Liberal Democracies Must Demonstrate Long-term Thinking and Acumen in Crisis Management

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Content

1. Key Findings

Robust liberal democratic institutions and processes are essential but nonetheless insufficient when it comes to governments overcoming the crises associated with a renewed global order, the new model of inter-system competition, climate change, pandemics, social divisions and rising inequality. If governments are to successfully navigate such crises, they will need to do more than identify and announce sustainable policies; they will need to institute more efficient, inclusive and forward-looking governance solutions in order to ensure that such measures achieve their desired outcomes in the long term.

Against this background, our analysis highlights key trends and differences found among EU and OECD countries with regard to their ability to horizontally and vertically coordinate policy, their acumen in building public consensus and their capacity to develop long-term, sustainable policy strategies. Covering a period of more than ten years, our Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI) dataset, which monitors coordination, consensus-building and strategy efforts in 41 OECD and EU countries, is well-positioned to offer valuable insight into key developments in these areas.

Most OECD and EU states saw regression or stagnation in coordination capacity over past decade

Compared to the SGI 2014 findings, only six of the 41 countries surveyed improved notably in terms of their coordination capacity. A total of 21 countries saw some form of weakened performance, with Poland, Turkey and the Netherlands showing a relatively significant decline.

Cyprus, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria bring up the rear in the comparison of coordination capacity. There are also no changes at the top of the ranking. Finland, New Zealand, Canada and Denmark continue to create the best institutional conditions for an effective coordination of policies. Germany ranks only 18th in this regard.

Ideology can unravel even well-functioning coordination mechanisms

In some countries, losses in the capacity to generate expertise for the highest level of government are clearly associated with the shift toward a more autocratic logic of governing. For example, the United States and Poland recorded high scores on the indicator examining the expertise of the government office to evaluate ministerial drafts according to the government's priorities in 2012, which was followed by dramatic losses in 2017 and 2016, respectively.

Not enough states are leveraging digital technology to facilitate interministerial coordination

Where formal coordination mechanisms fall short, digital technologies can prove essential to fostering policy coordination across and within ministries by offering alternative means of proactive policy coordination. The use of digital technologies in Estonia, Finland, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway and South Korea encourages public servants to share capabilities across sectors and allows them to set measurable administrative goals while ensuring greater accountability and transparency within government.

Government ability to achieve self-set goals has deteriorated in 17 states

Overall, we observe a steady decline in this ability since 2012, with the average score of 6.7 (2012) falling to 6.2 (2019), before improving slightly from 2019 to 2022. For the SGI 2022, Germany, Latvia, Sweden and Switzerland form the top group, while Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Mexico and Romania bring up the rear.

Insufficient monitoring of public agencies in 12 countries; political clientelism complicates matters

In countries such as Cyprus, Slovenia, Romania and Slovakia, the state's weak monitoring capacity is further complicated by the presence of political clientelism and favoritism in public policy. Over the last ten years, our

experts observe a decline in the capacity to monitor public agencies in ten countries, with the average score falling from 6.6 (2012) to 6.5 (2022).

Worrying development: local self-government eroding in one-third of states

In fact, the average score for the constitutional scope of discretion granted to local level governments during policy implementation remains low at 5.9. In nearly one-half (17) of all SGI countries, our experts observe central governments seeking to limit, in practical terms, the autonomy of local governments to implement policies. Moreover, subnational governments in Poland, the Netherlands, Mexico, Sweden and Slovakia in particular have, in the past ten years, received a growing number of tasks without being provided the funding needed to properly carry out their duties.

Spotlight: Introduction of regulations in one-third of states often ineffective or biased

Governments must be able to engage in fair, unbiased policymaking and enforcement, which involves resisting the pressures of vested interests regardless of their political, economic or social clout. However, in one-third of all the 41 countries surveyed, government agencies prove to be ineffectual and/or act with bias when it comes to enforcing regulations.

Political polarization poses a major obstacle to consensus-building

In almost one-half (18) of the countries surveyed, political polarization already poses a major obstacle to policymaking. The Netherlands and Sweden joined those countries in which polarization posed a major threat to building consensus during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Involvement of external experts underdeveloped in many countries

In 14 countries, obtaining external (scientific) expertise plays no or only a minor role in policymaking processes. This lack of expert involvement is particularly pronounced in Hungary, Cyprus, Turkey, Romania, Poland and Croatia, where only a select handful of experts are involved through opaque processes.

The will to engage in public consultation is on the decline in many countries

Significantly increased efforts on the part of current and future governments to build a consensus is relevant in a total of 18 of the countries surveyed. To be sure, even the SGI's top performers in this regard are not immune to potential backsliding. The temptation to streamline social coordination processes is certainly widespread and, if taken too far, can have a profoundly negative impact on the outcomes of such processes.

Spotlight: Open government in 12 countries is largely dysfunctional

Government must employ comprehensive, timely and user-friendly practices when publishing data and information and thereby allow citizens to hold their government accountable. While governments in Norway and the UK excel at publishing data and information, governments in 12 other countries are lagging behind in terms of how they present data and information to their respective publics.

Lack of evidence-informed policymaking hinders strategy development in many countries

Evidence-informed instruments are needed in order to identify and assess the likely effects of planned policies and the observable effects of existing policies. In about half of the countries surveyed, impact assessments are not regularly and/or systematically applied. We see a particular weakness with regard to governments monitoring whether their policy proposals are compatible with economic, social and environmental sustainability goals.

Strategy development depends substantially on the extent to which a government prioritizes it

Governments must also demonstrate the political will to create strategic capacities and then apply them in the ways intended. For example, until 2016, Poland scored consistently among the top ten in terms of its domestic capacity for strategy development (7.3). However, Poland's score on this criterion has since plunged to 4.0 points, bringing Poland down to its current third-to-last position on the ranking.

Spotlight: Need for stronger integration of RIA findings and ex post evaluation into all countries' policymaking processes

A closer look at the findings shows that even countries featuring robust evidence-based instruments still show room for improvement. For example, Finland's Regulatory Impact Assessment Council concluded in its 2017 and 2018 reviews of regulatory proposals that a significant share of RIAs were of poor quality.

Coherent communication of strategic goals has worsened in many countries

Since 2012, performance with regard to the coherent communication of strategic goals has worsened in 15 countries and improved in only five. While in several countries this trend is associated with changes in government, inconsistent messaging is a constant feature of governance in seven countries: Cyprus, Croatia, Belgium, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Czechia. In each of these countries, citizens cannot rely on their government's messaging to track progress in policy outcomes.

18 countries feature only sporadic and selective monitoring of institutional arrangements

Given the rapid pace of worldwide change, governments must not only improve their strategic planning and policy evaluation, but they should also review their respective structures and processes. This requires that institutional arrangements be regularly and effectively put to the test and evaluated. This kind of self-monitoring can be observed in Finland, New Zealand and Sweden but only occasionally in 18 of the countries surveyed.

Some countries offer inspiring solutions to the three governance challenges.

In Finland, policy goals are a structural feature of strategic planning. Policies are also well-coordinated, in large part because the prime minister's office (PMO) has the capacity to track progress in policy implementation and coordinate communication within the government.

Denmark offers a good example of information-based policymaking. Relevant stakeholders are involved in the conduct of impact assessments, and evaluations have been explicitly integrated into the policy formulation process.

In the United Kingdom, important policy measures are subject to ex post evaluations that assess the impact of each measure in terms of their desired effect. In turn, policy measures can thus be revised or new measures introduced, if necessary. In addition, the government draws on behavioral research findings for decision-making.

Estonia stands out in terms of digital coordination efforts. The country's Information System for Legal Drafts allows users to search proposals currently under consideration and participate in public consultations. A data exchange platform supports coordinated and integrated policymaking and monitoring across sectors.

2. Introduction

Robust liberal democratic institutions and processes are essential but nonetheless insufficient when it comes to governments overcoming the crises associated with a renewed global order, the new model of inter-system competition, climate change, pandemics, social divisions and rising inequality. These crises, and in particular their combined impact, call for significantly increased efforts from governments to demonstrate long-term thinking and acumen in crisis management. If governments are to successfully navigate such crises, they will need to do more than identify and announce sustainable policies; they will need to institute more efficient, inclusive and forward-looking governance solutions in order to ensure that such measures achieve their desired outcomes in the long term.

Governments must therefore proactively address three common issues in governance and develop innovative approaches to tackling each more effectively:

1) **Policy coordination**: Silo-based thinking within individual departments and levels of government presents a serious challenge to policy coherence. Designing coordination procedures in which proactive problem-solving is the norm is an effective means of resolving the traditional problems that arise in policy coordination.

2) **Consensus-building**: Without public trust and support, even the most ably organized government will eventually fail to deliver effective policies. Governments must therefore strive to rapidly build a broad knowledge base and public support by involving all relevant experts and societal actors in the early stages of policy development.

3) **Strategy development**: The rapid emergence and complexity of today's societal problems demand more than ever greater strategic and evidence-informed policymaking in government. If strategic action is to become the rule rather than the exception, governments will need to integrate collective learning processes, mutually adaptive coordination protocols and a culture of open communication that is facilitative of evidence-based foresight into the routines of policy development.

Overly decentralized and fragmented policy development often delivers policies which, built on a minimal consensus, fail to properly address the multiple dimensions of the policy problem at hand. This has proved true of Germany's climate policy in the past decade. The German government's failure to effectively coordinate its climate policy activities aimed at establishing Paris Agreement-compatible GHG targets and a sound mix of policy measures have severely hampered the country's progress in reducing emissions and deploying renewable energies (Flachsland et al. 2021).

