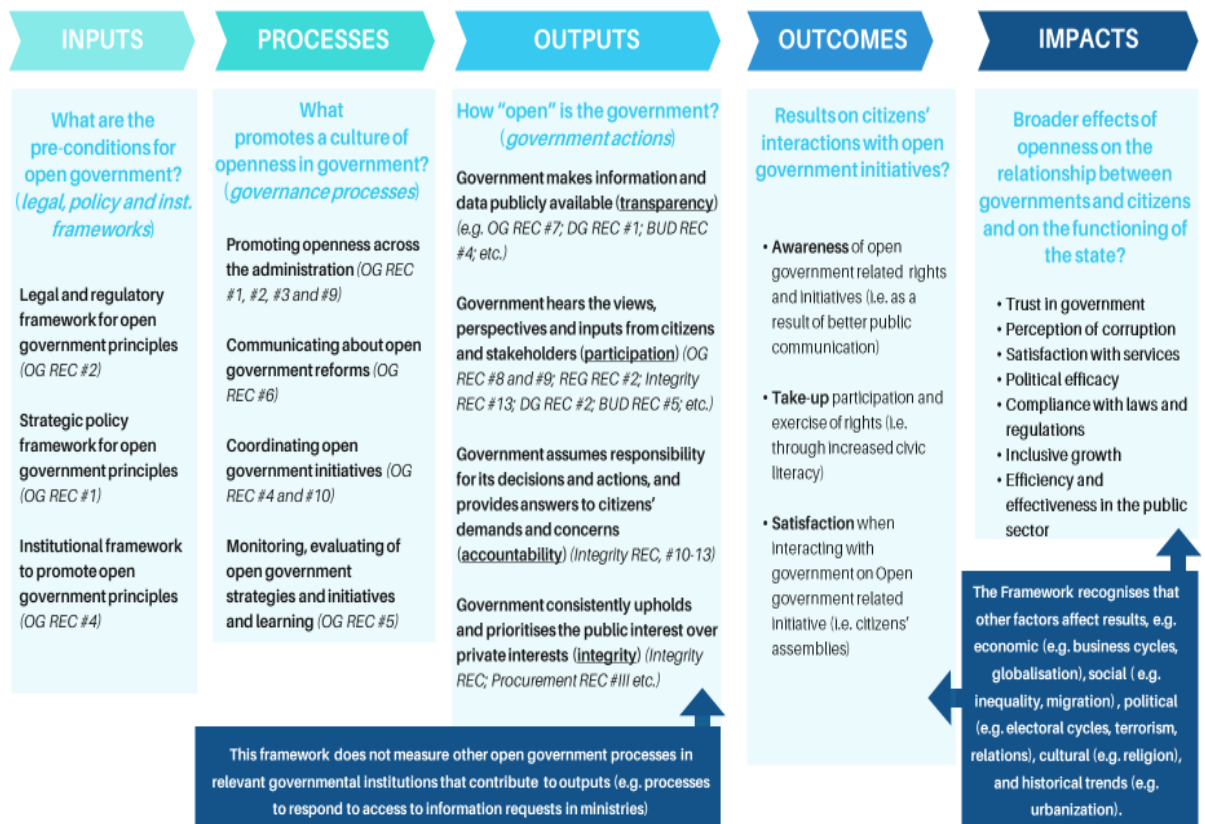
3.2. The OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments

33. Re-organising the 10 Provision of the OG Recommendation, and following the operation dimensions of the OECD definition of open government, *the OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments* presented in Figure 3.2 is modelled as a theory of change to underline the interrelations between the various aspects that are involved in promoting an open government culture of governance. A theory of change is actionable and measurable, and allows to test the assumptions that the OG Recommendation suggests (e.g. that better coordination leads to more openness in government, that openness leads to more trust in government).

34. The elements of the Framework are not new, and were agreed to by member countries upon the adoption of the OG Recommendation. The Framework systematises and models the Provisions in a way that shows how the governance of open government can eventually contribute to increased levels of openness and how openness, in turn, affects a range of policy goals (e.g. in terms of trust and satisfaction).

35. Reflecting the cross-cutting nature and relevance of the principles of open government, the outputs suggested in the Framework also include references to Principles and Provisions relating to open government in other relevant OECD Council Recommendations.

Figure 3.2. The suggested OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments



Source: Authors' own elaboration

36. The following sections of this paper present each element of the Framework, starting with the final *impacts* of open government reforms, and going backwards by looking at their *outcomes*, *outputs*, *processes*, and finally *inputs*. This is done in order to better highlight the causal links that connect them.

3.3. Impacts: Open government for what?

37. The OECD Framework for Measuring the Openness of Government assumes that open government can have instrumental benefits and serve as a tool to achieve a range of broader policy objectives, as also recognised by the OG Recommendation (Box 3.2).

Box 3.2. The impact of open government reforms, as identified in the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government

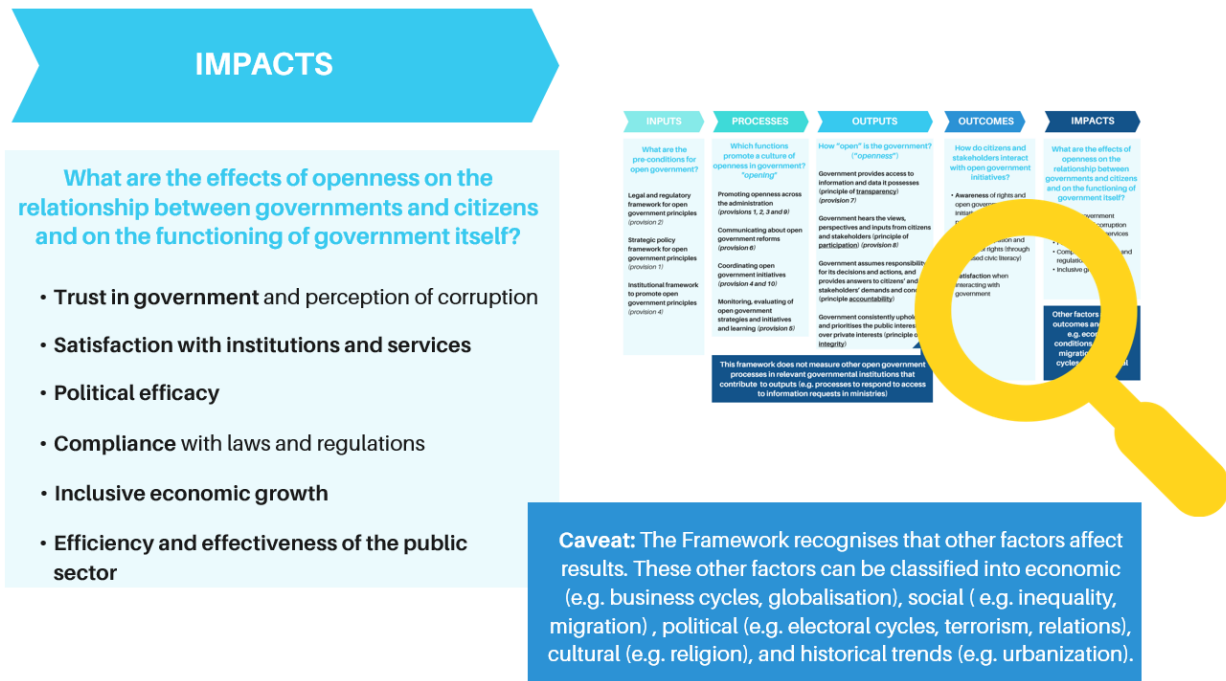
“RECOGNISING that open government is critical to building citizen trust and is a key contributor to achieving different policy outcomes in diverse domains including: public sector integrity and anticorruption, public sector modernisation, civic freedom, digital government, public procurement, public sector innovation, public financial management

and human resource management, as well as all major socio-economic targets within the framework of the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals”

Source: OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017) [OECD/LEGAL/0438].

38. The Framework aims to show how the processes of opening up government affect, one the one hand, the relationship between governments and citizens / stakeholders and, one the other hand, the functioning of the administration itself. Recognising that objectives vary widely from one country to another, through its research, the OECD (2016) has identified the most relevant measurable impact areas that increased levels of government openness can have.

Figure 3.3. Impacts of open government reforms considered in the OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

39. Through the adoption a culture of open government, in which citizens are able to understand the functioning of their government and scrutinise the use of public resources and the performance of public institutions, as well as contribute to decision-making and hold their government to account-, citizens are expected to experience:

- **Higher levels of trust in government:** Institutional trust is the basis on which the legitimacy of governments is built, and legitimacy is in turn required for governments to be able to rule without resorting to force (e.g. through decreased levels of social unrest). Trust in government implies that citizens believe that their government acts for the public interest. The OECD has developed a survey on Drivers of trust in government which will allow to indicate to what extent openness, integrity and participation in decision-making contribute to enhance trust.

- **Decreased levels of perception of corruption:** Perception of corruption is related to actual incidence of corruption, but also to the capacity of citizens to access information on the activities of government and to analyse it (Melgar, Rossi and Smith, 2010). Perception of corruption has a strong relationship with support for democracy (Carnache and Allison, 2008).
- **Increased levels of political efficacy:** Political efficacy refers to citizen's beliefs that they have a say in what their government does. High levels of political efficacy relate to high levels of participation in the political life of a country (e.g. voting), and therefore influences the legitimacy of public institutions and representatives. This indicator is included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG indicator 16.7.2 as Tier II (which entails that there is an internationally-agreed methodology).
- **Increased levels of satisfaction with institutions and services:** Satisfaction with institutions and services (such as education and health care) are relevant performance measures for governments, as it shapes political attitudes and behaviours towards policies. People who are dissatisfied with public services are more likely to complain (either individually or collectively). This indicator is included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG indicator 16.6.2 as Tier II (which entails that there is an internationally-agreed methodology).
- **Increased levels of compliance with government rules and regulations:** Compliance with rules and regulations affects the level of revenues that the government raises (which depend largely on taxes) to deliver goods and services to the population, and the allocation of public resources. In contexts of low compliance, the government would typically allocate more resources to policing (e.g. police, tax collection) than to delivering goods and services (e.g. education, schools), and would collect a lower level of revenues than its potential (if every tax-liable individual and organisation paid the corresponding taxes).
- **Increased efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector:** Efficiency is defined as achieving a maximum output from a given level of resources used to carry out an activity. Achieving higher efficiency requires modifying the production process in order to "waste" the least amount of resources. In the case of the public sector, efficiency would entail delivering more and better public services (such as education and health care) and infrastructure with less public spending by reducing waste due to wrong choices or misallocation of funds. Effectiveness in the public sector is defined as the capacity of public institutions to successfully design and deliver policies and services that have a concrete positive impact on peoples' lives.
- **Inclusive growth:** Economic growth depends on a multiplicity of factors, one of them being government spending. OECD research has found that certain types of spending (public investment and education) boost potential growth. The same research has shown that other types of spending, such as social benefits, contribute to reduce inequality (Fournier and Johansson, 2016). Inclusive growth can be considered an indirect impact of open government, which would be achieved through increased levels of compliance with rules and regulations and increased efficiency, which would allow the government to collect more tax-revenues and spend them better.

40. The framework aims to understand how open government reforms that promote the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability, and stakeholder participation contribute to achieve the impacts mentioned above. There are several interplays between

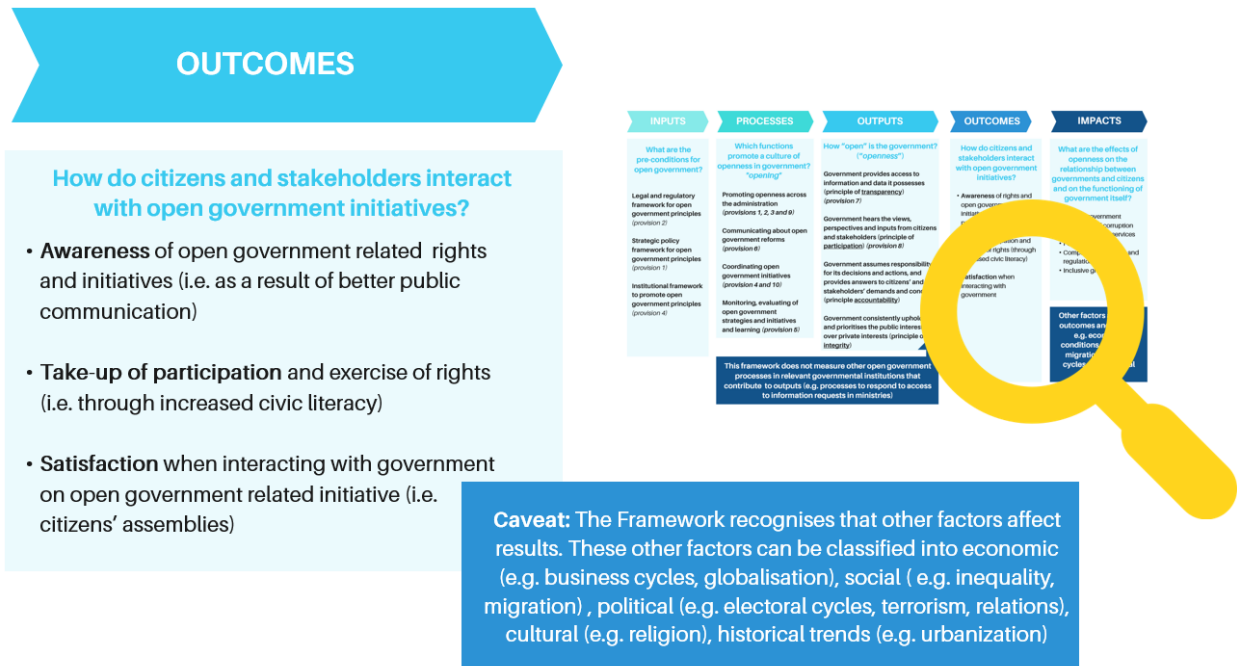
all the aspects involved in good governance, for example, the success of open government reforms depends on the correct functioning of public institutions, which is enhanced by the mainstreaming of an open government culture across the government. Therefore, the effect of open government on trust in government, satisfaction with services, among others cannot be fully distinguished from the effect of the other aspects that make up good governance. However, this work will seek to differentiate the new aspects that a culture of open government brings from those that are the basis of the correct functioning of public institutions (e.g. fair elections).