Effective coordination is important not only during policy development but also during policy implementation. This was made painfully obvious during the first few months of the coronavirus pandemic when, in most countries, ill-defined administrative responsibilities resulted in a patchwork of pandemic-mitigation responses that heavily compromised any larger national strategy to address the crisis (Schiller et al. 2021). However, as discussed below, some countries such as Finland have improved policy coherence over the past decade by developing novel means of strengthening competencies and monitoring capacities at the top levels of government and by introducing proven formal and informal coordination mechanisms.

In many countries, political polarization poses a major obstacle to achieving a cross-party consensus on major policy initiatives that are focused on the transformation toward a resource-efficient economy, combating climate change, containing a pandemic and efforts to mitigate the negative effects of digitalization on society. In those areas lacking a (broad) consensus on the causes of and solutions to social problems, polarization tendencies can prove particularly damaging.

Many of today's problems, like climate change or the transformation toward a circular economy, are referred to as "wicked" problems (Rittel and Webber 1973) in part because they defy a clear definition. Solutions to

these problems are neither simple nor final; at best, finding good or satisfactory solutions requires involving multiple stakeholders in an adaptive, dynamic process. It is therefore imperative that governments draw on all potentially relevant expertise available to them – as early as possible. Equally imperative is that they do so transparently. Once again, the coronavirus pandemic offers an instructive example of the disastrous consequences of failing to consider all relevant expert opinions. In Sweden and the Netherlands, for instance, the pool of experts brought in to advise the governments of these countries in the early days of the crisis turned out to be much too small. As a result, both countries struggled to effectively contain COVID-19 caseloads among their respective populations (Schiller et al. 2021).

A lack of consensus on the root causes and effects of important social issues provides authoritarian populists ample opportunity to exploit – and thus deepen – societal and political divisions. This, in turn, fuels their popularity. Policymakers must therefore do more than bring all the relevant experts to the table; they must remain engaged with street-level bureaucrats in order to get a more clear sense of the impact of specific policy choices. At the same time, governments must resist the temptation – as seen during the pandemic – to go too far in streamlining social coordination processes and thereby significantly reduce their effectiveness (Schiller et al. 2021).

Many of the crises we currently face as a society, such as climate change, global order and inter-system competition, natural resource scarcity and pandemic threats are the result of short-sighted political decision-making of the past. Government today must therefore be able to quickly respond to crises and thereby mitigate their short-term negative consequences while, at the same time, direct policymaking toward long-term aims. Establishing new strategic planning units and policy labs or conducting stress tests during a crisis are not enough to succeed at both. The more crucial factor is the extent to which these new tools or procedures can be integrated into the political decision-making process and help create a governmental culture that values strategic, forward-looking thinking and institutional learning.

Covering a period of more than ten years, our Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI) dataset, which monitors coordination, consensus-building and strategy efforts in 41 OECD and EU countries, is well-positioned to offer valuable insight into key developments in these areas. The figure below provides an overview of the SGI indicators we used to examine these three dimensions of governance. The expert ratings and assessments for each individual indicator of the SGI dataset are the result of a multistage validation and review process involving more than 100 regional, country and sector experts (for more information on SGI methodology, visit our data portal at sgi-network.org).

Three common governance issues
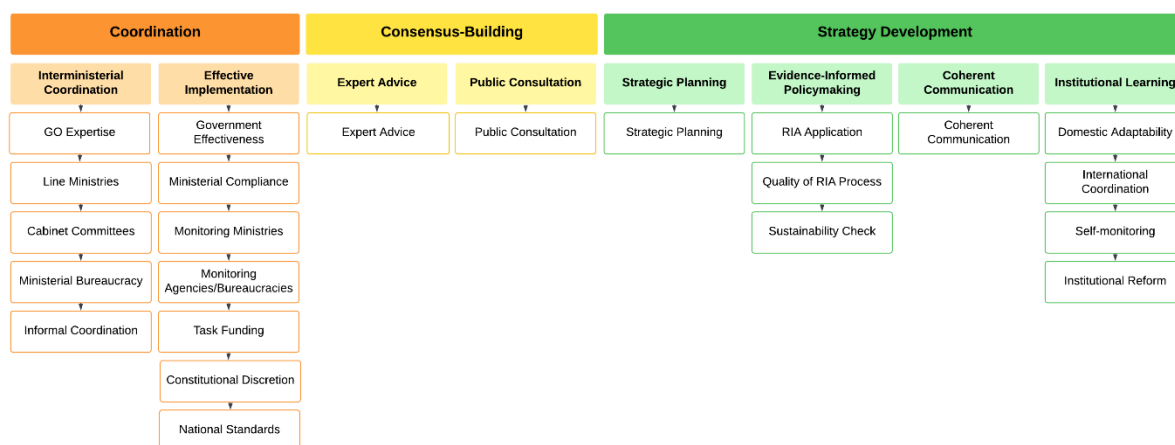
3. Policy coordination

The ability to carry out integrated and coordinated state responses across various sectoral arenas and scales of governance is essential for tackling problems like climate change, depleting natural resources, pandemic threats, a changed global order and inter-system competition precisely because these problems are cross-cutting and systemic in nature.

The SGI 2022's aggregated results for the capacity to coordinate policy reveal a mixed bag of performance. On average, we see a downward trend for coordination capacity since the economic and financial crises of 2008. After reaching its lowest point in 2019 at 6.5 points, the average score rebounded somewhat to 6.7 points in 2022. The latter development seems to be driven in part by coordinated government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and the structural weaknesses it exposed within existing institutions. In Germany, for example, where adopting e-governance mechanisms has been slow, the pandemic raised awareness of the need to create digital infrastructures and agile mindsets in the public sector. As a result, new avenues for an accelerated introduction of e-governance tools in the chancellery have opened up (Heinemann et al. 2022). In Spain, the pandemic drew attention to cracks in the Spanish administrative model of territorial organization. To address the sluggish, heterogenous decision-making that characterized the country's early response to the crisis, intergovernmental coordination mechanisms have been improved. This includes, for example, representatives of the country's various health authorities meeting on a regular basis to share information and make common decisions (Kölling et al. 2022).

Coordination
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Finland	9.02	9.02	8.97	8.97	8.80	8.80	8.63	8.63	-0.39
2	New Zealand	8.36	8.52	8.62	8.62	8.62	8.62	8.46	8.46	+0.10
3	Canada	8.32	8.32	8.32	8.32	8.32	8.32	8.32	8.42	+0.10
4	Denmark	8.31	8.31	8.31	8.31	8.31	8.31	8.31	8.41	+0.10
5	United Kingdom	8.40	8.34	8.40	8.29	8.07	8.07	7.58	8.29	-0.11
6	Australia	7.92	7.70	7.70	7.76	7.76	7.70	8.03	7.98	+0.06
7	France	7.43	6.59	6.80	6.86	7.61	7.61	7.78	7.78	+0.35
8	Luxembourg	7.71	7.61	7.61	7.61	7.61	7.56	7.56	7.61	-0.10
9	Spain	6.97	7.02	7.19	7.13	7.01	7.22	7.11	7.56	+0.59
10	Switzerland	7.52	7.52	7.52	7.52	7.52	7.52	7.52	7.52	0.00
11	United States	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	6.46	6.30	6.30	7.43	-0.57
12	Sweden	7.17	7.38	7.27	7.27	7.27	7.27	7.21	7.32	+0.15
13	Latvia	7.89	7.78	7.78	7.78	7.78	7.78	7.78	7.28	-0.61
14	Italy	7.07	7.29	7.29	7.23	7.04	5.99	5.62	7.26	+0.19
15	South Korea	7.29	7.01	7.01	6.84	7.07	7.12	7.01	7.18	-0.11
16	Belgium	7.54	7.54	7.49	7.32	7.27	7.10	7.00	7.07	-0.47
	Chile	7.17	7.17	7.17	7.17	7.17	7.08	7.01	7.07	-0.10
18	Germany	6.49	6.67	6.61	6.72	6.72	6.67	6.83	7.04	+0.55
	Norway	7.21	7.21	7.21	7.04	7.04	7.04	7.04	7.04	-0.17
20	Ireland	6.62	6.84	7.00	7.13	6.87	6.92	6.92	7.02	+0.40
21	Iceland	6.96	6.96	6.96	6.96	6.96	6.96	6.96	6.96	0.00
22	Portugal	6.53	6.63	6.57	6.93	6.88	6.93	7.21	6.93	+0.40
23	Lithuania	6.93	6.93	6.93	6.93	6.83	6.83	6.83	6.83	-0.10
24	Japan	6.47	6.57	6.82	6.81	6.81	6.81	6.77	6.77	+0.30
—	Average	6.71	6.69	6.66	6.66	6.60	6.58	6.54	6.65	
25	Greece	5.02	4.92	4.40	4.99	5.24	5.29	5.54	6.38	+1.36
26	Hungary	6.94	6.84	6.54	6.74	6.74	6.64	6.39	6.33	-0.61
27	Estonia	6.64	6.48	6.21	5.96	6.43	6.54	6.44	6.28	-0.36
28	Austria	5.66	5.76	5.66	5.76	5.76	6.32	6.06	6.26	+0.60
29	Israel	6.13	6.13	5.97	5.91	6.07	6.07	6.07	6.07	-0.06
30	Poland	7.18	7.23	7.23	6.68	6.29	6.23	6.18	5.73	-1.45
31	Mexico	6.40	6.34	5.97	5.74	5.59	5.48	5.66	5.70	-0.70
32	Slovenia	5.31	5.31	5.41	5.36	5.36	5.19	5.09	5.68	+0.37
33	Netherlands	6.66	6.60	6.28	6.28	6.33	6.33	6.11	5.64	-1.02
34	Malta	4.50	5.01	5.07	5.27	5.47	5.57	5.62	5.62	+1.12
35	Turkey	7.00	6.63	6.62	6.20	5.73	5.69	5.53	5.58	-1.42
36	Czechia	5.47	5.47	5.47	5.63	5.53	5.59	5.59	5.31	-0.16
37	Slovakia	5.64	5.53	5.53	5.42	5.42	5.20	4.62	4.83	-0.81
38	Bulgaria	5.12	4.69	4.91	4.86	4.86	4.86	4.86	4.63	-0.49
39	Romania	4.78	4.61	4.61	4.83	4.41	4.41	4.51	4.46	-0.32
40	Croatia	4.22	4.22	4.32	4.16	4.16	4.16	4.21	4.41	+0.19
41	Cyprus	2.98	3.46	3.46	3.57	3.57	3.73	3.73	3.90	+0.92

SGI Sustainable Governance Indicators

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Most states saw regression or stagnation in coordination capacity over past decade

However, compared to the SGI 2014 findings, only six of the 41 countries surveyed improved notably in terms of their coordination capacity, with Greece and Malta showing relatively strong improvement. A total of 21 countries saw some form of weakened performance, with Poland, Turkey and the Netherlands showing a relatively significant drop. In the past ten years, Poland, the Netherlands and Hungary in particular saw a steady decline in their capacity to coordinate policies in either the policy formulation or the implementation stage.

Cyprus, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria bring up the rear in the comparison of coordination capacity. There are also no changes at the top of the ranking. In the opinion of our experts, Finland, New Zealand, Canada and Denmark continue to create the best institutional conditions for an effective coordination of policies. Germany ranks only 18th in this regard. The greatest (governance) challenges for Germany's decentralized system of government continue to be the marginally effective coordination between the chancellor's office and the line ministries (rank 30), the chancellery's insufficient sectoral expertise which limits its ability to monitor line ministries (rank 23) and the lack of proactive coordination with regard to cabinet proposals (rank 28).

Interministerial Coordination
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Finland	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	0.0
2	New Zealand	8.6	8.6	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	+0.2
	United Kingdom	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.6	8.8	0.0
4	Denmark	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.6	+0.2
5	Australia	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	0.0
	Canada	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.4	+0.2
7	United States	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	6.8	6.6	6.6	8.2	-0.8
8	France	8.2	7.4	7.6	7.6	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	-0.2
	Luxembourg	8.2	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	-0.2
	Spain	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.8	8.0	8.0	8.0	+0.4
11	Belgium	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.0	7.8	-0.4
	Chile	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.6	7.8	7.8	-0.2
	South Korea	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	0.0
14	Ireland	6.8	6.8	7.0	7.6	7.4	7.4	7.4	7.6	+0.8
15	Italy	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.2	6.2	5.8	7.4	-0.4
16	Greece	5.6	5.4	4.8	5.2	5.6	5.8	6.2	7.2	+1.6
	Japan	6.6	6.8	7.2	7.4	7.4	7.4	7.2	7.2	+0.6
	Portugal	6.4	6.6	6.8	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	+0.8
19	Hungary	8.0	7.8	7.2	7.6	7.6	7.4	7.0	7.0	-1.0
	Latvia	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.0	-1.0
	Lithuania	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	-0.2
22	Iceland	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	0.0
—	Average	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.8	
23	Switzerland	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	0.0
24	Mexico	6.8	6.8	6.6	6.6	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.4	-0.4
	Netherlands	7.2	7.2	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.4	-0.8
26	Germany	6.2	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.2	0.0
	Norway	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	0.0
	Sweden	6.0	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	+0.2
29	Estonia	6.4	6.4	6.2	5.8	6.2	6.2	6.0	6.0	-0.4
30	Israel	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	+0.2
	Malta	4.0	4.8	4.8	5.2	5.6	5.8	5.8	5.8	+1.8
	Poland	6.8	6.8	6.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	-1.0
	Slovenia	5.4	5.4	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.4	5.8	+0.4
34	Turkey	7.0	6.6	6.8	6.4	5.8	5.6	5.6	5.6	-1.4
35	Austria	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.4	5.2	5.0	5.4	+1.2
	Czechia	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	-0.2
37	Slovakia	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	4.8	5.0	-0.4
38	Romania	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.6	4.6	4.8	4.8	-0.2
39	Bulgaria	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	-0.2
	Croatia	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.6	+0.6
41	Cyprus	3.4	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	+0.4

SGI Sustainable Governance Indicators | BertelsmannStiftung

GO Expertise
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Australia	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Canada	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Chile	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Finland	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Latvia	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	United Kingdom	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	United States	10	10	10	10	7	7	7	9	-1
8	Denmark	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	+1
	Mexico	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	New Zealand	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	+1
	Norway	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	South Korea	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Spain	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Sweden	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	+1
15	Belgium	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	France	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	-1
	Greece	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	+1
	Hungary	9	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	-2
	Ireland	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	+1
	Italy	7	6	6	6	6	5	5	7	0
	Japan	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	+1
	Lithuania	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
—	Average	6.6	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.7	
23	Austria	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	+1
	Estonia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	+1
	Germany	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Iceland	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Israel	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	+1
	Luxembourg	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Netherlands	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Poland	9	9	9	6	6	6	6	6	-3
	Portugal	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
32	Czechia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Malta	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	+1
	Romania	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	-1
	Slovakia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Switzerland	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Turkey	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
38	Bulgaria	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Croatia	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	+2
	Slovenia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
41	Cyprus	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0

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Interministerial coordination

A key aspect of coordination capacity worthy of a closer look is the SGI criterion of interministerial coordination, that is, the capacity of governments to effectively orchestrate policymaking across ministerial lines to deliver coherent policies. Again, Finland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are the best performers in this regard and have consistently received top ratings over time.

Effective cross-sectoral coordination requires informed, properly equipped leadership able to ensure that individual political initiatives can be woven together into a coherent and goal-oriented government program. The SGI "GO expertise" indicator examines whether the government office (e.g., the prime minister's office or a chancellery) has sufficient resources to regularly and independently evaluate if the policy content of ministry proposals fits within the government's overarching policy agenda. **Finland**, with consistently high scores over time in this regard, is a standout example. The Finnish prime minister's office has proved not only able to track progress in policy implementation, it has also effectively coordinated communication across the government and promote proactive policy development (Hiilamo et al. 2022).

Ideology can unravel even well-functioning coordination mechanisms

Showing greater volatility in terms of their capacity to generate GO expertise, the United States and Poland recorded high scores on this issue in 2012[1], which was followed by dramatic losses in 2017 and 2016, respectively. These losses are clearly associated with the shift toward a more autocratic logic of governing. In the **United States**, President Trump and his administration rarely chose to rely on experienced or expert opinion when making decisions. In fact, the White House staff was often preoccupied with preventing the president from taking further destructive action. The Biden administration has since reversed these tendencies, investing instead in expert-informed policymaking (Béland et al. 2022). Though **Poland's** Chancellery of the Prime Minister continues to be well-staffed and to evaluate most draft bills, under the PiS government, its policy expertise has been diminished by the fact that political obedience rather than expertise or professionalism has become the key qualification for becoming a member of the administration employment (Matthes et al. 2022).

Thus, progress in creating GO expertise, once achieved, is clearly susceptible to backsliding when such institutional arrangements are subject to ideological attacks from the highest levels of government. At the same time, however, the example of the United States also shows that such arrangements, such as those

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[1] Please note: The year 2012 refers to the observation period covered in the SGI 2014 edition.

responsible for ensuring a well-informed White House, can be rebuilt once expertise-driven leadership is in high demand again.

Line Ministries
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Belgium	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0
	United States	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0
3	Australia	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Canada	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Chile	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Denmark	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Finland	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	France	9	7	8	8	9	9	9	9	0
	Ireland	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	New Zealand	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	South Korea	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	United Kingdom	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
13	Greece	7	7	6	6	6	6	7	8	+1
	Hungary	10	10	9	9	9	8	8	8	-2
	Iceland	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Latvia	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Luxembourg	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Norway	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Spain	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	+1
—	Average	7.3	7.3	7.2	7.1	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.2	
20	Israel	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Italy	8	8	8	8	7	6	6	7	-1
	Japan	7	7	7	8	8	8	7	7	0
	Lithuania	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Mexico	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Netherlands	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	7	-1
	Portugal	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Sweden	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Switzerland	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Turkey	9	8	8	7	7	7	6	7	-2
30	Austria	3	3	3	3	4	6	5	6	+3
	Bulgaria	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Czechia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Germany	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	-1
	Poland	8	8	8	6	6	6	6	6	-2
35	Estonia	8	8	7	6	7	7	6	5	-3
	Malta	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	+2
	Romania	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
38	Croatia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Slovakia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
40	Cyprus	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
	Slovenia	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0

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In no less than ten countries are the PMOs lacking the competence to evaluate policy proposals. The PMOs in Cyprus, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Switzerland, Slovakia, Romania, Malta and Czechia thus find it particularly difficult to facilitate interministerial coordination.

Institutions responsible for coordination between line ministries and the PMO, and among cabinet members, ministry officials and civil servants thus offer governments additional means to increase policy coherence. The use of additional coordination mechanisms may also help compensate for the lack of GO expertise.