41. Furthermore, the impacts considered in the framework are affected by a number of other factors that can contribute or keep the government from achieving them. These include economic conditions (which, for example, affect the size of government revenues and their allocation), electoral cycles (which can affect the structure of government institutions and priorities), terrorism, migration, and other international factors, etc. Therefore, the effect of open government should be analysed, to the extent possible, isolated from these conditions, while recognising that it is not fully feasible to do so.

3.4. Outcomes: awareness, use, satisfaction and trust in open government

42. The outcomes of the OECD Framework for Measuring the Openness of Government consider how citizens benefit from and take advantage of the opportunities provided by open government (i.e. the outputs discussed in section 3.5). Open government reforms are intended to have an impact on citizens by allowing them to participate in relevant decisions and by improving the transparency and the accountability of government institutions. In order to achieve desirable impacts, citizens must be aware of their rights, of the opportunities provided to use them, and of the obligations of their government in terms of transparency, participation and accountability, trust the actual transformative power of open government initiatives (e.g. that their participation actually influences decision making), and be satisfied with the experience (e.g. of participation).

Figure 3.4. Outcomes of open government reforms considered by the OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Awareness of rights, opportunities and government obligations regarding transparency, participation and accountability

43. Adopting a culture of open government can only transform the relationship between citizens and stakeholders and their government if citizens and stakeholders are aware of their rights (e.g. to submit access to information requests), of concrete opportunities brought by open government policies and initiatives (e.g. to participate in specific decision-making processes), as well as of government obligations (e.g. to respond to access to information requests within a certain period).

44. Recent studies have found that the limited number of access to information requests submitted in some countries after the adoption of a law is related to the lack of awareness (Holsen and Pasquier, 2011). In contexts of increased awareness, there may still be inequalities among the population. For example, a 2011 survey in Queensland (Australia) found out that people were likely to have heard of access to information rights if they were older, had higher earnings, spoke English at home and did not identify as having indigenous origins (Office of the Information Commissioner, 2011). Similarly, a recent evaluation of the European Commission's efforts to engage stakeholders and citizens throughout the policy-cycle found out that that more had to be done in terms of outreach to widen the scope of potential participants (European Court of Auditors, 2019).

45. Only when the majority of citizens, regardless of their background, are aware of the possibilities of accessing government information, of influencing policy-making and of holding their government to account, as well as their rights and government responsibilities in those areas, the government becomes more transparent, participatory and accountable. For this reason, governments should communicate proactively about these rights through

various channels to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of their rights, of opportunities to use them and of government obligations.

Use of opportunities to access government information and data, to participate in decision-making and/or to hold the government to account

46. Open government is about fostering the political participation of stakeholders, which strengthens the legitimacy of government institutions. Therefore, they can only have an effect on citizens when the majority – regardless of their background – are interested in learning about how their government functions, in interacting with public institutions, and in participating in decision-making.

47. While some aspects of transparency, participation, and accountability relate to the daily needs of citizens and stakeholders, others have more to do with the functioning of public institutions. Academic literature has emphasised that the actual use of rights to submit access to information requests, analyse government data and to participate in policy-making, among others, is linked to individual socioeconomic characteristics (which largely condition their possibilities of interpreting and extracting value of information and voicing their opinions), and interests and priorities.

48. Citizens and stakeholders seek information and participate in different ways, as well as focus on different topics. For example, a study of 1 million access to information requests in Mexico showed that the predominance of topics varied by region, reflecting the concerns of citizens and stakeholders in the region, e.g. the regions with oil and natural gas production had a larger proportion of requests on such topics (Berliner, Bagozzi and Rubin, 2018).

49. In many cases, citizens and stakeholders do not make use of the opportunities to access government information or participate on their own, but rather rely on others (e.g. infomediaries) to do so. For example, a civil society organization may create a visualization or a report to make public information or open government data more straightforward to interpret. A citizen may not actually use this tool, but read a newspaper article analyzing the data. Therefore, an individual can make a direct or indirect use of such opportunities.

50. Governments should invest in civic literacy to help citizens understand how to exercise their rights on their own, by learning how to find and interpret government records, by articulating their opinion or identifying and supporting actors (such as CSOs) who represent them, by learning to raise complaints whenever their requests are not addressed by the government. Governments should also ensure that the opportunities to make use of rights and to participate are accessible to everyone, by using various channels and methods of communication and engagement.

Satisfaction with the interaction with government when submitting access to information requests, accessing government information and data and participating in decision-making

51. Satisfaction may not necessarily be linked to achieving the result that individual citizens and stakeholders initially expected, but rather with being able to understand how a specific result was achieved. Citizens and stakeholders expect the government to be a “fair” mediator between private interests (but also competing public interests, e.g. economic growth and sustainability, transparency and security) to reach a decision that is based on the public interest. As such, citizens and stakeholders would need their government to be transparent in its decisions, by explaining how and why a specific interest was prioritized

over another. If citizens perceive that decisions are fair and that there is no favoritism, they can be satisfied with the results even when they do not agree with them (e.g. Prokopy, 2005; Traber, 2013). The satisfaction of citizens with the interaction with government when seeking information about their entitlements, submitting access to information requests, participating in consultations, etc. affects their behavior towards their government.

52. Therefore, governments should ensure that, whenever they receive requests from citizens and stakeholders or engage them in decision-making, they provide prompt and clear explanations of how (and why) the final decisions were reached in order to ensure that they understand government decisions. For example, only 33% of those who submitted responses to consultations from the European Commission, expressed that the Commission takes into account the opinion of citizens. This is accompanied by a 38% satisfaction level with the synopsis report (where the Commission explains how the contributions were considered in the final decision). Most of the respondents indicated that they were not able to find the results of the consultations in such reports (European Court of Auditors, 2019).

3.5. Outputs: A new relationship between citizens, stakeholders, and governments

53. As mentioned above, openness has a value in itself: it allows for anyone to take part in a democracy “regardless of their abilities, where they were born, who are their parents, and whom they voted for in the last elections” (Rubinstein, 2017). At the same time, openness can contribute to a number of outcome and impact areas, as identified in sections 3.3 and 3.4. All the aspects considered in the operational dimensions of the OECD definition of open government (e.g. proactive disclosure of budgeting information) are included as *outputs* in this Framework, since they are the concrete products that the government produces for its citizens, for their use and benefit, and that ultimately have an impact on them. Such *outputs* can only be possible if there is a coordinated effort across government to ensure their continuous supply (rather than being one-off), which entails substantial efforts to promote the open government agenda (*processes*, see below), embed it in laws and regulations, etc. (*inputs*, see below).

54. The suggested outputs of the framework are structured along the lines of the operational dimensions of the OECD definition of open government that are discussed above. In line with them, a government can be considered “open” when its actions, decisions and processes are transparent, accountable, participatory, and integer. An open government, hence⁵:

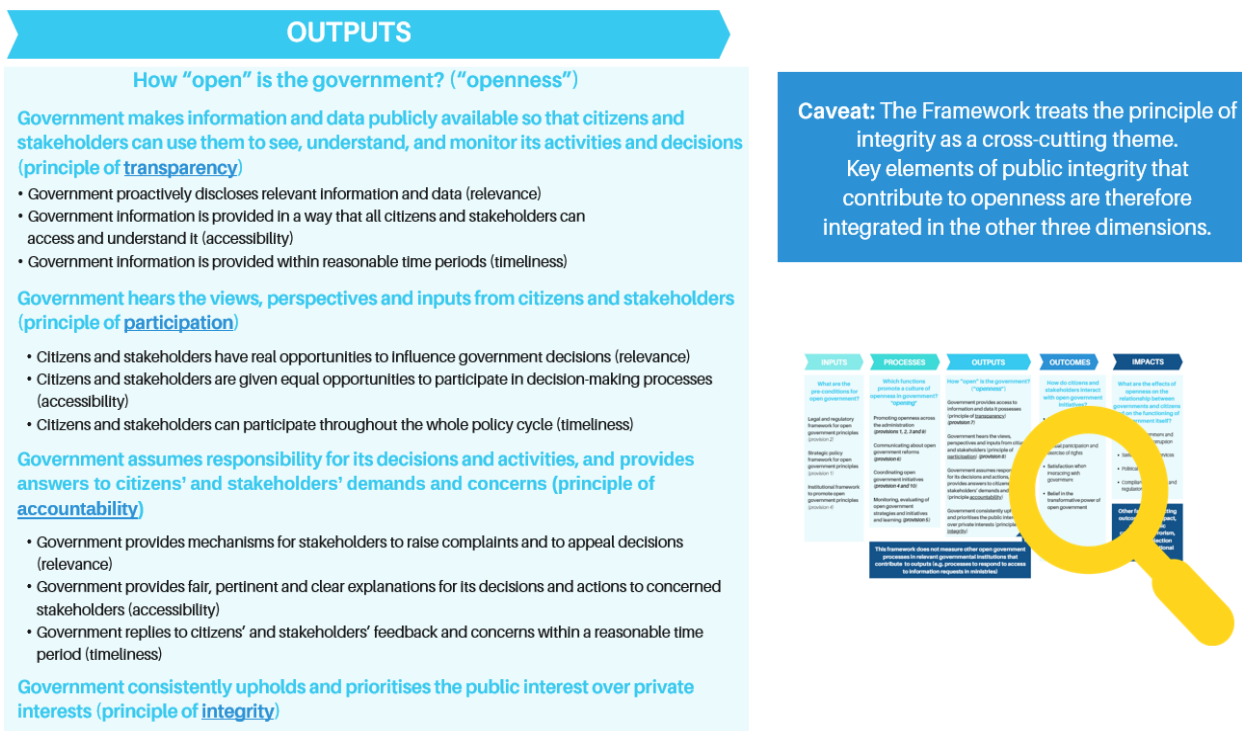
- Makes information and data publicly available so that citizens and stakeholders can use them to see, understand, and monitor its activities and decisions (principle of transparency).
- Hears the views, perspectives, and inputs from citizens and stakeholders. Citizens and stakeholders can influence the activities and decisions of the government (principle of citizen and stakeholders’ participation).

⁵ A distinction is to be made between the efforts to improve the functioning of the government by applying the principles of open government to internal policies, services and processes (e.g. the budgeting cycle, public procurement calls for tenders) and the efforts to design and deliver services incorporating open government principles (e.g. in tourism, health). The first generation of open government initiatives focused on the first subset, while the second generation of initiatives focuses on the second subset.

- Is responsive, assumes responsibility, explains its decisions and actions, and answers citizens’ and stakeholders’ demands (principle of accountability).
- Consistently upholds ethical standards and prioritises the public interest over private interests and its activities and decisions are guided by shared ethical values, principles and norms (principle of integrity).

55. As mentioned above, these aspects build on those that make up the basis of a democracy, including respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, transparency of elections and of any other formal participation mechanisms (e.g. referendums), the accountability mechanisms between elected officials and their citizens and between public institutions. The *outputs* covered in this framework are complementary to, but do not replace, traditional democratic mechanisms.

Figure 3.5. Outputs of open government reforms considered in the OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments



Source: Authors’ own elaboration.

56. The transformative value that governments attribute to the principles of open government is also reflected by their inclusion in an important number of other OECD Council Recommendations, in addition to the OG Recommendation (see 6. Annex A for an overview of Provisions on open government principles included in other relevant OECD Council Recommendations). In order to show the relevance of the dimensions of openness for different policy areas and different functions of government, the *outputs* of the *OECD Framework for Measuring the Openness of Governments* make reference to other OECD legal instruments. As explained in section 4 below, data collection for an eventual *OECD Openness Index* will be enriched through the regular monitoring of these other OECD Council Recommendations.

57. The following sections elaborate on the four dimensions of openness, clustering each of them around three sub-dimensions, namely 1) relevance (i.e. the degree to which it matters to citizens and stakeholders); 2) accessibility (i.e. the degree to which it is easy for citizens and stakeholders, regardless of their background, to access) and 3) timeliness (i.e. the degree to which it is provided at a time in which it is useful for citizens and stakeholders). It should be noted that the list of sub-dimensions presented is not exhaustive and that they only consider elements which are linked to the responsibilities of the executive branch of the state⁶. Other key dimensions of quality, such as inclusiveness, integration and collaboration are expected to be captured within the selected sub-dimensions (e.g. collaboration can be included in relevance, as it helps ensuring that outputs matter to citizens, inclusiveness can be part of accessibility), especially as it regards measurement (the more quality dimensions are included, the more difficult to define distinct indicators for each of them). In addition, as the concept of integrity mostly focusses on the government's own working mechanisms, rather than on fostering the interactions between citizens and the government, the *OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments* treats integrity as a cross-cutting theme that should underpin the entire open government agenda. Key elements of public integrity that contribute to openness are therefore integrated in the other three dimensions (transparency, accountability, and participation). For example, the publication of asset declarations and of information regarding lobbying are included in the transparency outputs.

3.5.1. The government makes information and data publicly available so that citizens and stakeholders can use them to see, understand, and monitor its activities and decisions (principle of transparency)

58. Transparency means that citizens and stakeholder can see, understand and monitor the activities and decisions of government. It means that the wider public has access to, understands and can use relevant information and data the government creates and collects about its processes, plans, decisions, actions and performance. This information and data provides the basis for informed participation in policy processes and in service delivery and it can allow citizens to hold the government to account (if appropriate mechanisms exist, see below).

59. Provision 7 of the OG Recommendation provides that countries should be proactive about the disclosure of data and information and establishes a set of criteria that governments should respect to foster transparency.

⁶ In this definition, "government" includes all public institutions that form part of a country's executive branch, including ministries, bodies, agencies, secretariats, regulators, councils etc.

Box 3.3. Provision 7 of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government

“Proactively make available clear, complete, timely, reliable and relevant public sector data and information that is free of cost, available in an open and non-proprietary machine-readable format, easy to find, understand, use and reuse, and disseminated through a multi-channel approach, to be prioritised in consultation with stakeholders”

Source: OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017) [[OECD/LEGAL/0438](#)].

60. Along the same lines, a number of OECD Council Recommendations highlight the strategic importance of transparency and recommend that governments publish information and data in their respective policy areas.

61. The following section discusses the different sub-dimensions of the principle of transparency that are considered in the *OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments*.

Government proactively discloses relevant information and data (relevance)

62. An open government proactively discloses complete and comprehensive information on those actions, processes, services, etc. that matter the most to citizens. A truly transparent government incorporates the principle of transparency in its daily working and treats information and data as a public good that is routinely disclosed. Although in order to be able to participate and to hold the government to account, citizens and stakeholders need access to all kinds of information and data, there is a core set that an open government makes proactively available:

- Information (and data) that help individual citizens make decisions related to their own lives, such as on services offered by government (e.g. What are citizens rights and entitlements in terms of services? How do public services perform? How are they funded?)
- Information (and data) on how public funds are being used, (e.g. How does government collect and spend public funds?), including on public contracting / procurement (e.g. How are contracts awarded? On the basis of which criteria? Who was awarded a specific contract?)
- Information (and data) that allow citizens to understand how their government functions, such as the policy, legal and regulatory framework of the country (e.g. laws, decrees, regulations, ministerial policies, etc.), disclosure of who influences policy-making and what are their interests (e.g. lobbying registry, asset declarations, conflict of interest declarations, etc.), information on law- and regulation-making processes (e.g. How are laws and regulations made? By whom? How are policies and strategies designed? By whom? How can citizens and stakeholders participate in the process?), information about the functioning of the government, its internal processes and its actions (e.g. Who is responsible for which actions and decisions? Who and how to contact the people in charge of a given decision?.)
- Information (and data) that citizens and stakeholders have already expressed interest in, such as the most frequently requested records through access to information requests and high-value datasets that support entrepreneurs.

- Information (and data) that citizens can use to do business.

63. These information should be self-explanatory (e.g. including relevant definitions, clear visualisations, detailing all steps of a process) and/or provide reference to relevant documentation (e.g. laws) for citizens to be able to understand how decisions are taken and on what grounds. In the case that information is published in an open data format, it should be accompanied with metadata and codebooks; procurement data should include the evaluation of the various providers, etc.

Information and data is provided in a way that all citizens and stakeholders can access and understand it (accessibility)

64. An open government makes information (and data) available in ways that everybody can easily find, access, understand, use and reuse it. This implies tapping into the potential of modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) to facilitate the provision of information to citizens, while continuing to rely on traditional, non-digital information channels. Analogue tools can include notice boards, brochures, among others. Online channels can include single whole-of-government portals (e.g. an Open Government Portal) and / or individual public institutions websites. An open government also publishes high-impact data sets in an open and non-proprietary machine-readable and/or text-searchable format to allow for use and reuse.

65. Since not all kinds of information can and nor will be published proactively, an open government establishes procedures for citizens to request such information. In an ideal case, access to information requests can be made through a single government portal, as well as through a variety of analogue channels.

66. The government should further make dedicated efforts to inform disadvantaged groups of citizens and stakeholders. These efforts may include translating publicly-available information into the various official languages spoken in the country, the use of plain and readily comprehensible language, designing targeted communication channels and vehicles, etc. Accessibility also means that all data and information should be provided free of charge.

Information and data is provided within reasonable time periods (timeliness)

67. An open government provides information and data to citizens within such a timeframe that they can extract value from them. This entail responding to access to information requests within the time stipulated by the law, as well as regularly updating information put on websites, brochures etc.

68. For open datasets, their update should occur periodically, so that the date of data release and the reference period of the data are not too far apart, and that citizens can follow relevant government processes at the time they are able to influence them.

3.5.2. The government hears the views, perspectives and inputs from citizens and stakeholders (principle of citizen and stakeholders' participation)

69. Openness means that citizens and stakeholders can participate in and influence the activities and decisions of the government and that they can – safely, equally and without discrimination – contribute views, opinions, ideas and evidence to the decisions, policies and services that affect their lives. Citizen and stakeholder participation, hence, goes

beyond formal democratic participation through elections, political parties, intermediate institutions, etc.

70. The OG Recommendation includes an important number of Provisions relating to stakeholder participation. First and foremost, it defines stakeholder participation as “all the ways in which citizens and stakeholders can be involved in the policy cycle and in service design and delivery (...)” and explains the three different levels of participation (i.e. information, consultation and engagement). In its preamble, the OG Recommendation further highlights the importance of participation to increase government accountability, broader citizens’ empowerment and influence on decisions, build civic capacity, improve the evidence base for policy-making, reduce implementation costs, and tap wider networks for innovation in policy-making and service delivery. Provisions 8 and 9 of the OG Recommendation invite governments to implement and foster innovative ways of citizen and stakeholder participation with equal and fair opportunities of engagement in all phases of the policy-cycle and service design and delivery (Box 3.4.).

Box 3.4. Stakeholder participation as a key building block of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government

Preamble: “*RECOGNISING that stakeholder participation increases government accountability, broadens citizens’ empowerment and influence on decisions, builds civic capacity, improves the evidence base for policy-making, reduces implementation costs, and taps wider networks for innovation in policy-making and service delivery;*”

Definition of Stakeholder Participation: “*all the ways in which stakeholders can be involved in the policy cycle and in service design and delivery, including (...)*”

Definition of Stakeholders: “*any interested and/or affected party, including: individuals, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and political affiliations; and institutions and organisations, whether governmental or non-governmental, from civil society, academia, the media or the private sector;*”

Provision 1: “*take measures, in all branches and at all levels of the government, to develop and implement open government strategies and initiatives in collaboration with stakeholders (...)*”

Provision 5(ii): “*Developing comparable indicators to measure processes, outputs, outcomes, and impact in collaboration with stakeholders*”

Provision 7: “*(...) disseminated through a multi-channel approach, to be prioritised in consultation with stakeholders;*”

Provision 8: “*grant all stakeholders equal and fair opportunities to be informed and consulted and actively engage them in all phases of the policy-cycle and service design and delivery. This should be done with adequate time and at minimal cost, while avoiding duplication to minimise consultation fatigue. Further, specific efforts should be dedicated to reaching out to the most relevant, vulnerable, underrepresented, or marginalised groups in society, while avoiding undue influence and policy capture*”

Provision 9: “*promote innovative ways to effectively engage with stakeholders to source ideas and co-create solutions and seize the opportunities provided by digital government*”

tools, including through the use of open government data, to support the achievement of the objectives of open government strategies and initiatives”

Source: OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017) [[OECD/LEGAL/0438](#)].

71. As shown above, participation is of cross-cutting relevance and Provisions/Principles to foster it have been included in many other OECD Council Recommendations. The different dimensions of the principle of participation that are considered in the *OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments* are outlined below.

Citizens and stakeholders have real opportunities to influence government decisions (relevance)

72. An open government involves citizens and stakeholders in those policy processes and decisions that matter the most to them and enables them to make contributions that influence the outcome, including by protecting and promoting civic space. The policy cycle in a specific policy area may also involve the use of different policy instruments/tools by public institutions, including government programmes and strategies, primary laws and regulations. Citizens and stakeholders should have the opportunity to contribute to their design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

73. An open government does not only inform and consult citizens and stakeholders in also provides opportunities for more active engagement (as defined by the OECD Recommendation), thereby sharing responsibilities with citizens and stakeholders and giving them the opportunity and the necessary resources (e.g. information, data and digital tools) to collaborate. Public institutions can use tools of co-creation, co-implementation and co-evaluation to increase the level of participation and move from informing and consulting with citizens and stakeholders to an actual collaboration.

74. No matter which tools is used and no matter which stage of the policy cycle, stakeholder participation needs to happen when there is still sufficient time for inputs and comments to be taken on board. When designing and implementing participatory processes, public institutions need to always keep the factor time in mind. An insufficient amount of time may result in rushed participatory process that only tick the box and fulfil the obligation without any actual impact on the resulting policy.

Citizens and stakeholders are given equal opportunities to participate in decision-making processes (accessibility)

75. An open government provides fair and equal participation opportunities and makes dedicated efforts to reach out to and hear the voices of the most relevant, vulnerable, underrepresented, or marginalised groups in society. A recurrent criticism of participatory processes is that they only benefit a small part of the population. Openness means that public institutions make efforts to ensure that everybody has the chance to participate and be heard in their participatory process. In order for this to happen, government institutions apply and use specific tools and methods that ensure the inclusiveness of their policy processes (e.g. by sending invitations in different languages; by organising on-site meetings during certain times of the day, etc.).

76. The use of multiple channels and forms of stakeholder involvement can contribute to maximising the reach of the decision-making process. An open government makes

strategic use of digital tools to complement and enrich analogue tools to engage citizens and stakeholders in the policy cycle (e.g. through mobile applications, hackathons, etc.).

77. Additionally, an open government taps into the full potential of innovative forms of deliberative, collaborative, and participatory decision making. Participating in decision-making requires certain skills and knowledge that not all citizens and stakeholders possess, hence, the government should make all possible efforts to break the barriers that keep some groups of citizens out of participatory processes.

Citizens and stakeholders can participate throughout the policy cycle (timeliness)

78. An open government involves citizens and stakeholders at those moments of the policy cycle when participation is most opportune and most warranted. For many policy cycles, this may mean involving citizens and stakeholders at all stages, including in:

- Agenda-setting (i.e. the process of defining policy priorities). Jointly designing policy priorities can allow governments to benefit from citizens' knowledge and experience and to adequately reflect their preferences and priorities (OECD, 2016).
- Policy making and planning (i.e. the process by which governments translate their political vision into programmes and actions). Participatory policy design can allow government to include a wide collection of opinions, ideas, needs and expectations from across society.
- Policy implementation (i.e. the process of implementation of a government of policy). Participation in policy implementation can foster innovation, better risk management and improve the quality of service and policy delivery. Participation in policy implementation can provide the information governments need to adjust policies and make sure they correspond to citizens' needs.
- Monitoring of policy implementation (i.e. the process of overseeing the results a policy is delivering as it is being implemented);
- Policy evaluation (i.e. the process of assessing the impact of a policy).
- Design and delivery of public service (e.g. co-design, co-production, co-delivery, etc.).

79. An open government also ensures that all citizens are able to prepare for participating in participatory processes, no matter at which stage of the policy cycle. Without enough time for all interested stakeholders to read the background documents, conduct research, discuss with others and reflect on the matter under discussion, there is a risk that those who have the resources and prior knowledge will monopolise the decision-making process and that their voices will be over-represented in the final outcome (policy capture, etc.).

3.5.3. The government is responsive, assumes responsibility for its decisions and actions and provides clear answers to citizens' and stakeholders' demands and concerns (principle of accountability)⁷

80. Accountability means that citizens and stakeholder can demand answers from the government and hold it to account. An accountable government embeds rules, laws and mechanisms that ensure that citizens and stakeholders are provided with explanations about government decisions and actions, and establishes feedback loops that contribute to continuously improve government performance. Hence, while allowing citizens and stakeholders to access government data and information and participate in decision-making, the government establishes a bidirectional communication with them.

81. The following section discusses the different sub-dimensions of the principle of accountability that are considered in the OECD Framework.

Government provides mechanisms for stakeholders to raise complaints and to appeal decisions (relevance)

82. The efforts to enhance transparency and participation need to be accompanied with mechanisms for citizens and stakeholders to report irregularities, and with feedback loops between the government and the civil society in order for them to work together towards the improvement of policies and services, as well as the use of public resources. An open government, therefore, facilitates the effective functioning of civil society as a means of monitoring its own actions and detecting where they are deviating from citizens' expectations in order to take remedial action.

83. An open government provides mechanisms for raising complaints regarding violations of civic freedoms, for example, inaccurate replies to access to information requests (e.g. if wrong documents were provided), and to appeal decisions on denied requests. Citizens and stakeholders must proactively be informed of these possibilities (e.g. every time they submit an access to information request), in order for them to use them whenever necessary. The rules and procedures for making use of such mechanisms should be transparent and straightforward (e.g. grounds on which an appeal can be submitted, which institution is responsible for their resolution).

84. When the government opens its records to citizens and stakeholders, it is possible for them to detect issues and require clarifications from the involved institutions. The collaboration with civil society can help the government improve its performance and strengthen public integrity. An open government provides citizens with mechanisms to report irregularities found when scrutinising government data and/or information, both regarding the data themselves (e.g. missing periods of time, missing data) and as a result of their analysis (e.g. outliers which may indicate misconduct or misallocations). Ideally, the government platforms containing open data would include contact information and/or

⁷ Accountability has been conceptualised in multiple ways, all of them relevant to open government. Most of the definitions create typologies on who is accountable (e.g. political accountability, bureaucratic accountability, etc.), to whom (e.g. upward accountability, downward accountability, horizontal accountability), the subject (e.g. performance accountability) and type of accountability (e.g. answerability, responsiveness, enforceability). Some of the aspects involved in accountability are covered by the principles of transparency and participation, while others are beyond the scope of this framework (e.g. horizontal accountability, enforceability).

forms to submit such complaints, and printed material should include contact details for citizens to raise their complaints.