However, over the last ten years, we see in seven states a deterioration in the quality of formal coordination activity between PMOs and ministries. In Estonia, coordination between the PMO and ministries continued to deteriorate even further during the pandemic (Toots et al. 2022). Only three states – Austria, Greece and Spain – were able to improve coordination significantly between their respective PMO and line ministries from 2012 to 2022.

Cabinet Committees
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Belgium	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0
	Finland	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0
3	Denmark	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	New Zealand	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Spain	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	United Kingdom	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
7	Australia	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Canada	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	France	8	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	0
	Ireland	5	6	6	8	7	7	7	8	+3
	Italy	8	8	8	8	8	7	6	8	0
	Luxembourg	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Slovenia	7	7	8	8	8	8	7	8	+1
	United States	8	8	8	8	5	5	5	8	0
15	Lithuania	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Netherlands	9	9	8	8	8	8	8	7	-2
	Portugal	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	+1
	South Korea	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
—	Average	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.1	6.1	
19	Chile	7	7	7	7	7	5	6	6	-1
	Croatia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Greece	5	4	3	4	5	5	5	6	+1
	Iceland	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Israel	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Japan	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	+1
	Malta	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	+1
	Slovakia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Turkey	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
28	Cyprus	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	+1
	Czechia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Germany	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Hungary	6	6	6	7	7	7	5	5	-1
	Mexico	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	5	-2
	Romania	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
34	Bulgaria	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Poland	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
36	Austria	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	0
	Estonia	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
	Latvia	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	2	-6
	Switzerland	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
40	Norway	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
	Sweden	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0

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Tasked with reviewing policy proposals, cabinet or ministerial committees can also prove effective in efforts to coordinate such proposals prior to cabinet meetings. Yet, since 2012 this indicator shows considerable fluctuation. In 11 of the surveyed countries, there has been a consistent rise and fall in the importance afforded to relevant commissions for policy development. In **Mexico**, President López Obrador has systematically undermined the autonomy and relevance of independent bodies and agencies as a means of increasing his own power. Coordination between these bodies – now staffed with Obrador's loyal followers – has stagnated as top-down efforts to steer policy have increasingly replaced horizontal coordination activities (Muno et al. 2022). In **Latvia**, where the prime minister introduced a resolution in 2019 that effectively removed cabinet committees from the government's decision-making process, such committees no longer convene. Issues once taken up by such committees are now addressed elsewhere by so-called special steering groups (Mangule et al. 2022). At the top and the bottom of the ranking on this indicator, we see relative stable scores for those states that tend to maintain cabinet committees and for those that have no cabinet committees.

Ministerial Bureaucracy
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Estonia	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0
	Finland	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0
	Switzerland	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0
4	Denmark	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Latvia	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	9	+1
	Luxembourg	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	New Zealand	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Portugal	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	United Kingdom	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	9	+1
10	Australia	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Canada	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	France	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
13	Chile	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Germany	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Iceland	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Italy	8	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	-1
	Japan	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Lithuania	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	-1
	Norway	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	South Korea	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Spain	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Sweden	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
—	Average	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.8	
23	Austria	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	+1
	Greece	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	6	+2
	Ireland	6	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Malta	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	+2
	Mexico	5	5	5	5	6	6	5	6	+1
	Romania	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Slovenia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	United States	8	8	8	8	4	4	4	6	-2
31	Belgium	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Cyprus	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	+1
	Czechia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Hungary	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Israel	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Netherlands	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	-1
	Poland	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	-1
	Slovakia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Turkey	7	6	7	6	5	5	5	5	-2
40	Bulgaria	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	-1
	Croatia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0

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Digitalization for Interministerial Coordination
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Estonia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10	10	10	
2	Finland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
	Luxembourg	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	9	
	New Zealand	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
	Norway	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
	South Korea	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
7	Chile	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	8	
	Denmark	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	Latvia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	7	8	
	Lithuania	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	Slovenia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	8	
	Spain	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	United Kingdom	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	United States	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
15	Australia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Bulgaria	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Canada	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	7	
	France	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	7	
	Greece	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	5	7	
	Ireland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Malta	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Switzerland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
—	Average	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.2	6.3	6.6	
23	Belgium	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	6	
	Germany	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	6	
	Hungary	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Israel	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Mexico	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Poland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Portugal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Sweden	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Turkey	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
32	Austria	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	5	
	Croatia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	5	
	Czechia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
	Italy	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	5	
	Netherlands	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	4	5	
37	Cyprus	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	4	
	Japan	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	4	
	Slovakia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	4	
40	Iceland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	2	3	
	Romania	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	

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The extent to which governments can rely on proactive civil servants to effectively coordinate policy proposals is another important means of interministerial coordination. Nonetheless, 11 of the surveyed countries (i.e., Croatia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Slovakia, Poland, Netherlands, Israel, Hungary, Czechia, Cyprus, and Belgium) are critically underdeveloped in this regard, plagued either by a heavily compartmentalized or politicized bureaucracy, or both.

Spotlight: Not enough states are leveraging digital technology to facilitate interministerial coordination

Where formal coordination mechanisms fall short, digital technologies can prove essential to fostering policy coordination across and within ministries by offering alternative means of proactive policy coordination. Government efforts in this area appear to have accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the average rating increasing from 6.3 in 2019 (SGI 2020) to 6.6 in 2022 (SGI 2022).

Estonia, Finland, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway and South Korea, each of which feature sophisticated digital infrastructures designed to foster interministerial coordination, are the top performers for this indicator. Their use of digital technologies in this regard encourages public servants to share capabilities across sectors and allows them to set measurable administrative goals while ensuring greater accountability and transparency within government. In Estonia, for example, which consistently tops the SGI's digitalization ranking, the Information System for Legal Drafts (Eelnõude infosüsteem, EIS) allows users to search documents currently under consideration, participate in public consultations and submit comments on draft bills. The data exchange platform X-Road further supports coordinated and integrated policymaking and monitoring across sectors (Toots et al. 2022).

Implementation
Unit: Score

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022		change to 2014
1	Canada	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4		0.0
	Sweden	8.3	8.6	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.2	8.4		+0.1
	Switzerland	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4		0.0
4	Denmark	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2		0.0
5	New Zealand	8.1	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.1	8.1		0.0
6	Germany	6.8	7.3	7.2	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.7	7.9	↑	+1.1
	Norway	8.2	8.2	8.2	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.9		-0.3
8	United Kingdom	8.0	7.9	8.0	7.8	7.3	7.3	6.6	7.8		-0.2
9	Finland	8.4	8.4	8.3	8.3	8.0	8.0	7.7	7.7	↘	-0.7
10	Australia	7.4	7.0	7.0	7.1	7.1	7.0	7.7	7.6		+0.2
	France	6.7	5.8	6.0	6.1	7.2	7.2	7.6	7.6	↗	+0.9
	Latvia	7.8	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6		-0.2
13	Luxembourg	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.1	7.2		0.0
14	Austria	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.4	7.1	7.1		0.0
	Iceland	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1		0.0
	Italy	6.3	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.9	5.8	5.4	7.1	↗	+0.8
	Spain	6.3	6.4	6.8	6.7	6.2	6.4	6.2	7.1	↗	+0.8
18	Lithuania	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7		0.0
	Portugal	6.7	6.7	6.3	6.7	6.6	6.7	7.2	6.7		0.0
	United States	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.1	6.0	6.0	6.7		-0.3
21	Estonia	6.9	6.6	6.2	6.1	6.7	6.9	6.9	6.6		-0.3
	South Korea	6.8	6.2	6.2	5.9	6.3	6.4	6.2	6.6		-0.2
—	Average	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.5		
23	Ireland	6.4	6.9	7.0	6.7	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.4		0.0
24	Belgium	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.4	6.3	6.0	6.0	6.3	↘	-0.6
	Chile	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.6	6.2	6.3		0.0
	Israel	6.7	6.7	6.3	6.2	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3		-0.4
	Japan	6.3	6.3	6.4	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.3	6.3		0.0
28	Hungary	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.7		-0.2
	Poland	7.6	7.7	7.7	7.6	6.8	6.7	6.6	5.7	↓	-1.9
30	Greece	4.4	4.4	4.0	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.9	5.6	↑	+1.2
	Slovenia	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	4.8	4.8	5.6		+0.4
	Turkey	7.0	6.7	6.4	6.0	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.6	↓	-1.4
33	Malta	5.0	5.2	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.4	5.4		+0.4
34	Czechia	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.7	5.7	5.8	5.8	5.2		-0.1
35	Mexico	6.0	5.9	5.3	4.9	4.8	4.6	5.1	5.0	↓	-1.0
36	Netherlands	6.1	6.0	5.6	5.6	5.7	5.7	5.2	4.9	↓	-1.2
37	Bulgaria	5.4	4.8	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	4.7	↘	-0.7
	Slovakia	5.9	5.7	5.7	5.4	5.4	5.0	4.4	4.7	↓	-1.2
39	Croatia	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.2		-0.2
40	Romania	4.6	4.2	4.2	4.7	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1	↘	-0.5
41	Cyprus	2.6	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.7	3.7	4.0	↑	+1.4

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Effective implementation

Being able to steer policymaking across different ministry lines is not the only relevant contributor to a country's coordination capacity. Equally important is its ability to ultimately ensure the effective and efficient delegation of tasks and policy implementation across various scales of governance, including ministries, agencies and subnational governments.