85. Stakeholders who participate in decision-making processes (e.g. who provide input for a policy or regulation) may identify barriers to their participation (e.g. not enough time allowed for consultations) or irregularities in the process (e.g. overrepresentation of a specific interest). These issues defeat the purposes of ensuring that the plurality of voices and interests are represented and pondered when taking relevant policy, regulatory or other decisions. Hence, an open government proactively seeks feedback from stakeholders about their participation, in order to ensure that all voices are equally represented. For example, in participation portals, all individuals or organisations who submitted comments could get an e-mail requesting their feedback on the process.

Government provides fair, pertinent and clear explanations for its decisions and actions to concerned stakeholders (accessibility)

86. Whenever the government receives access to information requests, appeals to denied access to information requests, reports on irregularities found when analysing government data, or engages stakeholders in decision-making, it creates an obligation to provide clear answers about its decisions and actions to stakeholders who express their interest. These answers must be provided in easy-to-understand language so that they can be understood by everyone, and the explanations should be based on pre-established and known criteria (e.g. by the law) whenever possible.

87. An open government therefore provides clear explanations on why access to information requests or appeals are denied, based on legally established reasons. While general guidance on reasons why access can be denied (e.g. violation of individual privacy), these should be elaborated on when replying to individual requests (e.g. “these records cannot be provided because they disclose credit card information of concerned individuals”) in order to be understood by all stakeholders. The answers should be provided in the language of the individual or organisation who submitted the request and through their preferred channel.

88. Similarly, for all complaints regarding missing data in open datasets, clear explanations should be provided. These should ideally be grounded on pre-established data quality frameworks so that stakeholders who need to access them understand the reasons why the data are missing, and when (or if) they are going to be released.

89. When implementing a participatory practice, an open government provides feedback to stakeholders on how their comments and suggestions were included in the final decisions. Ideally, a report explaining how each relevant input (e.g. impact analyses, cost-benefit analyses, stakeholders’ views) was pondered would be made publicly available so that anyone can understand how the decision was made. Citizens and stakeholders who provided inputs for such decisions should be able to see how their contributions affected the final decision.

90. Beyond providing explanations for its decisions, an open government also provides an account of its actions. Whenever stakeholders identify an irregularity (e.g. an outlier when analysing procurement data) and report it, the concerned institutions should provide clear explanations, and explain what corrective actions will be taken, if appropriate. Ideally, the detected issue and the remedial actions should be made public.

Government replies to citizens' and stakeholders' feedback and concerns within a reasonable time period (timeliness)

91. An open government fulfils its obligation to provide answers to stakeholders who have provided input for a decision, reported an irregularity or raised a complaint or submitted an appeal within a reasonable time period. Whenever such period is not regulated by law, the government should communicate with stakeholders to indicate the period within which they can expect an answer, and should abide by such timeframe. Timely answers contribute to create a trusting relationship between citizens and the government, as well as enable feedback loops that contribute to improve government performance and enhance public integrity.

3.5.4. The government consistently upholds and prioritises the public interest over private interests and its activities and decisions are guided by shared ethical values, principles and norms (principle of integrity).

92. Citizens and stakeholders can expect government to act in an integer manner and government decisions and actions are designed to benefit the whole of society.

93. Public integrity is a multi-faceted concept. Integrity in the public sector should underpin the entire open government agenda. As the concept of integrity mostly focusses on the government's own working mechanisms, rather than on fostering the interactions between citizens and the government, the OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Government treats the open government principle of integrity as a cross-cutting theme. Key elements of public integrity that contribute to openness are therefore integrated in the other three dimensions. For example, the legal framework for open government (*inputs*) include legislation on whistle-blower protection while the publication of asset declaration and lobbying transparency are included in the transparency *outputs*. In addition, public integrity and reduced levels of corruption are treated as impacts of openness.

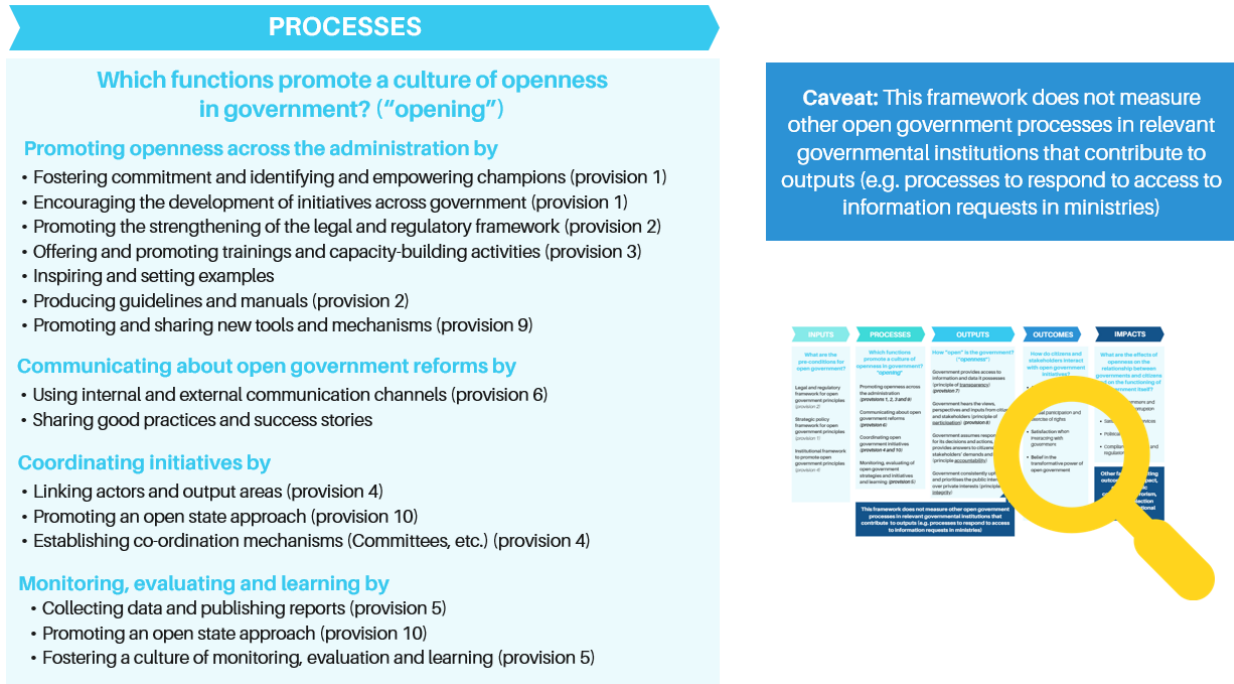
94. Additionally, in the context of open government, the principle of integrity has two facets, one referring to the functioning of public institutions, and the other referring to how the government engages with citizens. Regarding the first one, a culture of openness is one where public employees can discuss public integrity concerns in their organisations and there are clear rules for reporting violations of integrity standards (Principle 9 of the Recommendation on Public Integrity). Regarding the engagement between government and citizens, integrity entails avoiding policy capture by narrow interest groups and encouraging a civil society that oversees the activities of the government (Principle 13 of the Recommendation on Public Integrity).

3.6. Processes enabling governments to become more open

95. In order to become more open, governments need to establish processes that transform inputs (e.g. laws and policies) into outputs (i.e. openness). Recognising that countries are at different stages of their open government agendas and that there are different ways for governments to pursue openness, the *OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments* focuses on selected key processes that should be led by any government that aims to promote a coherent and co-ordinated approach to fostering a culture of openness across the whole-of-government. These processes reflect the Provisions of the OG Recommendation which provides clear indications as to processes that are recommended for any government to pursue (see Figure 3.6). Each process will eventually

be transformed into indicators that will be included in the Governance of Open Government Dashboards (see section 4).

Figure 3.6. Processes promoting an open government culture of governance considered in the OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments



Source: Authors’ own elaboration.

96. This approach assumes that a relatively restricted number of central government institutions (e.g. the Open Government Office and other relevant institutions with whole-of-government co-ordination responsibilities for the principles of open government) and oversight mechanisms, are responsible for spreading the open government culture (e.g. by sharing best practices, providing guidance) across government, and for monitoring and/or enforcing its uptake in individual government institutions (e.g. ministries). Whereas numerous processes contribute to the four output areas as listed below and whereas fostering openness ultimately requires the contributions of all public institutions, the framework takes a functional approach and focuses on central processes that are led by the main co-ordination offices in charge of the open government agenda. The framework assumes that these central institutions responsible for promoting open government and overseeing the implementation of related policies (e.g. on participation) have (either a soft or hard) influence on the institutions that have to implement them (e.g. the open government office can advocate for ministries to adopt a participatory approach to policy-making). This framework does not follow the processes and mechanisms that each institution incorporates (or must incorporate) in order to implement such policies and to comply with the laws related to open government (e.g. on access to information). Hence, while clearly recognising that responsibilities are usually shared between different institutions, this framework does not aim to measure all open government processes in relevant governmental institutions that may contribute to outputs (e.g. monitoring and

evaluation initiatives of stakeholder engagement in regulatory processes led by a line ministry, etc.).

3.6.1. Co-ordinating open government initiatives

Linking actors and output areas

97. As stipulated by Provision 4 of the OG Recommendation, governments should “coordinate, through the necessary institutional mechanisms, open government strategies and initiatives - horizontally and vertically - across all levels of government to ensure that they are aligned with and contribute to all relevant socio-economic objectives.” The outputs mentioned above touch upon the very functioning of every public institution and have a profound impact on the way they run their operation and interact with each other.

98. Evidence collected through the OECD Open Government Reviews shows that initiatives that promote the different output areas (i.e. the principles of transparency, citizen and stakeholder participation and accountability) are implemented by all public institutions. However, in many cases, these initiatives are not linked to each other and do not pursue a common approach that aims to foster the openness of government (i.e. an open government approach). By facilitating dialogue between institutions and with stakeholders, the central / federal co-ordination offices can ensure that the government’s agendas to foster transparency, participation and accountability are linked to each other and pursue common goals, thereby ensuring policy coherence across government.

Promoting an open state approach

99. Provision 10 of the OG Recommendation reads as follows: “while recognising the roles, prerogatives, and overall independence of all concerned parties and according to their existing legal and institutional frameworks, explore the potential of moving from the concept of open government toward that of open state”.

100. In order to be truly effective, an open government approach needs to be embedded in a wider open state approach. For the time being, the proposed OECD Framework for Measuring the Openness of Government focuses on elements that are under the responsibility of the executive branch of the state. However, in order to facilitate a holistic and integrated approach to openness, the co-ordination offices can reach out to the other branches of the state and to all levels of government to involve them in the government’s agenda and to support them in the design and implementation of their own policies and practices that contribute to the openness of the state. This can, for instance, be done through the organisation of joint activities or by involving them in the OGP Action Plan process.

Establishing co-ordination mechanisms

101. As part of its efforts to strengthen whole-of-government co-ordination on open government and on its principles, the central / federal co-ordination offices can create dedicated “institutional mechanisms”, as stipulated by Provision 4 of the OG Recommendation. These mechanisms may include open government steering committees that bring together relevant government institutions and stakeholders as well as networks of open government contact points in public entities and in civil society.

102. While many countries already have committees that co-ordinate their OGP Action Plans in place, the pursuit of openness, as described above, requires more far-reaching and inclusive co-ordination mechanisms that bring together all relevant institutions and

stakeholders that contribute to the implementation of initiatives that promote the principles of open government. In many countries, this also involves co-ordination with existing bodies and committees that are in charge of agendas that are of relevance for the promotion of transparency, citizen and stakeholder participation and accountability (e.g. a National Integrity Roundtable; an Access to Information Committee; etc.).

3.6.2. Promoting a culture of openness across the administration

Fostering commitment and identifying and empowering champions

103. Provision 1 of the OG Recommendation highlights the importance “to take measures (...) to foster commitment from politicians, members of parliaments, senior public managers and public officials, to ensure successful implementation and prevent or overcome obstacles related to resistance to change”. While this is of course the responsibility of all government institutions, the central / federal co-ordination offices can play a key role in bringing the open government agenda to the attention of the most senior leadership of the country, including by organising high-visibility events and by gathering data and evidence on the transformative power of open government initiatives and communicating about it (see below).

Encouraging the development of open government strategies and initiatives across government

104. In order for a government to become open, all public institutions should “develop and implement open government strategies and initiatives in collaboration with stakeholders”, as stipulated in provision 1 of the OG Recommendation. Through their co-ordination role and thanks to the experience gathered through the OGP process (where applicable), the central / federal co-ordination offices can encourage other government institutions to develop open government initiatives and that contribute to the wider whole-of-government agenda (and, where available, the Central / Federal Open Government Strategy).

Promoting the strengthening of the legal and regulatory framework

105. As stipulated by Provision 2 of the OG Recommendation, governments need to “ensure the existence and implementation of the necessary open government legal and regulatory framework”. While the adoption of laws and regulations that promote open government (e.g. inclusion of mandatory requirements for participation in sectorial laws; provisions stipulating the proactive disclosure in administrative regulations; etc.) are the responsibility of a variety of institutions, including of course the legislature, the co-ordination offices should have the clearest understanding of achievements, challenges and bottlenecks of a government’s open government agenda. From their privileged position, the co-ordination offices can lobby for or even initiate legal and regulatory changes that contribute to the promotion of a culture of openness across the country and that may ultimately lead to better outcomes and impacts.

Offering and promoting trainings and capacity-building activities

106. Provision 3 of the OG Recommendation provides that countries should promote “open government literacy in the administration”. This kind of literacy can for example result from trainings and capacity-building events for civil servants on relevant open government topics. In some cases, the central / federal co-ordination offices may

themselves be in a position to offer relevant trainings and events for public servants and / or stakeholders (e.g. on methodologies for co-creating policy documents). They may also collaborate with relevant institutions (e.g. national civil service school; training institutes; etc.) to promote relevant trainings for civil servants on ways to provide more and better information and data, foster the interactions with citizens and stakeholders and respond to their needs and demands.

Inspiring and setting examples

107. Some central / federal co-ordination offices have substantive responsibilities over key areas of open government (e.g. open government data, access to information) or are situated in a government ministry that has key substantive responsibilities (e.g. in the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Public Administration). Evidence from countries' implementation of OGP Action Plans shows that co-ordination offices themselves are sometimes responsible for a number of commitment. Through the implementation of their own substantive responsibilities in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, the offices can inspire and set examples for other public institutions.

Producing and promoting supporting documents such as guidelines and manuals

108. Promoting open government as an integrated and holistic approach to policymaking is relatively new. In order to make public institutions and civil servants aware of the benefits of enhanced interactions with citizens and stakeholders, it is therefore of primordial importance to disseminate and mainstream the concept. Provision 2 of the OG Recommendation provides that countries should “ensure the existence and implementation of the necessary open government legal and regulatory framework, *including through the provision of supporting documents such as guidelines and manuals.*”

109. In order to raise awareness and create buy-in, the co-ordinating offices can elaborate their own guidelines and manuals on open government and its principles (e.g. Guides on Open Government for Civil Servants, etc.). In addition, the co-ordination offices should promote and disseminate guidelines and manuals elaborated by other relevant actors across government and civil society (e.g. Participation Manual elaborated by the Ministry of Interior; etc.).

3.6.3. Communicating about open government reforms

Using internal and external channels to communicate about reforms

110. Provision 6 of the OG Recommendation provides that countries should “actively communicate on open government strategies and initiatives, as well as on their outputs, outcomes and impacts, in order to ensure that they are well-known within and outside government, to favour their uptake, as well as to stimulate stakeholder buy-in”. As part of their role, the central / federal co-ordination offices can use different internal and external communication channels to raise awareness and communicate progress and challenges in the government's agenda to foster transparency, citizen and stakeholder participation and accountability to a wide audience. Communication can also be used to stimulate buy-in.

Sharing good practices and experiences

111. The co-ordinating offices of the open government agenda are often in a privileged position in that they are exposed to a large number of good national and international practices and experiences through their participation in national and international

conferences and events on open government and its principles. As stipulated by Provision 9 of the OG Recommendation, they can therefore “promote innovative ways to effectively engage with stakeholders”, including by sharing experiences and good practices through their networks and by organising events and conferences on new developments.

3.6.4. Monitoring, evaluating and learning

Developing and implementing monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms

112. Provision 5 of the OG Recommendation provides that countries should “develop and implement monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms for open government strategies and initiatives” including by “fostering a culture of monitoring, evaluation and learning among public officials by increasing their capacity to regularly conduct exercises for these purposes in collaboration with relevant stakeholders”. While all countries that participate in the OGP, monitor the implementation of the commitments included in their Action Plans, few countries monitor – or even evaluate – their broader open government agenda, including all relevant initiatives that contribute to openness. The co-ordination offices can promote the creation of overarching monitoring and evaluation frameworks that go beyond the OGP process. They can further support other public institutions in the development of their own frameworks that are linked to the central / federal M&E framework.

Developing indicators, collecting data and publishing performance evaluations and reports

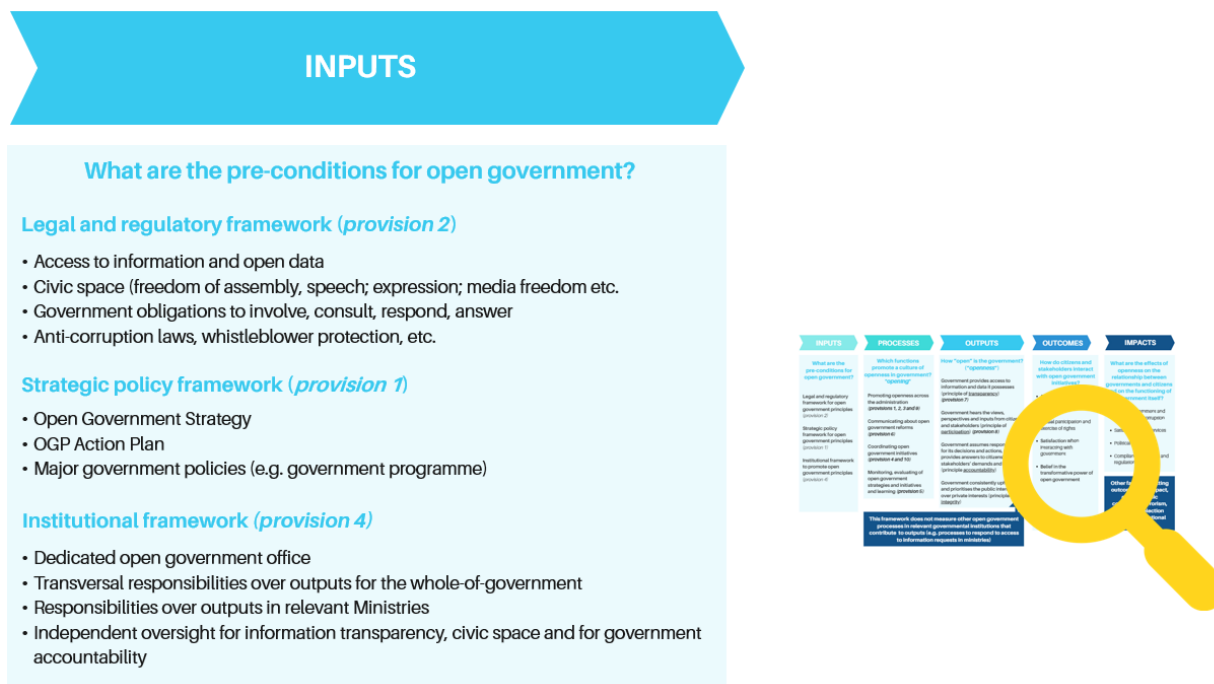
113. For the time being, most countries do not collect data on the implementation of their wider open government agenda. As mentioned above, countries usually only monitor and gather data on the implementation of their OGP Action Plans which includes a number of targeted commitments which contribute to the outputs (i.e. openness) but do not capture the full open government agenda of a country. Provision 5 of the OG Recommendation provides that countries should identify “institutional actors to be in charge of collecting and disseminating up-to-date and reliable information and data in an open format” and develop “comparable indicators to measure processes, outputs, outcomes, and impact in collaboration with stakeholders”. Gathering data on the provision of information, the interaction with citizens and stakeholders and the way government responds to their requests can lead to a better understanding of challenges and, ultimately, better policymaking.

3.7. Inputs: Preconditions for mainstreaming a culture of open government

114. In order to implement open government reforms, governments must have an “enabling environment” comprised of laws, policies, and an institutional setting with clearly assigned responsibilities in place. The main input for an open government culture is the “enabling environment”, which comprises the legal framework of the country containing fundamental democratic rights (such as freedom of expression, association and assembly), as well as laws that expand on them and set the preconditions for governments to put open government principles into practice (e.g. access to information laws, etc.). The policy framework on open government (e.g. Government Programme, OGP Action Plan, Open Government Strategy, Integrity Strategy, etc.) is also part of the enabling environment. Finally, the institutional setting, defined here as all the responsibilities related to the oversight of the aforementioned laws and policies, as well as concrete responsibilities

related to the promotion of an open government culture across government (e.g. concrete responsibilities over the implementation of the dimensions of openness), and specific implementation responsibilities in relevant government institutions (e.g. ministries) are considered as inputs. This section details the inputs that are considered in the framework, i.e. the pre-conditions for open government.

Figure 3.7. Inputs enabling open government reforms that are considered in the OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments



Source: Authors’ own elaboration.

3.7.1. A legal framework supporting open government reforms

115. The legal framework of a country sets out the rules and determines rights and obligations for citizens, stakeholders and the government. The legal instruments for sanctioning such rules, rights and obligations vary depending on the legal tradition of the country (e.g. common law, civil law). Nevertheless, in order to guarantee the sustainability of an open government culture over time, all commitments should be embedded in the law, and supported by regulations.

116. The legal framework underpinning open government consists of the fundamental rights that constitute the core of modern democracies, namely freedom of expression, of assembly and of association. These are usually accompanied by laws and regulations that ensure their correct application, including clear definitions of who is entitled to such right, of any constraints/restrictions (e.g. terms such as “hate speech” or “disruption of public order” should be narrowly defined in order to prevent their arbitrary application), and of government’s intervention (e.g. which bodies are responsible for intervening to guarantee the application of the right, and what is their role).

117. Additionally, laws that expand on such fundamental rights and put open government principles into practice are also considered a precondition from the perspective

of this framework. These include laws on access to information, which usually contain provisions of proactive and reactive disclosure of information (and sometimes on open data), allowing citizens to access government records. Other laws include requirements for governments to involve and consult citizens, such as through public councils, public meetings, public forums and any other forms for requesting citizen's input on laws, regulation and any other form of decision-making.

118. All of these laws must be explicit on who is entitled to such right, what are the constraints (e.g. in which cases can information not be disclosed), detail the requirements for officials to explain denials (e.g. to respond to citizen's initiatives) and include the possibility of appealing such decisions. The laws or their regulation should specify which public institutions are covered, the timeframes for providing a response (e.g. to access to information requests, to citizens' petitions) and detail calculation of costs (e.g. for information requests. The concrete responsibilities for oversight and implementation should also be clarified. The laws (or their regulations and guidelines) on requirements to consult citizens should specify in which cases, for how long, at what stages of the process, and the basis for selecting participants.

119. Promoting integrity in decision-making requires the sanctioning of specific laws. Whistle-blower protection laws are necessary to encourage and protect public employees who report wrongdoings in their workplace. The law should include specific provisions, such as anonymity/confidentiality of the whistle-blower's identity, a clear delineation of the coverage of the law, among others. Conflicts of interests and asset declarations are also relevant to ensure that public officials are working for the public interest rather than for private gains. The laws should define the scope of who is required to submit such declarations, about the disclosure of such declarations, among other relevant aspects. Finally, laws on lobbying are important to ensure that the practices to influence decision-making are controlled. These laws should include the creation of a public lobbying register, the disclosure of lobbying activities and the meetings of public officials with lobbyists, etc.

120. All of these legal provisions, laws and associated regulations constitute the backbone of open government as they provide the basis for open government strategies and initiatives, and guarantee their sustainability over time through the creation of public bodies, the allocation of responsibilities and resources, among others. They can be accompanied by specific and sectorial laws (e.g. on participatory budgeting, on participation in environmental policy, on asset disclosure, etc.) in order to reinforce their concrete application.

3.7.2. Policy framework

121. The principles of open government can be embedded in a variety of policies, which provide guidance to the government for the medium or long term. Nevertheless, it is recommended for countries to design a specific Central / Federal Open Government Strategy, including a vision and clear goals and objectives and priorities for the whole-of-government, and providing a strategic implementation framework for open government reforms (see [GOV/PGC/OG\(2020\)4](#)).

122. In all countries the principles of open government (transparency, participation and responsiveness/accountability) are embedded in other major strategies, such as the government programme, the national development strategy, the modernization strategy, the anti-corruption and/or integrity strategy, the digital government strategy, etc., as these tackle relevant governance aspects, that are of high concern for citizens, and which require reforms of the public sector.

123. Some countries use their OGP Action Plan as their major policy document on open government. However, often these include a series of commitments that are not necessarily bound together by a strategic framework. In some cases, the Action Plans are skewed towards one principle, which may not necessarily speak to the core of open government as described in this framework (e.g. focus on efficiency through digitalization). Furthermore, some of the commitments contribute only marginally to embed the principles of open government in the public administration because they are narrow in scope, they are one-off, they are to be implemented by a single local government, etc.

124. The major policy or policies on open government should include objectives that are measurable, achievable and relevant, have a defined timeframe, and include a monitoring framework with performance indicators. At the same time, at least some of the objectives must be ambitious, in the sense tackling a concrete problem that matters to citizens by bringing about a fundamental change in the public administration (e.g. increase transparency in the management of natural resources). The policies should include clear monitoring responsibilities from the government side, as well as create or rely on monitoring mechanisms with civil society.

125. In order to be implementable, the major strategy or strategies on open government should detail the necessary steps to achieve the objectives, through one or several (but linked) initiatives or projects (e.g. the objective of increasing transparency in the management of natural resources can entail modifying access to information laws to include public private partnerships and private companies that exploit assets that belong to the state, adopting EITI standards, publishing data in a machine-readable format, among others, and each of these be an initiative on its own given that they entail significant effort) with specific deadlines and responsibilities.

3.7.3. Institutional setting

126. In order to effectively implement public sector reforms and open government initiatives, there should be clear responsibilities for ensuring a coordinated and consistent approach across the government, as well as implementation responsibilities within relevant institutions, and independent oversight. The OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments does not take a normative approach on how these responsibilities should be allocated nor to which bodies, but rather focuses on a functional approach.

127. Evidence shows that it can be beneficial to have an office responsible for open government, that has access to high-level policy-makers (e.g. ministers) that advocates for the implementation of open government reforms and initiatives, and secures their commitment to do so, and whose main purpose is to ensure that the culture of open government is embedded in the all relevant institutions (i.e. that the principles of open government are followed in the daily operations of institutions, such as ministries). For example, some countries have an open government office in the Centre of Government.