Our experts find that policy implementation capacities across OECD and EU governments have declined overall, worsening from an average score of 6.6 in 2012 to 6.4 in 2019 before rising slightly to 6.5 points in 2022. While these capacities were weakened in one way or another in 19 out of the 41 surveyed governments (with Poland, Turkey, Slovakia, the Netherlands and Mexico showing a marked deterioration), only two countries were able to improve their capacities significantly. Canada, Sweden and Switzerland are at the top of our ranking. The greatest relative gains in implementation capacity between 2012 and 2022 can be observed in **Germany**. This positive development can be attributed to a high implementation rate of projects specified in the 2018 coalition agreement and the fact that the German government no longer tends to delegate tasks from the federal to Länder levels without ensuring commensurate funding (Heinemann et al. 2022). Over the last ten years, Poland, Turkey and the Netherlands have recorded the greatest losses in implementation capacity and proved unable to significantly reverse this trend during the first two years of the pandemic. A closer look at the individual indicators comprising the implementation criterion reveals important country-specific details.

Government Effectiveness
Unit: Score

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022		change to 2014
1	Germany	7	8	8	8	8	8	9	9	↑	+2
	Latvia	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9		0
	Sweden	8	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	↑	+1
	Switzerland	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9		0
5	Australia	7	6	6	6	6	6	8	8	↑	+1
	Canada	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8		0
	Denmark	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8		0
	Italy	7	8	8	7	8	6	5	8	↑	+1
	New Zealand	8	9	9	9	9	9	8	8		0
	Norway	9	9	9	8	8	8	8	8	↓	-1
	United Kingdom	9	9	9	8	7	7	5	8	↓	-1
12	Austria	7	7	7	7	7	8	7	7		0
	Estonia	9	8	7	7	8	8	8	7	↓	-2
	Finland	9	9	9	9	8	8	7	7	↓	-2
	France	5	3	3	3	6	6	7	7	↑	+2
	Lithuania	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7		0
	Luxembourg	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7		0
	Portugal	6	7	6	7	7	7	8	7	↑	+1
	Spain	6	6	7	7	6	6	5	7	↑	+1
—	Average	6.7	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.3	6.2	6.4		
20	Belgium	7	7	7	6	6	6	5	6	↓	-1
	Greece	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	↑	+2
	Iceland	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6		0
	Ireland	7	8	8	7	6	6	6	6	↓	-1
	Israel	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	↓	-1
	Japan	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	↓	-1
	Malta	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6		0
	Poland	8	8	8	9	7	7	7	6	↓	-2
	Slovenia	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	6		0
	South Korea	6	5	5	4	5	5	5	6		0
	Turkey	8	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	↓	-2
31	Bulgaria	6	5	6	6	6	6	5	5	↓	-1
	Chile	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	↓	-1
	Cyprus	2	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	↑	+3
	Netherlands	8	8	7	7	7	7	7	5	↓	-3
	Slovakia	7	6	6	6	6	5	4	5	↓	-2
	United States	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	5		0
37	Croatia	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	↓	-1
	Czechia	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4		0
	Hungary	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	↓	-1
	Mexico	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4		0
	Romania	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	↓	-1

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Government ability to achieve self-set goals has deteriorated in half of the states surveyed

The first benchmark of a government's policy implementation capacity is whether it can achieve its own major policy objectives. Overall, we observe a steady decline in this ability since 2012, with the average score of 6.7 (2012) falling to 6.2 (2019), before improving slightly from 2019 to 2022. For the SGI 2022, Germany, Latvia, Sweden and Switzerland form the top group, while Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Mexico and Romania bring up the rear. No less than 17 countries saw their government effectiveness diminish over the last ten years, while our experts observed a positive development in nine countries over the same period.

Some of our frontrunner governments in terms of government effectiveness managed to link their ability to achieve their own major policy objectives with effective and transparent efforts to monitor implementation. **Latvia's** newly established central government planning unit, the Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre (Pārresoru koordinācijas centrs, PKC), offers regular analyses and recommendations that feed into the day-to-day review of government implementation activity (Mangule et al.

2022). In **Sweden**, policy monitoring has been essential as the government navigates new, more interactive governance forms that involve various departments and government agencies in designing policies (Petridou et al. 2022).

As is well-known, government effectiveness also critically depends on the art of instituting stable (coalition) governing structures and securing a stable majority in legislative chambers. This proved to be a particularly difficult feat in Australia, Portugal, Czechia, Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, Lithuania and Romania during the observation period of 2020 to 2022, as each of these countries struggled with political instability during this period.

A second benchmark for a government's policy implementation capacity is the extent to which it is able to secure and monitor implementation across all its scales of governance, which includes ministers, line ministries, agencies and subnational bureaucracies.

Over the last ten years, mechanisms to increase cabinet discipline have weakened in their effectiveness in many places. Twelve of the countries surveyed have seen a weakening of ministerial compliance. In Cyprus, Slovakia, Romania and Croatia institutional mechanisms to increase cabinet cohesion such as prime ministerial powers over personnel, policies or structures, coalition committees, party summits, comprehensive government programs/coalition agreements and cabinet meetings play no decisive role.

Governments have different means of increasing cabinet cohesion. In **Canada,** a consistent frontrunner among the countries surveyed in terms of ensuring compliance, the prime minister's office sends every minister a public mandate letter outlining the term's agenda at the beginning of every mandate. Ministers are evaluated accordingly and, if deemed a political liability, replaced (Lecours et al. 2022).

Insufficient monitoring of public agencies in 12 countries; political clientelism complicates matters

In addition to carrying out their activities as coherently as possible, national (and subnational) ministries must also monitor the activities of semi-autonomous executive agencies in their task area without interfering with their day-to-day business. In a total of 12 countries surveyed, however, efforts to monitor public agencies have proved insufficient. In countries such as Cyprus (Christophorou et al. 2022), Slovenia (Hacek et al. 2022), Romania (Wagner et al. 2022) and Slovakia (Kneuer et al. 2022), the state's weak monitoring capacity is further complicated by the presence of political clientelism and favoritism in public policy. Over the last ten years, our experts observe a decline in the capacity to monitor public agencies in ten countries, with the average rating falling from 6.6 (2012) to 6.5 (2022).

Ministerial Compliance
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Canada	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0
	Hungary	10	10	10	10	9	9	8	10	0
	Sweden	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0
	United States	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0
5	Australia	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	9	-1
	Chile	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Denmark	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	France	9	8	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Iceland	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Latvia	10	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	-1
	New Zealand	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Norway	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	South Korea	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	-1
	Spain	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	United Kingdom	9	9	9	9	8	8	7	9	0
16	Belgium	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Estonia	9	9	8	8	9	9	8	8	-1
	Finland	9	9	8	8	8	8	8	8	-1
	Ireland	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	+1
	Italy	9	9	9	9	8	6	6	8	-1
	Japan	6	6	7	7	7	7	8	8	+2
	Mexico	9	9	8	8	8	7	8	8	-1
	Switzerland	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
—	Average	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.8	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.7	
24	Bulgaria	8	7	8	7	7	7	7	7	-1
	Germany	8	8	7	8	8	7	7	7	-1
	Greece	6	6	5	6	6	5	5	7	+1
	Israel	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Lithuania	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Luxembourg	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Netherlands	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Poland	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	7	0
	Portugal	9	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	-2
33	Austria	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Czechia	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	6	0
	Malta	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	+1
	Slovenia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Turkey	9	9	7	7	6	7	7	6	-3
38	Croatia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Romania	5	5	5	6	5	5	5	5	0
	Slovakia	7	8	8	7	7	6	5	5	-2
41	Cyprus	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	+1

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Monitoring Agencies/Bureaucracies
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Hungary	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0
2	Austria	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	New Zealand	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Sweden	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
5	Australia	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	8	-1
	Canada	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Denmark	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Estonia	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Finland	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Germany	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	+1
	Greece	8	8	7	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Luxembourg	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Norway	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
14	Chile	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	France	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Japan	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Latvia	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Poland	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	7	-1
	Portugal	8	8	8	8	7	7	8	7	-1
	Spain	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	-1
	Turkey	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	United Kingdom	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	-1
—	Average	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	
23	Belgium	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	6	-1
	Ireland	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	+1
	Israel	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	-1
	Lithuania	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	South Korea	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	-1
	Switzerland	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	United States	8	8	8	6	6	5	5	6	-2
30	Czechia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Italy	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	+1
	Malta	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	+1
	Mexico	7	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	-2
	Slovakia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
35	Bulgaria	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Croatia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Netherlands	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Romania	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Slovenia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
40	Cyprus	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	+1
	Iceland	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0

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While monitoring the execution of policies across different levels of government is an important element of effective implementation capacity, central governments must also ensure that subnational self-governments have access to the resources needed to carry out such policies. This includes making sure that delegated tasks are properly funded, that subnational self-governments have enough leeway to implement policies in ways best-suited to local conditions, and guaranteeing that public service national standards are upheld across the country.