128. Additionally, there should be transversal responsibilities for ensuring that similar standards and policies are applied across government regarding the application of the laws and regulations related to open government, as well as those aspects that are not necessarily regulated by law (e.g. informal participation in decision-making).

129. Each relevant government institution should allocate the responsibilities over access to information and participation (in its various forms) to ensure that the laws, policies and standards are translated into concrete practices. For example, an access to

information office would be responsible for handling access to information requests and for proactive disclosure of data and information.

130. An independent oversight function should exist with the purpose of guaranteeing that citizens' freedom of expression, of assembly and association, as well as right to access to information, and all forms of participation guaranteed by law are respected. The responsible institution should be allowed to scrutinise the government to detect irregularities and enforce corrections. In some countries, these responsibilities are assigned to an Ombudsman institution.

3.7.4. Exclusions

131. This framework does not consider the material resources (e.g. staff, financial resources) devoted to open government. This is because all government institutions are responsible for embedding the principles of open government in their daily operations. As shown in the Box 2.1, transparency, integrity, accountability, and stakeholder participation should be put into practice in budgeting, public procurement, etc. Hence, quantifying the human resources dedicated to open government is difficult to capture, as most public employees have a role to play in their implementation. Similarly, capturing the financial resources dedicated to open government would prove difficult to distinguish.

4. From the OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments to the development of indicators: Enabling an empirical analysis of open government reforms

132. The purpose of this paper and of the *OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments* is to provide guidance to countries to understand if and how open government reforms have contributed to improve the relationship between stakeholders and their government, as well as improve the functioning of the government itself. This work also intends to provide countries with a monitoring framework to track their progress in opening their governments over time and identify areas of improvement. In order to do so, the measurement of the *OECD Framework for Measuring the Openness of Governments* requires substantial work in the short-, medium and long-term to identify indicators for each of the elements that compose it.

133. The initial focus of the measurement work is to understand the extent to which open government reforms and initiatives have achieved a transformation of the governance culture of countries. Open government reforms set up specific mechanisms that build up on the regular functioning of the government (rather than run parallel to them), and that aim to transform such regular processes. Structuring the framework as a theory of change shows the logical order of the elements involved in a culture open government, and contributes to understand how they affect one another (e.g. how having an open government office that provides guidance to ministries on open government contributes to enhancing stakeholder participation in policy-making; open data policies etc.).

134. Following the logic of the Framework, *inputs* and *processes* are enablers, since they provide the basis for establishing a culture of open government and describe the efforts required to ensure that such culture is mainstreamed throughout public institutions. For example, a law on access to information can only be applied if the institutions that hold public records have mechanisms in place to publish information and reply to requests. Given that there are competing priorities both across the government and in individual institutions, awareness needs to be raised at a high level (e.g. among ministers) in order to ensure that the issue receives enough attention to be implemented. *Inputs* and *processes* of the Framework make up the governance of open government (GOOG).

135. The GOOG is the backbone that enables a country's open government agenda to be designed and implemented. Having the correct *inputs* and *processes* in place is an essential part of an open government agenda. Therefore, the OECD proposes the elaboration of specific dashboards to guide countries in setting the necessary conditions to succeed at opening their government. These dashboards will allow tracking progress over time and learning from peers, without prioritising between the various aspects that the Framework highlights as necessary.

136. Yet, the *inputs* and *processes* that make up the GOOG need to be translated into concrete *outputs*, with which citizens and stakeholders can interact, and that signal the adoption of a culture of open government. Such outputs can only be possible if there is a coordinated effort across government to ensure their continuous supply (rather than being one-off), which entails substantial efforts to promote the open government agenda, embed it in laws and regulations, etc. The existence of concrete *outputs* also indicates that the principles of open government have been successfully mainstreamed in the government, as

they require the concerted effort of multiple institutions⁸. Therefore, only *outputs* will be considered when measuring the openness of governments, as they are the result of the continuous efforts to promote and mainstream a culture of open government across the government. The *outputs* are also concrete manifestations of a culture of open government, which stakeholders can perceive and can benefit from.

137. As described in the Framework, openness as a concept is composed of four principles (transparency, integrity, accountability, and stakeholders' participation), that lead to specific products (as described in the section on *outputs* of this paper). These products can be analysed under the lens of specific quality dimensions (relevance, comprehensiveness, timeliness, etc.), as shown in section 3. Such principles and dimensions need to be measured "across the government", which entails that they have to be applied to various functions and sectors of government, such as budgeting, procurement, gender policies, health, environment etc. Hence, measuring the openness of a government will require summarising large amounts of information and data to provide clear policy messages to help countries advance their open government agendas. For this reason, the OECD proposes an *OECD Openness Index*, whose structure and content will be agreed to with all relevant actors both from within the Working Party on Open Government (WPOG) and the wider OECD community.

138. The first step to undertake this work, which will contribute to an understanding of the effects of open government reforms and initiatives on the mainstreaming of a culture of open government, and the impacts on stakeholders and the government itself, is to identify proxy indicators that meet the criteria of being specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound, and timely (SMART). These indicators should lend themselves to the estimation of the relationships between the elements of the framework that they represent. This means that, through the analysis of how indicators affect one another, and how they interact with external factors, it would be possible to understand the links between the *inputs*, *processes*, and *outputs*, and how they contribute to achieve the *outcomes* and *impacts* presented in the Framework.

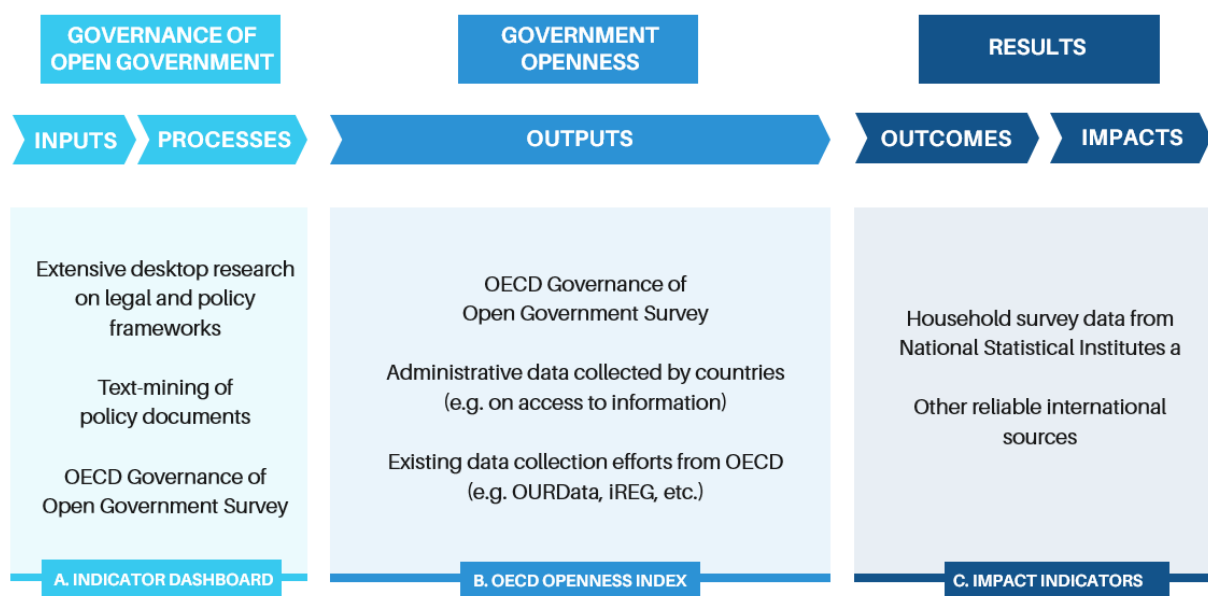
139. Defining indicators to measure the elements of the Framework is a complex task, since such elements are abstract and multidimensional concepts that need to be deconstructed in order to find appropriate proxy variables. Furthermore, there will be a need of collecting indicators from several public institutions and ministries, beyond those responsible for internal processes (e.g. procurement agencies). Determining the relationship between governance measures and specific impacts is equally challenging since there are multiple confounding factors and interplays between various governance areas. Therefore, the measurement will be done in several phases, as it requires drawing from various sources of data. The work will start with the measurement of the governance of open government (i.e. GOOG) - as provided for in the OECD OG Recommendation - and conclude with the measurement of outcomes and impacts. As work progresses, the Secretariat will produce relevant cross-country and time series analyses to guide Adherent countries as they advance in their open government agendas.

⁸ In this regard, it is relevant to highlight that there may be several ways of mainstreaming open government principles. In some cases, governments would apply them only to internal policies or processes (e.g. procurement), while others would move forwards to designing and delivering better services following open government principles (e.g. tourism), although these two approaches can also take place simultaneously.

140. Summarising, the measurement of the *OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments* will be composed of four steps, each one focusing on specific elements of the framework:

- Data on *inputs* and *processes* will be gathered through desktop research, text-mining of policy documents and the 2020/2021 OECD Survey on the Governance of Open Government (GOOG-Survey) that monitors the implementation of the OG Recommendation, as mandated by Council. This first step will allow the OECD Secretariat to design **country-specific Governance of Open Government Dashboards**. These dashboards will provide details on each country's legal and policy frameworks, institutional settings, among other inputs and processes.
- Data on *outputs* will come from administrative records held by countries (e.g. on replies to access to information requests), and from data gathered through the GOOG-Survey and other surveys run by the OECD Public Governance Directorate (e.g. OURdata, iREG, Gender policies, Integrity indicators) and other relevant Directorates. These efforts will require to standardise data collection efforts on the aspects covered in this framework, including the quality dimensions described in the section on *outputs* of this document.
- Once the relevant output indicators have been identified and collected, an **OECD Openness Index** will be constructed in consultation with Delegates. This process will require substantial methodological development and testing in order to produce indicators that yield relevant policy messages over time. In a first stage, this work will build on existing surveys conducted by the OECD Public Governance Directorate and later on expand to ministries and institutions responsible for services such as education and health.
- Data on *outcomes and impacts* will mainly be gathered through the collaboration with National Statistical Institutes and other actors that produce household survey data, including through the ongoing OECD work on measuring trust in institutions and in contribution to the measurement of indicators for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (in particular SDG 16).

Figure 4.1. Summary of the suggested process for the development of indicators



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

4.1. Data sources

141. In the OECD OG Recommendation, the Council instructs the Public Governance Committee to “monitor the implementation of this Recommendation, including through the use of the developed indicators, open government reviews and comparative studies, and report thereon to the Council no later than three years following its adoption and regularly thereafter”. As part of the monitoring process, the Secretariat is currently developing the OECD Survey on the Governance of Open Government (GOOG) which will be launched in September 2020, and which will be preceded by substantial desktop research.

142. The GOOG-Survey will include questions to monitor the implementation of Provisions of the OG Recommendation for which data cannot be found through desktop research nor text-mining of documents, and will serve as a basis for a report to be sent to the OECD Council in 2021. Desktop research will mostly focus on the legal frameworks on open government, and text-mining will be used to analyse the policy frameworks of the countries, as the principles of open government are to be mainstreamed in all areas of government. These data will feed into the dashboard of indicators, as they refer to the *inputs* and *processes* included in the Framework.

143. For the compilation of the indicators that would potentially be included in the *OECD Openness Index*, this work seeks to re-use, to the extent possible, existing sources of data. The OECD, and especially the Public Governance Directorate, has been collecting time-series on open government practices, such as participatory budgeting, integrity and regulatory consultation, which can be repurposed. Additionally, new questions on open government can be included in recurring data collections, in order to avoid sending multiple requests to the same institutions (hence reducing respondent burden) and creating synergies between the various work streams of the OECD Public Governance Directorate. This work would be cross-cutting and require the establishment of common data quality standards together with countries and experts from the OECD.

144. The use of data from multiple questionnaires sent to government officials will increase the robustness of the resulting Index. Most governance indicators are compiled through questionnaires that are filled by one or several public officials who reply on behalf of a whole public institution (e.g. ministry) or the whole public administration, and are considered to be the official response of the country. Using data from multiple questionnaires allows to improve reliability of the indicators by combining answers provided by different (groups of) respondents at different points in time. This is important because, as in every communication, there could be divergences in interpretation of the concepts used in the questionnaires and of the practices of an institution or of the whole public administration (e.g. for one person the policies of an institution may be developed in a participative way. Hence, the aggregation of responses from a single country can provide a more accurate picture, by allowing to create a distribution rather than a single data point.

145. Some indicators on *outputs* can be compiled from administrative records routinely produced by countries as they implement open government policies and initiatives. Examples of indicators that can be derived from administrative data are percentage of access to information requests completed in time, as well as number of data sets available in an open data format which would both contribute to measure the timeliness dimension of transparency (as defined in the Framework). The GOOG-survey will also gather data on outputs from countries' administrative records that are not available online, and other types of relevant data.

146. Indicators related to *outcomes* and *impacts* of open government strategies and initiatives would need to be collected through household surveys or population polls as they measure citizens' perceptions. These would need to be disaggregated in order to show how whether government efforts are reaching the different groups of the population. While internationally comparable data on impacts are currently being collected by various surveys, such as European Social Survey, there are also international standards for compiling official statistics, such as the *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust* (OECD, 2017), for such indicators. Gathering data that are not currently being collected will require to establish partnerships with National Statistical Institutes and/or other actors in National Statistical Systems, to include questions in national household surveys and complement perception data with evaluation and situational questions.

147. Data produced by countries to track their own progress in opening their government would also fit into this work. These would ideally be collected by countries to monitor SDG 16 which addresses governance issues, and follow international standards as established in the Handbook of Governance Statistics (Praia City Group, 2020).

5. Conclusions

148. In line with the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government and responding to countries' demand for indicators, the main objective of this paper is to propose a coherent and consistent roadmap for the assessing the impact of open government reforms.