Task Funding
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Canada	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	New Zealand	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Switzerland	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
4	Austria	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Denmark	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Finland	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Germany	5	6	6	7	7	7	7	8	⬆ +3
	Iceland	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Luxembourg	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	8	⬆ +1
	Norway	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	United States	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
12	France	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	⬆ +1
	Israel	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	⬆ +1
	Italy	6	6	5	6	6	5	7	7	⬆ +1
	Portugal	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	⬆ +1
	Spain	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	⬆ +1
17	Australia	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	⬇ -1
	Chile	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Czechia	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	⬇ -1
	Estonia	4	4	4	4	4	5	6	6	⬆ +2
	Ireland	6	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	0
	Japan	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	⬆ +1
	Latvia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Lithuania	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Slovenia	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	6	⬆ +2
	Turkey	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	United Kingdom	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	6	⬇ -1
—	Average	6.1	6.1	6.0	5.9	6.0	5.9	6.0	6.0	
28	Croatia	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	+1
	Malta	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Slovakia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	⬇ -1
	South Korea	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	0
	Sweden	8	7	5	5	5	5	4	5	-3
33	Belgium	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	⬇ -1
	Bulgaria	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	⬇ -1
	Cyprus	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Mexico	7	7	7	5	5	5	5	4	-3
	Netherlands	7	6	5	5	5	5	4	4	-3
38	Greece	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	0
	Poland	7	7	7	5	5	4	4	3	⬇ -4
	Romania	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
41	Hungary	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0

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Constitutional Discretion
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Belgium	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0
	Canada	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	10	⬆ +1
	Switzerland	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0
4	Finland	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Sweden	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
6	Austria	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Denmark	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Germany	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Iceland	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	United Kingdom	5	5	6	7	7	8	8	8	⬆ +3
	United States	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
12	Chile	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	7	⬆ +2
	Czechia	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Italy	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Luxembourg	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Spain	4	5	5	5	5	5	6	7	⬆ +3
17	Estonia	5	5	5	4	5	6	6	6	⬆ +1
	France	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Lithuania	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Mexico	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	⬇ -1
	New Zealand	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Norway	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Slovenia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	⬆ +1
	South Korea	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	⬆ +1
—	Average	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.9	
25	Australia	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	⬆ +1
	Ireland	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Israel	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Latvia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Netherlands	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	⬆ +1
	Portugal	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	5	0
31	Bulgaria	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	⬇ -1
	Croatia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Cyprus	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Japan	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
35	Hungary	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
	Malta	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
	Poland	7	7	7	5	4	4	4	3	⬇ -4
	Romania	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
	Slovakia	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	⬇ -1
40	Greece	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	⬇ -1
41	Turkey	5	5	5	4	2	2	1	1	⬇ -4

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Worrying development: local self-government eroding in one-third of states

One-third of all the countries surveyed struggle with the issue of underfunded mandates to subnational governments. This development is alarming in view of the multiple crises facing governments and the important role played by local government in implementing policies designed to address such challenges. Subnational governments in Poland, the Netherlands, Mexico, Sweden and Slovakia in particular have, in the past ten years, received a growing number of tasks without being provided the funding needed to properly carry out their duties. In **Poland**, the PiS has tried to systematically restrict local government powers and thereby prevent the opposition from exercising too much freedom. Facing a variety of problems spawned by these restrictions and inadequate funding, 12 of Poland's larger cities have discussed suing the government. Several Polish municipalities have even expressed their desire to distance themselves from their government's veto of the EU's rule of law instrument, which allows the EU to stop payments from its budget to member states that defy the rule of law (Matthes et al. 2022). By contrast, Germany, Slovenia and Estonia managed to significantly reverse the trend of delegating tasks without providing commensurate funding.

The formal state of regional or local self-government in all the countries surveyed is also a cause for concern. In fact, the average score for the constitutional scope of discretion granted to local level governments during policy implementation remains low at 5.9. In nearly one-half (17) of all SGI countries, our experts observe central governments seeking to limit, in practical terms, the autonomy of local governments to implement policies. The Turkish and Greek governments in particular have repeatedly sought to undermine local autonomy over the past ten years.

Canada receives high scores for both task funding (9) and constitutional discretion (10). At 78%, the share of government spending allocated to Canadian provinces far exceeds the OECD average of 32%. As a result, local governments in Canada are able to carry out nearly all of their tasks as intended. As one of the most decentralized federations in the world, Canada's provincial governments have exclusive autonomy when it comes to legislating and implementing policy in accordance with local needs in those areas over which they have jurisdiction. However, this division of powers also has its negative effects. Because

provincial governments wage staunch battles against any attempt by the federal government to direct policy in these areas, national standards are rarely upheld across the country. The quality of public services therefore varies across the country, a fact reflected in its relatively low score of five points for this indicator (Lecours et al. 2022).

National Standards
Unit: Score

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Denmark	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	France	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
3	Iceland	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Japan	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Luxembourg	9	9	9	9	9	8	8	8	-1
	Norway	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
7	Finland	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Germany	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Ireland	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Israel	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	New Zealand	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	South Korea	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Sweden	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	+1
	Switzerland	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	United Kingdom	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
16	Australia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Austria	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Czechia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Latvia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Lithuania	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Malta	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Poland	8	8	8	7	7	7	6	6	-2
	Portugal	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Spain	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	+1
—	Average	5.8	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	
25	Belgium	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Canada	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	-1
	Estonia	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	+1
	Italy	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	+1
	Netherlands	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Slovenia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Turkey	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	United States	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
33	Bulgaria	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Chile	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	+1
	Croatia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Greece	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	+2
	Hungary	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	+1
	Romania	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	-1
	Slovakia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
40	Mexico	5	5	5	4	3	2	3	3	-2
41	Cyprus	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0

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Striking the proper balance between the desire for local autonomy and the need for nationally agreed-upon standards in public service delivery is clearly difficult. Among those countries best able to achieve this balance is Denmark, which records consistently high scores across the three indicators relevant to effective implementation (i.e., task funding: 9 points, constitutional discretion: 8 points and national standards: 9). In **Denmark**, the government has an established system of benchmarks and tests to ensure that national standards are met. Furthermore, it can require that performance indicators are published (Klemmensen et al. 2022).

Spotlight: Introduction of regulations in one-third of states often ineffective or biased

Finally, governments must be able to engage in fair, unbiased policymaking and enforcement, which involves resisting the pressures of vested interests regardless of their political, economic or social clout. Our new indicator addressing this issue, "effective regulatory enforcement," shows Finland, Germany and Sweden proving most capable of and willing to deal with resourceful interest groups. In **Sweden**, maintaining dialogue with relevant target groups is an important feature of designing better regulation. This means that regulations are from the start more responsive, as all relevant target groups stand on equal ground when providing feedback (Petridou et al. 2022).

Effective Regulatory Enforcement
Unit: Score

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Finland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
	Germany	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
	Sweden	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
4	Denmark	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	Estonia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	Ireland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	Norway	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	United Kingdom	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
9	Canada	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	France	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Latvia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Lithuania	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Spain	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	United States	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	7	
15	Australia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Austria	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Belgium	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	6	
	Chile	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Iceland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Israel	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Japan	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Luxembourg	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	New Zealand	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Slovenia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Switzerland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
—	Average	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9	5.9	5.8	
26	Italy	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
	Malta	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
	Netherlands	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	5	5	
	Poland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
	Portugal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
	South Korea	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
32	Croatia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	4	
	Czechia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	4	
	Greece	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	4	4	
	Mexico	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	4	
	Turkey	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	4	
37	Cyprus	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
	Hungary	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
	Romania	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
	Slovakia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
41	Bulgaria	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	2	2	

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In one-third of all the 41 countries surveyed, government agencies prove to be ineffectual and/or act with bias when it comes to enforcing regulations. In Belgium, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed shortcomings in the state's capacity to enforce lockdown measures with impact (Castanheira et al. 2022). At the bottom of the ranking, we find governments such as those in Bulgaria and Hungary that demonstrate little willingness to fight off efforts by powerful groups to promote their individual interests. In **Bulgaria**, where government regulatory enforcement is extremely biased and uneven, the implementation of COVID-19 emergency regulations varied considerably depending on the locality and ethnic groups affected. The country's Roma population was subject to the state's blatant violation of privacy and other rights (Stanchev et al. 2022). In **Hungary**, the interests of key oligarchs trump public interests. This form of state capture is evident in the large number of "high public-interest decrees" that allow the country's government-friendly oligarchs to ignore (in particular) environmental regulations (Ágh et al. 2022).

4. Consensus-building

A further key challenge in governance is consensus-building, which involves creating the institutions and conditions needed to mediate between opposing interests. The SGI 2022 findings offer valuable insight into this important issue.