149. Following the operationalisation of the OECD definition of open government, the paper proposed an *OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments* which structures the provisions of the OG Recommendation as a theory of change to show how the various provisions relate to one another. The Framework is further built on and enriched by provisions included in other relevant OECD Recommendations, demonstrating the cross-cutting importance of openness for any policy area and for public governance as a whole.

150. The paper then presented how the *Framework* can, over time, enable the development of three different sets of indicators, namely 1) Governance of Open Government Dashboards, 2) an OECD Openness Index and 3) Results indicators. Together, these indicators will allow to understand if and how open government reforms are achieving their ultimate objectives and, as such, they will be of value to countries which seek to evaluate their own open government agenda.

151. The development of these indicators can only be a participatory and consensus-building exercise between the OECD Secretariat and the WPOG. The Secretariat would therefore like to propose the establishment of sub-group on indicators which would be an integral part of the OECD Working Party on Open Government and which will oversee and lead the development of indicators.

152. The Secretariat suggests the following tentative timeline for the development of indicators:

- **Q2/Q3 2020:** The Secretariat finalises the development of the updated 2020 OECD Survey on the Governance of Open Government.
- **Q3 2020:** The GOOG-Survey is launched to enable the Secretariat to collect information and data on the *inputs, processes* and selected *outputs* identified in the Framework.
- **Q3/Q4 2020:** The Secretariat gathers additional data on countries' legal and policy frameworks through desktop research and through a text-mining methodology, to be jointly elaborated with Delegates.
- **Q4 2020 / Q1 2021:** The results of the GOOG-Survey are available and validated by countries.
- **Q1 2021:** The WPOG and the Secretariat start conversations on OECD Openness Index. The Secretariat gathers data from Surveys conducted across the wider OECD (e.g. the Survey on the Implementation of the 2015 OECD Recommendations on Public Procurement; the iREG-Survey, etc.) to enrich the Openness Index.

- **Q1 2021:** The methodology for the Open Government Dashboards is co-developed between Delegates and the Secretariat.
- **Q3/Q4 2021:** Country-tailored Open Government Dashboards are presented to Delegates.
- **Q4 2021 / 2022:** The WPOG and the Secretariat start conversation on results indicators (outcomes and impacts).

Table 5.1. Overview: The three indicators

	GOVERNANCE OF OPEN GOVERNMENT DASHBOARDS	OECD OPENNESS INDEX	RESULTS INDICATORS
Measurement	Are the framework conditions for open government adequate?	How open is the government?	What are the effects of openness?
Relevant section of the OECD Framework for Measuring the Openness of Governments	Inputs + Processes	Outputs	Outcomes + Impacts
Relevant OECD Council Recommendation(s)	OG Recommendation	OG Recommendation Integrity Recommendation Regulatory Policy Recommendation Etc. (see Annex A)	OG Recommendation
Main data source(s)	OECD Governance of Open Government Survey Text mining	OECD Governance of Open Government Survey Data from BUD, PSI, REG, etc. Reliable external data	Household Surveys Other reliable international sources
Timeframe	Short-term (2020-2021)	Medium-term (2021-2022)	Medium to Long-term (2022-2024)

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

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Annex A. Mapping the inclusion of the principles of open government in relevant OECD Council Recommendations

Note: The table presented below is non-exhaustive.

Table A A.1. Mapping Open Government Principles in relevant OECD Council Recommendations

	Government provides access to information and data it possesses (principle of transparency)	Government hears the views, perspectives and inputs from citizens and stakeholders (principle of participation)	Government assumes responsibility for its decisions and actions, and provides answers to citizens and stakeholders demands and concerns (principle of accountability)	Government consistently upholds and prioritises the public interest over private interests (principle of integrity)
REC on Open Government (2017)	<p>Provision 7: proactively make available clear, complete, timely, reliable and relevant public sector data and information ()</p>	<p>Preamble: RECOGNISING that stakeholder participation increases government accountability, broadens citizens empowerment and influence on decisions, builds civic capacity, improves the evidence base for policy-making, reduces implementation costs, and taps wider networks for innovation in policy-making and service delivery;</p> <p>Def. of Stakeholder Participation: all the ways in which stakeholders can be involved in the policy cycle and in service design and delivery, including ()</p> <p>Def. of Stakeholders: any interested and/or affected party, including: individuals, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, religious</p>	<p>Def. of Open Government: a culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth</p>	<p>Def. of Open Government: a culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth</p>

	<p>and political affiliations; and institutions and organisations, whether governmental or non-governmental, from civil society, academia, the media or the private sector;</p> <p>Provision 1: take measures, in all branches and at all levels of the government, to develop and implement open government strategies and initiatives in collaboration with stakeholders ()</p> <p>Provision 5(ii): Developing comparable indicators to measure processes, outputs, outcomes, and impact in collaboration with stakeholders</p> <p>Provision 7: () disseminated through a multi-channel approach, to be prioritised in consultation with stakeholders;</p> <p>Provision 8: grant all stakeholders equal and fair opportunities to be informed and consulted and actively engage them in all phases of the policy-cycle and service design and delivery. ()</p> <p>Provision 9: promote innovative ways to effectively engage with stakeholders to source ideas and co-create solutions ()</p>		
<p>REC on Public Integrity (2017)</p> <p>Provision 13: a) promoting transparency and an open government, including ensuring access to information and open data, along with timely responses to requests for information; ()</p>	<p>Principle 5: Promote a whole-of-society culture of public integrity, partnering with the private sector, civil society, and individuals ()</p> <p>Principle 13: b) granting all stakeholders including the private sector, civil society and individuals access in the development and implementation of public policies; ()</p>	<p>Principle 10: Apply an internal control and risk management framework to safeguard integrity in public sector organisations ()</p> <p>Principle 11: Ensure that enforcement mechanisms provide appropriate responses to all suspected violations of public integrity standards by public officials ()</p> <p>Principle 12: Reinforce the role of external oversight and control within the public integrity system ()</p> <p>Principle 13: d) encouraging a society that includes watchdog organisations, citizens groups, labour unions and independent media.</p>	<p>Def. of Public Integrity: Public integrity refers to the consistent alignment of, and adherence to, shared ethical values, principles and norms for upholding and prioritising the public interest over private interests in the public sector.</p> <p>All Principles</p>

<p>REC on Regulatory Policy and Governance (2012)</p>	<p>Principle 2: Adhere to principles of open government, including transparency and participation in the regulatory process to ensure that regulation serves the public interest and is informed by the legitimate needs of those interested in and affected by regulation. () Governments should ensure that regulations are comprehensible and clear and that parties can easily understand their rights and obligations.</p>	<p>Principle 2: Adhere to principles of open government, including transparency and participation in the regulatory process to ensure that regulation serves the public interest and is informed by the legitimate needs of those interested in and affected by regulation. This includes providing meaningful opportunities (including online) for the public to contribute to the process of preparing draft regulatory proposals and to the quality of the supporting analysis. ()</p>	<p>Principle 3: Establish mechanisms and institutions to actively provide oversight of regulatory policy procedures and goals, support and implement regulatory policy, and thereby foster regulatory quality.</p>	<p>Principle 2: Adhere to principles of open government, including transparency and participation in the regulatory process to ensure that regulation serves the public interest and is informed by the legitimate needs of those interested in and affected by regulation. () Principle 7: Develop a consistent policy covering the role and functions of regulatory agencies in order to provide greater confidence that regulatory decisions are made on an objective, impartial and consistent basis, without conflict of interest, bias or improper influence.</p>
<p>REC on Public Procurement (2015)</p>	<p>Recommendation II: RECOMMENDS that Adherents ensure an adequate degree of transparency of the public procurement system in all stages of the procurement cycle. ()</p>	<p>Recommendation VI: RECOMMENDS that Adherents foster transparent and effective stakeholder participation.</p>	<p>Recommendation XII: RECOMMENDS that Adherents apply oversight and control mechanisms to support accountability throughout the public procurement cycle, including appropriate complaint and sanctions processes.</p>	<p>Recommendation III: RECOMMENDS that Adherents preserve the integrity of the public procurement system through general standards and procurement-specific safeguards. Def. of Integrity: Integrity refers to the use of funds, resources, assets and authority, according to the intended official purposes and in a manner that is well informed, aligned with the public interest, and aligned with broader principles of good governance;</p>
<p>REC on Digital Government Strategies (2014)</p>	<p>Principle 1: Ensure greater transparency, openness and inclusiveness of government processes and operations () Principle 3: Create a data-driven culture in the public sector, by: i) developing frameworks to to (a) increase openness and transparency, ();</p>	<p>Principle 2: Encourage engagement and participation of public, private and civil society stakeholders in policy making and public service design and delivery () Principle 3: Create a data-driven culture in the public sector, by: i) developing frameworks to () b) incentivise public engagement in policy making, public value creation, service design and delivery;</p>	<p>Principle 7: Establish effective organisational and governance frameworks to co-ordinate the implementation of the digital strategy within and across levels of government, through: () ii) establishing a system for check and balances of governments decisions on spending on technology to increase</p>	

	<p>Principle 6: Ensure coherent use of digital technologies across policy areas and levels of government, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) engaging relevant stakeholders and other levels of government to provide input to the development of the digital government strategy <p>Principle 10: "Reinforce institutional capacities to manage and monitor projects implementation, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> () iv) reinforcing their public sectors digital and project management skills, mobilising collaborations and/or partnerships with private and non-governmental sector actors as necessary; 	<p>the level of accountability and public trust, and to improve decision-making and management to minimise risks of project failures and delays.</p>	
<p>REC on Budgetary Governance (2015)</p>	<p>Preamble: RECOGNISING that budget transparency is a key element in underpinning the overall agenda of transparency, accountability and trust in government, ().</p> <p>Principle4: Ensure that budget documents and data are open, transparent and accessible ()</p> <p>Principle6: Present a comprehensive, accurate and reliable account of the public finances ()</p>	<p>Principle 7: Actively plan, manage and monitor the execution of the budget ()</p> <p>Principle 8: Ensure that performance, evaluation and value for money are integral to the budget process ()</p>	<p>Principle 10: Promote the integrity and quality of budgetary forecasts, fiscal plans and budgetary implementation through rigorous quality assurance including independent audit ()</p>
<p>REC on Gender Equality in Public Life (2015)</p>	<p>Principle I (4): Consider integration of the gender perspective in all phases of the budget cycle, as appropriate, so that transparency regarding gender-relevant resource allocation decisions is maximised.</p>	<p>Principle I (1): Secure leadership and commit at the highest political level (), which would enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> () ii) engaging relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders with a view to ensuring an inclusive and comprehensive coverage of gender equality issues; and 	<p>Recommendation II: RECOMMENDS that Adherents strengthen accountability and oversight mechanisms for gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives across and within government bodies.</p>
<p>REC on Water (2016)</p>	<p>Principle V (1): Prepare for water-related disasters by investing in: () vii) Transparency, accountability and public awareness in water risk-related decision-making.</p> <p>Principle VI (5): Produce, update, and share timely, consistent, comparable and policy-relevant water and water-related data and</p>	<p>Principle II (2): [Recommends water policies that] Are based on long term water management plans (). They would benefit from stakeholder consultation.</p> <p>Principle III (3): [Recommends] Water allocation regimes that (): iv) Are responsive to the customary practices of traditional communities;</p>	<p>Principle V (1): Prepare for water-related disasters by investing in: () vii) Transparency, accountability and public awareness in water risk-related decision-making.</p> <p>Recommendation VI: Water governance encompasses () rules, practices, and processes () through</p>

information, and use it to guide, assess and improve water policy.

Recommendation VI: Water governance encompasses () rules, practices, and processes () through which () stakeholders can articulate their interests and have their concerns considered ().

Principle VI (10): Promote stakeholder engagement for informed and outcome-oriented contributions to water policy design and implementation.

which () stakeholders can articulate their interests and have their concerns considered, and decision-makers are held accountable in the management of water resources and the delivery of water services.

Principle VI (9): Mainstream integrity and transparency practices across water policies, water institutions and water governance frameworks for greater accountability and trust in decision-making.

Principle VI (12): Promote regular monitoring and evaluation of water policy and governance where appropriate, share the results with the public and make adjustments when needed.

[REC on Governance of Critical Risks \(2014\)](#)

Recommendation VI: RECOMMENDS that Members demonstrate transparency and accountability in risk-related decision making by incorporating good governance practices and continuously learning from experience and science.

Principle VI (1): Ensure transparency regarding the information used to ensure risk management decisions are better accepted by stakeholders to facilitate policy implementation and limit reputational damage

Principle II (3): Engage all government actors at national and sub-national levels, to coordinate a range of stakeholders in inclusive policy making processes ().

Principle II (4): Establish partnerships with the private sector to achieve responsiveness and shared responsibilities aligned with the national strategy ()

Recommendation IV: RECOMMENDS that Members raise awareness of critical risks to mobilise households, businesses and international stakeholders and foster investment in risk prevention and mitigation.

Recommendation VI: RECOMMENDS that Members demonstrate transparency and accountability in risk-related decision making by incorporating good governance practices and continuously learning from experience and science.

Principle VI (3): Continuously share knowledge, including lessons learned from previous events, research and science through post-event reviews, to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention and preparedness activities, as well as response and recovery operations

[REC on Principles on Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying \(2010\)](#)

Annex (5): Countries should provide an adequate degree of transparency to ensure that public officials, citizens and businesses can obtain sufficient information on lobbying activities.

Annex (1): Countries should provide a level playing field by granting all stakeholders fair and equitable access to the development and implementation of public policies.