Political Polarization
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Canada	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
	Denmark	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
	Finland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
	United Kingdom	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	4	9	
5	Germany	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	8	
	Iceland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	Japan	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	Luxembourg	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	8	8	
	Norway	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
10	Austria	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	7	7	
	Chile	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	8	7	
	Croatia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Cyprus	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Estonia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	6	7	
	Ireland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	7	7	
	Latvia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	7	
	New Zealand	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	7	
	Portugal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	7	
19	Australia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	6	
	Bulgaria	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	6	
	France	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	6	
	Italy	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	4	6	
	Mexico	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
—	Average	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	6	
24	Greece	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
	Netherlands	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	5	
	Slovakia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
	South Korea	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
	Spain	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	4	5	
	Sweden	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	5	
30	Belgium	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	5	4	
	Czechia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	4	
	Israel	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	2	4	
	Lithuania	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	4	
	Malta	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	4	
	Poland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	4	
	Romania	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	4	
	Switzerland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	4	4	
38	Hungary	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
	Slovenia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
	Turkey	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
	United States	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	

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Consensus-Building
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Norway	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	0.0
	Switzerland	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.0	-0.5
3	Canada	7.0	7.0	7.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.5	+1.5
	Denmark	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	0.0
	Sweden	7.5	7.0	7.5	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.5	+1.0
6	New Zealand	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	8.0	8.0	+0.5
7	Finland	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	-0.5
8	Chile	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.0	7.0	-0.5
	Estonia	7.5	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	-0.5
	Germany	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	7.0	+0.5
	Israel	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	7.0	7.0	7.0	+0.5
	Latvia	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	+1.0
	Luxembourg	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.0	7.0	7.0	-0.5
	United Kingdom	6.0	7.0	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.0	7.0	7.0	+1.0
15	Australia	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	0.0
	Austria	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	5.5	5.5	6.5	0.0
	Lithuania	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	-0.5
	Netherlands	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.0	7.0	6.5	-1.0
	South Korea	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	6.0	6.5	6.5	6.5	+2.0
	Spain	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	+1.0
	United States	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	6.5	-1.0
—	Average	6.0	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.1	
22	Belgium	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	0.0
	Iceland	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	0.0
	Ireland	4.5	5.5	5.0	5.0	5.5	5.5	5.5	6.0	+1.5
	Mexico	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.0	5.0	5.5	6.5	6.0	+0.5
26	Bulgaria	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.5	+0.5
	Czechia	5.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.5	5.5	+0.5
	France	5.0	4.5	4.5	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.5	5.5	+0.5
	Greece	4.0	4.0	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	5.0	5.5	+1.5
	Japan	6.5	6.5	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.5	-1.0
	Malta	5.0	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	+0.5
	Portugal	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.5	+1.0
33	Italy	5.5	4.5	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	-0.5
	Slovakia	6.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	-1.5
	Slovenia	3.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	5.0	+1.5
36	Croatia	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	0.0
	Cyprus	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	+0.5
38	Poland	7.0	7.0	7.0	4.0	4.5	4.0	4.0	3.5	-3.5
	Romania	3.5	3.5	4.5	5.0	4.0	3.5	3.5	3.5	0.0
	Turkey	5.5	5.5	5.5	4.5	4.0	3.5	3.5	3.5	-2.0
41	Hungary	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.0

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State-mediated efforts to build a consensus must be considered in the context of growing political polarization. In healthy democracies, fair and equal competition between a variety of political parties and policy positions is essential if voters are to be presented with a choice. However, growing divisiveness within and between major political parties frustrates efforts to promote compromise and can even paralyze an entire political system. As societal and political polarization continues to grow in many OECD and EU countries, we explore the extent to which governments and legislatures successfully hammer out cross-party agreements that mitigate the threats posed by polarization to policy development.

In almost one-half (18) of the countries surveyed, political polarization already poses a major obstacle to policymaking. However, we observe a substantial, albeit temporary, improvement in this regard in Italy, the UK and Australia, where suitable compromises on various issues were achieved. On the other end of the spectrum, the Netherlands and Sweden joined those countries in which polarization posed a major threat to policymaking during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Expert advice

Mediating between different interests requires the creation of a sound foundation of knowledge from which stakeholders can draw upon to craft a potential compromise. The COVID-19 pandemic clearly demonstrated the importance of integrating expert knowledge into the policymaking process. Governments that quickly and effectively incorporated expert advice into policy formulation processes and into the adjustments made to specific policies tended to deliver a more compelling crisis response (Schiller et al. 2021). Given the urgency of the current crises' governments are facing and the need for transformative change in society and economic activity, involving experts in political decision-making processes is of the utmost importance. Acquiring their input is only one aspect of effective consultation – their input must be integrated into the process early on, before a decision is made on a particular policy measure. Political decision-makers should also be mindful to consider the advice of experts on a regular basis and thereby enhance the legitimacy of the consultation process. Ensuring legitimacy also involves selecting independent experts through a transparent process.

Expert Advice
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Canada	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	9 ⬆	+2
2	Chile	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Denmark	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	New Zealand	7	7	7	7	7	7	8	8 ⬆	+1
	Norway	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Sweden	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8 ⬆	+1
	Switzerland	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	8 ⬇	-1
8	Estonia	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Finland	6	6	7	7	7	7	6	7 ⬆	+1
	Germany	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7 ⬆	+1
	Greece	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7 ⬆	+1
	Israel	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Luxembourg	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Spain	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7 ⬆	+1
	United Kingdom	7	8	8	8	8	8	7	7	0
16	Australia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Austria	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	6 ⬆	+1
	Belgium	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6 ⬆	+1
	Iceland	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Ireland	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6 ⬆	+1
	Japan	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Latvia	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6 ⬆	+1
	Lithuania	7	7	7	7	6	6	6	6 ⬇	-1
	Mexico	6	6	7	6	6	6	7	6	0
	Netherlands	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	South Korea	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	United States	7	7	7	7	4	4	4	6 ⬇	-1
—	Average	5.9	5.9	6.0	6.0	5.8	5.8	5.8	6.0	
28	Bulgaria	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Czechia	5	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	0
	France	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5 ⬆	+1
	Italy	7	5	5	5	5	3	3	5 ⬇	-2
	Malta	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Portugal	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Slovakia	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5 ⬇	-1
	Slovenia	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5 ⬆	+2
36	Croatia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Poland	7	7	7	4	4	4	4	4 ⬇	-3
	Romania	4	4	5	6	5	4	4	4	0
	Turkey	6	6	6	5	4	4	4	4 ⬇	-2
40	Cyprus	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3 ⬆	+1
41	Hungary	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0

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The conditions for an effective inclusion of expert knowledge are best developed in Canada, Chile, Denmark, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. In **Chile**, where involving experts is a common practice, taking the advice of experts into policymaking is embedded into institutional arrangements. Here, commissions comprised primarily of academic experts and which cover a broad political spectrum wield considerable influence in the formulation of government programs and the development of political reform proposals. As such, these commissions can either accelerate or block the implementation of specific measures (Klein et al. 2022).

***Involvement of external experts underdeveloped in many countries***

In 14 countries, however, obtaining external (scientific) expertise plays no or only a minor role in policymaking processes. This lack of expert involvement is particularly pronounced in Hungary, Cyprus, Turkey, Romania, Poland and Croatia, where only a select handful of experts are involved through opaque processes. The situation is particularly critical in **Hungary**, where the government eschews any broad involvement of independent experts, which leads to decisions that are often disconnected from social reality (Ágh et al. 2022). In **Cyprus**, our country experts observe that consultation processes with external experts take place only rarely or irregularly, and that the government more or less ignores the country's Council of Experts (Christophorou et al. 2022). A similar picture emerges in **Romania**, where consultation processes are also infrequent and do not involve the input of the country's expert council. A further step backward was taken in 2018 when the government dissolved the Ministry of Public Consultation and Citizen Dialogue, which was supposed to ensure systematic efforts to involve the public in policymaking (Wagner et al. 2022).

Public consultation

In a context of rising political polarization, it is all the more important that governments reach out to and integrate all relevant societal stakeholders into political project planning. Public consultation is crucial because it not only broadens the foundation of knowledge used to design policy measures, it also helps the government secure the broadest possible support base needed to implement a policy. SGI findings show a strong positive correlation between the robustness of democratic institutions and the extent to which public consultation processes are inclusive and effective.

Correlation: "robust democracy" and "public consultation"
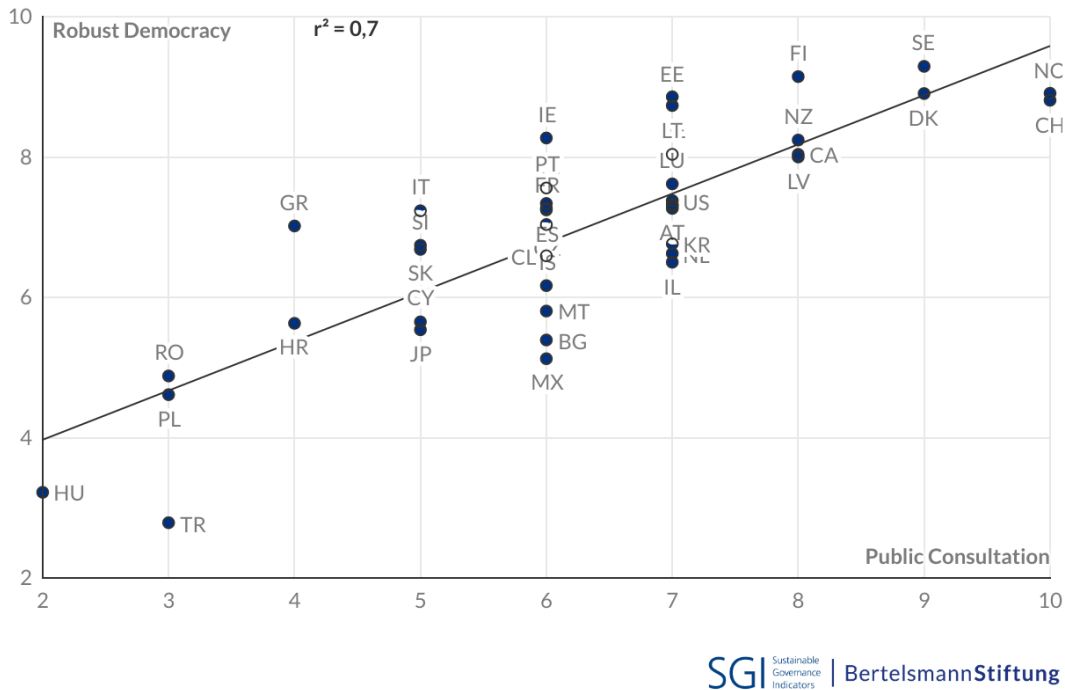
The will to engage in public consultation is on the decline in many countries

SGI findings for the "public consultation" indicator, which assesses how fairly and successfully a government consults with societal actors such as trade unions, employers' associations, religious communities or social and environmental interest groups in preparing its policy, show mixed results that vary over time. Governments in a total of 13 countries have increased efforts over the past ten years to reach out to societal groups in the policy development stage. We observe particularly noteworthy efforts in **South Korea**, where the government has begun experimenting with new deliberative policy forums (Kim et al. 2022). However, the relevance of such public consultation processes has declined in 12 countries, with Poland recording the most severe drop in this regard.