Annex (6): Countries should enable stakeholders including civil society organisations, businesses,

Annex (10): Countries should review the functioning of their rules and guidelines related to lobbying on a periodic basis and make necessary adjustments in light of experience.

Preamble: RECOGNISING that transparency, integrity and fairness in the decision-making process are crucial to safeguard the public interest and promote a level playing field for businesses;

		the media and the general public to scrutinise lobbying activities.		Annex (7): Countries should foster a culture of integrity in public organisations and decision making by providing clear rules and guidelines of conduct for public officials.
REC on Principles for Public Governance of Public-Private Partnerships (2012)	Principle I (C): Use the budgetary process transparently to minimise fiscal risks and ensure the integrity of the procurement process.	Principle I (A): 1. () Popular understanding of Public-Private Partnerships requires active consultation and engagement with stakeholders as well as involving end-users in defining the project and subsequently in monitoring service quality.		Principle I (A): 4. () There should be no institutional, procedural or accounting bias either in favour of or against Public-Private Partnerships.
Draft REC on Governance of Infrastructure	Principle II (2): e. informing decision-making on affordability of new projects and minimising sustainability risks by measuring and disclosing multi-year spending commitments, including running and maintenance costs, off-balance sheet commitments and contingent liabilities resulting from infrastructure projects, and assessing the availability to fund such commitments in the expected timeframe. Principle II (7): b. an adequate degree of transparency throughout the project life-cycle to ensure that disclosure of relevant information is timely and available to the public. Principle II (8): b. disclosing relevant data to the public in an accessible and understandable format, and in a timely fashion.	Principle II (4): Ensure systematic and effective stakeholder engagement () Principle II (3): f. engaging in transparent and regular dialogues with suppliers and business associations to present public procurement objectives and to assure a correct understanding of markets capacity.	Principle II (6): a. providing evidence-based tools for regulatory decisions, including stakeholder consultation, economic, fiscal, social and environmental impact assessment and ex-post evaluation.	Principle II (7): Implement a whole of government approach to manage threats to integrity ()

Note: This table is non-exhaustive (e.g. it does not mention all sub-principles that refer to stakeholders' participation). In addition, it will be complemented with elements of additional OECD Council Recommendations.

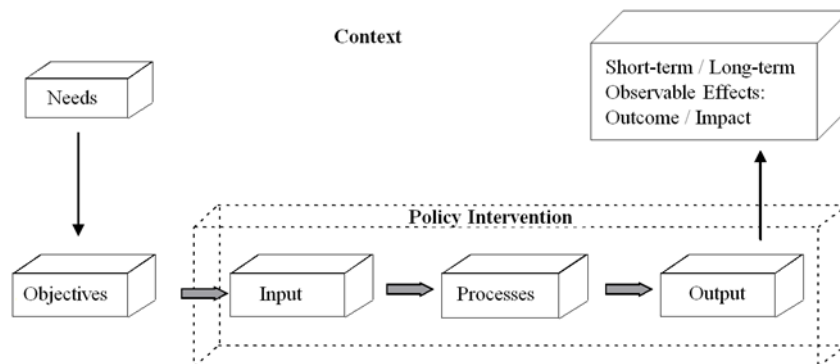
Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Annex B. What is a theory of change?

153. A theory of change (ToC) is a methodology that maps the assumptions –i.e. the necessary conditions for change- on how a policy or initiative⁹ impacts its beneficiaries. The main aim of a ToC is to describe how change is expected to happen from the perspective of the beneficiary, by establishing causal links between the policy/initiative and its outcomes. It is important to underline that these links are established based on assumptions, because even well researched ToCs (e.g. where the causal links between the various elements have been established by relevant evidence) have an element uncertainty given the multi-causal nature of social phenomena. By making all hypotheses on how a policy is intended produce an effect on its beneficiaries explicit, a ToC not only guides implementation, but also allows for monitoring and evaluating policies and initiatives. All the elements included in a ToC need to be concrete enough to allow for operationalisation and measurement – i.e. identifying performance indicators and tracking their evolution over time.

154. As described in Figure 6.1 any policy or initiative starts by identifying unmet needs, for example, declining levels of trust in government, dissatisfaction with public services, etc. A proper analysis of the situation is required to identify potential solutions to such needs (e.g. citizens feel that decisions are taken without considering their views, citizens believe that their government follows the interest of a minority, etc.). Finally, the policy or initiative sets one or several objectives, for instance, increasing trust in government and/or satisfaction with public services.

Figure 6.1 Elements of a Theory of Change (generic)



155.

⁹ Open government initiatives are defined by the Recommendation as “actions undertaken by the government, or by a single public institution, to achieve specific objectives in the area of open government, ranging from the drafting of laws to the implementation of specific activities such as online consultations”.

156. Once the objectives have been defined, a specific policy intervention needs to be designed in order to achieve them. Such intervention requires investing resources (inputs) into the production of concrete products (outputs), which are expected to have an effect (outcomes and impacts) on the beneficiaries. In order to transform the inputs into outputs, specific processes need to take place.

157. It has been noted in the literature that the relationship between inputs, processes and outputs is not linear. The same inputs (e.g. budget, legal framework, human resources) can be transformed in very different processes and outputs by different organisations. And even the same outputs may not contribute to produce the same outcomes and impacts in different contexts (e.g. at different levels of development, diverse population dynamics). Therefore, it is important to avoid *isomorphic mimicry*, which has been described in the literature as hiding behind the organisational forms that are successful in other contexts to hide own organisational dysfunctions (Pritchett, Woolcock and Andrews, 2010).

158. Additionally, in most policy areas, the identified need is not new and is probably addressed (either directly or indirectly) by other policies or initiatives at various levels of government (e.g. satisfaction with health care may be addressed by national health care policies, by municipal development plans, etc.). Furthermore, there are external factors and unforeseen eventualities that may change the context and therefore invalidate the relationship between the need and the selected policy response, as well as hinder the implementation of the policy itself.

159. Even taking these caveats into account, structuring the framework as a ToC allows to make the hypotheses behind open government policies and initiatives explicit (e.g. allowing citizens to participate in policy-making contributes to increase trust in government), to describe the channels through which such policies and initiatives are expected to achieve their desired outcomes, to measure the progress in their implementation (by assigning performance indicators at each stage) and to evaluate whether they achieved their objectives. Yet, considering that open government policies have an interplay with other policy domains, evaluations should focus on whether the specific policy or intervention contributed to change in any way (e.g. how has inviting citizens to participate in the design of the new health strategy contributed to change in satisfaction with health care?).

Annex C. Review of ongoing efforts to measure open government

Various international organisations, CSOs or universities have created indicators to measure transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders participation. They all follow different methodological approaches and focus areas, ranging from measuring citizens' perception of corruption as in the case of **Transparency International**, to assessing the functioning of the executive (**Freedom House**), or to the very ambitious measurement of the quality of democracy, as in the case the **Economist Intelligence Unit's** Democracy Index. This annex provides a non-exhaustive list of initiatives in this field.

Table A C.1. Existing indicators on open government and its principles

Open Government Principles	Institution (incl. Hyperlink)	Name of the indicator	How is it measured (methodology)?	Scope (# of countries covered)
Open Government	World Justice Project	The WJP Open Government Index™ 2015 report	The Open Government Index composed of 4 dimensions: publicized laws and government data, right to information, civic participation, and complaint mechanisms. The OG index draws from general population and expert surveys collected for the WJP Rule of Law Index that capture the experiences and perceptions of ordinary citizens.	102
Transparency	World Economic Forum	Global Competitiveness Report: Transparency of government policymaking	Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) GCI combines 114 indicators The GCI combines 114 indicators. The GCI includes statistical data from internationally IMF); WB; ITU, UNESCO, WHO. also includes indicators derived from the World Economic Forum's Executive Opinion Survey	138
Accountability	Transparency International	Corruption perception Index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual index. Free accessible data set (Excel), acc. to regions. Aggregated data from different Indexes used (Bertelsmann, WB...) 	176
	Transparency International	Global Corruption Barometer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measuring the experience of everyday people confronting corruption 	Regional surveys (e.g. Europe and Central Asia 2016: 60,000 in 42 countries surveyed)
	Global Integrity	Global Integrity Report data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggregated data from different Indexes used 	global
	World Bank	Worldwide Governance Indicators: Control of Corruption	Aggregated indicators using a statistical methodology. WGI indicators are research dataset summarizing the views on the quality of governance provided by a large number of enterprise, citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries. These data are gathered from a number of survey institutes,	200/ over the period 1996-2015

Open Government Principles	Institution (incl. Hyperlink)	Name of the indicator	How is it measured (methodology)?	Scope (# of countries covered)
		Worldwide Governance Indicators: Voice and Accountability	think tanks, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and private sector firms.	
	EIU	Accountability of Public Officials	Aggregated data from different Indexes used. Based on ratings for 60 indicators grouped in 5 categories. (restricted access to the doc)	
	WEF	Global Competitiveness Report: favouritism in decisions of government officials	Analyses competitiveness along 12 pillars: institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication and innovation. Organized into three sub-indices in line with three main stages of development: basic requirements, efficiency enhancers, and innovation and sophistication factors. The three sub-indices are given different weights in the calculation of the overall index, depending on each economy's stage of development	140 economies
Citizen Participation	EIU	EIU Democracy Index Civil Liberties sub-indicator	Aggregated data from different Indexes used. Based on ratings for 60 indicators grouped in 5 categories. (restricted access to the doc)	165 independent states and two territories
	Freedom House	Civil liberties+ political rights	Composed of numerical ratings and descriptive texts for each country and a select group of related and disputed territories. The analysts score countries based on the conditions and events within their borders during the coverage period. The final scores represent the consensus of the analysts, advisers, and staff, and are intended to be comparable from year to year and across countries and regions.	195 countries 15 territories from January-December 31, 2015.
	Gallup	Confidence in honesty of election and voicing of opinion to public official	Results are based on telephone and face-to-face interviews conducted in 2007 and 2008 with approximately 1,000 adults in each country surveyed.	134
	Freedom House	Electoral process Political pluralism and participation	External analysts assess countries and territories, using a combination of on-the-ground research, consultations with local contacts, and information from news articles, nongovernmental organizations, governments, and a variety of other sources. Expert advisers and regional specialists then vet the analysts' conclusions. The final product represents the consensus of the analysts, advisers, and Freedom House.	209

Open Government Principles	Institution (incl. Hyperlink)	Name of the indicator	How is it measured (methodology)?	Scope (# of countries covered)
	OECD	Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance 2015, iREG, covers the areas of stakeholder engagement, Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) and ex post evaluation	Collected through 2014 Regulatory Indicators survey (updated every 3-4 years)	OECD countries
Access to Information and Open Data	Right2Info.org	Access to Information	Ongoing Survey on Availability of ATI law	
	OECD	OURdata Index on Open Government Data	Survey sent to OECD countries, updated every 3-4 years	mainly OECD countries
Democracy	EIU	Democracy Index	Aggregated data from different Indexes used. Based on ratings for 60 indicators grouped in 5 categories. (restricted access to the doc)	165 independent states and two territories
	GallUp	Confidence in institutions	Results for this Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted	all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia
	GallUp	Trust in government		
	Freedom House	Functioning of the Government	External analysts assess countries and territories, using a combination of on-the-ground research, consultations with local contacts, and information from news articles, nongovernmental organizations, governments, and a variety of other sources. Expert advisers and regional specialists then vet the analysts' conclusions. The final product represents the consensus of the analysts, advisers, and Freedom House.	209
	Freedom House	Freedom of expression and of belief		
	Freedom House	Rule of law		
	Freedom House	Associational and organizational rights		
	World Values Survey	Corruption political interest and political participation political culture and political regimes	Interviews with almost 400,000 respondents to a common questionnaire conducted in almost 100 countries	100
Bertelsmann Foundation	Sustainable Governance Indicators, measuring Policy Performance Quality of Democracy Governance (Executive capacity and Accountability)	Combination of qualitative assessment by country experts (validated by an Expert Network) and quantitative data drawn from official sources	41	
Media	Freedom House	Freedom of the Press	External analysts assess countries and territories, using a combination of on-the-ground research, consultations with local contacts, and information from news articles, nongovernmental organizations, governments, and a variety of other sources. Expert advisers and regional specialists then vet the analysts' conclusions. The final product represents the consensus of the analysts, advisers, and Freedom House.	209
	Reporters without borders	Press Freedom Index	Determined by pooling the responses of experts to a questionnaire devised by RSF. This qualitative analysis is combined with quantitative data on abuses and acts of violence against journalists during the period evaluated. The criteria evaluated in the questionnaire are pluralism, media independence, media environment and self-censorship, legislative	180

Open Government Principles	Institution (incl. Hyperlink)	Name of the indicator	How is it measured (methodology)?	Scope (# of countries covered)
			framework, transparency, and the quality of the infrastructure that supports the production of news and information	
	WEF	Global Competitiveness Report: Freedom of the Press	Analysis competitiveness along 12 pillars: institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication and innovation. Organized into three sub-indexes in line with three main stages of development: basic requirements, efficiency enhancers, and innovation and sophistication factors. The three sub-indexes are given different weights in the calculation of the overall index, depending on each economy's stage of development	140
	IREX	Media sustainability Index	<p>-Tool to assess the development of media systems over time and across countries. IREX staff, USAID, and other media-development professionals contributed to the development of this assessment tool.</p> <p>-The MSI assesses five “objectives” in shaping a successful media system.</p> <p>-A score is attained for each objective by rating between seven and nine indicators.</p> <p>-Scoring is completed in two parts first by a panel of local experts in each country from media outlets, NGOs, professional associations, and academic institution. Later by the IREX editorial staff members The average of all individual indicator scores within the objective determines the objective score. The overall country score is an average of all five objectives.</p>	80

Source: Authors' own elaboration.