Public Consultation
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022		change to 2014
1	Norway	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		0
	Switzerland	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		0
3	Denmark	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9		0
	Sweden	8	7	8	8	8	8	8	9	↑	+1
5	Canada	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	↑	+1
	Finland	10	10	9	8	8	8	8	8	↓	-2
	Latvia	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	↑	+1
	New Zealand	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8		0
9	Australia	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7		0
	Austria	8	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	↓	-1
	Estonia	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	↓	-1
	Germany	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7		0
	Israel	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	↑	+1
	Lithuania	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7		0
	Luxembourg	8	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	↓	-1
	Netherlands	9	9	9	9	9	8	8	7	↓	-2
	South Korea	3	3	3	3	6	7	7	7	↑	+4
	United Kingdom	5	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	↑	+2
	United States	8	8	8	8	5	5	5	7	↓	-1
—	Average	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.1	6.3		
20	Belgium	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	↓	-1
	Bulgaria	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	↑	+1
	Chile	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	↓	-1
	Czechia	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	↑	+1
	France	6	5	5	5	6	6	6	6		0
	Iceland	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6		0
	Ireland	4	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	↑	+2
	Malta	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	↑	+1
	Mexico	5	5	4	4	4	5	6	6	↑	+1
	Portugal	4	4	4	4	4	5	6	6	↑	+2
	Spain	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	↑	+1
31	Cyprus	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		0
	Italy	4	4	4	5	5	3	4	5	↑	+1
	Japan	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	5	↓	-2
	Slovakia	7	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	↓	-2
	Slovenia	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	↑	+1
36	Croatia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4		0
	Greece	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	↑	+2
38	Poland	7	7	7	5	4	4	3	3	↓	-4
	Romania	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3		0
	Turkey	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	↓	-2
41	Hungary	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		0

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Open Government
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Norway	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10	10	10	
	United Kingdom	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10	10	10	
3	Denmark	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
	Finland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10	10	9	
	Slovenia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	9	9	
	Sweden	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
	Switzerland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
	United States	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	7	9	
9	Canada	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	Estonia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	Germany	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	Japan	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	Luxembourg	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	New Zealand	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	8	8	
	South Korea	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
16	Australia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Belgium	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	7	
	Chile	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Croatia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	France	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	7	
	Greece	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Ireland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Israel	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Lithuania	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Spain	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
—	Average	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.8	6.8	6.8	
26	Austria	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	6	6	
	Bulgaria	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Czechia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	6	
	Netherlands	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	6	
30	Cyprus	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
	Italy	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	5	
	Latvia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	5	
	Malta	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
	Mexico	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	6	5	
	Poland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
	Portugal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
	Slovakia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
38	Iceland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	4	
	Romania	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	4	
	Turkey	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	4	
41	Hungary	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	

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By contrast, the failure to successfully involve societal actors in national politics has characterized government activity in Hungary, Turkey, Romania, Greece, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy and Cyprus over the past ten years, and there is little sign of change on the horizon. At the bottom of the ranking, **Hungary** (Ágh et al. 2022) and **Turkey** (Arslantaş et al. 2022) are languishing under increasingly authoritarian leadership that has actively sabotaged consultation processes and efforts to build a consensus. Leaders in both of these countries have sought instead to bluntly push their own agenda, either by engaging exclusively in limited or one-sided dialogue with government sympathizers, or by ignoring civil society actors entirely. As a result, there is little prospect of balanced and sustainable policymaking in both countries.

Significantly increased efforts on the part of current and future governments to build a consensus is relevant in a total of 18 of the countries surveyed. To be sure, the SGI's top performers in this regard are not immune to potential backsliding. The temptation to streamline social coordination processes is certainly widespread and, if taken too far, can wear on the outcomes of such processes.

In high-scoring **Norway,** for example, a variety of stakeholders play an active role in the legislative process, as they are invited to express their views on a policy before it reaches the legislature. However, thanks to the expedition of decision-making processes (especially since the COVID-19 pandemic), public-hearing processes have had to cope with tighter deadlines which, in practice, places constraints on the influence wielded by external societal actors on political projects (Hagen et al. 2022).

Spotlight: Open government in 12 countries is largely dysfunctional

Findings for our "open government" indicator also provides valuable insight into the willingness of OECD and EU countries to engage with and integrate their citizens further into the governance process. This indicator measures the extent to which the government publishes data and information in a comprehensive, timely and user-friendly way, allowing citizens to hold their government accountable. While governments in Norway and the UK excel at publishing data and information, governments in 12 other countries are lagging behind in terms of how they present data and information to their respective publics.

5. Strategy development

Many of the crises we face, including the climate crisis, the Ukraine crisis and its attendant energy crisis, and the looming food crisis can in some ways be attributed to the failure of many governments to think and act with long-term goals in mind. This tendency to "sail by sight" without factoring long-term effects into policy design has only exacerbated problems such as those associated with climate change. Similarly, the failure to properly identify and assess potential risks such as dependence on Russian gas or the threat of a global pandemic have helped create the conditions that make it even more difficult to address these challenges when they arise. Tackling challenges through long-term policy-planning and strategizing at both the national and supranational levels is thus more urgent than ever.

The SGI dataset includes several indicators designed to capture the extent to which a government has strategic development capabilities. SGI indicators measure (1) the impact of strategic planning units on government decision-making; (2) the extent to which modern evidence-based analytical methods are applied in a systematic manner; (3) whether policy measures are coherently communicated; and (4) the capacity for institutional learning. As the SGI findings show, need for improvement in these areas is, in most countries, urgent.

Lack of evidence-informed policymaking hinders strategy development in many countries

On average, the ability to develop long-term strategies has hardly improved over the past decade. Although the average score has ticked upward somewhat since the coronavirus crisis, it remains at a mediocre level of 6.05 out of a possible 10.0 points. The greatest deficits continue to be found in the use of evidence-based tools for policy design and evaluation (5.7 points). In more than half of the countries surveyed, we see a particular weakness with regard to governments monitoring whether their policy proposals are compatible with economic, social and environmental sustainability goals.

Trends in strategy development, by criterion
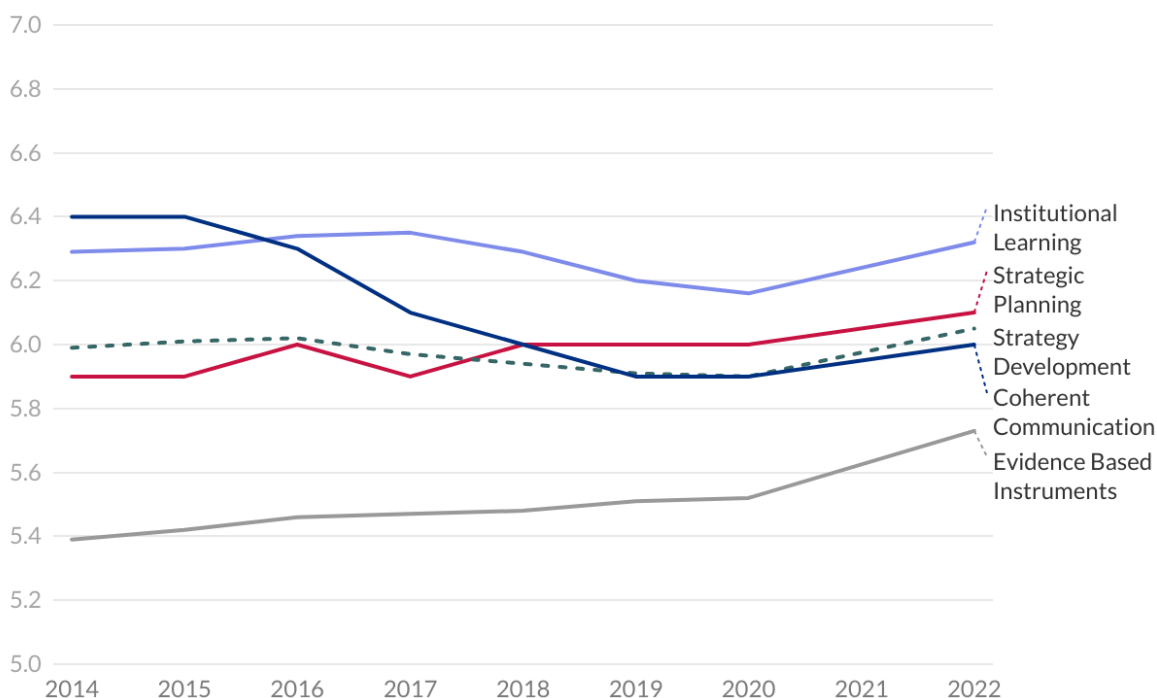
Changes in the aggregate average score tend to obscure the different ways in which various EU and OECD countries have anchored their governance in strategic thinking. While the Nordic states and New Zealand have effectively consolidated their strategic capability at a high level, Eastern Europe states and Turkey continue to perform poorly in this area.

Strategy development depends substantially on the extent to which a government prioritizes it

Developing sustainable, forward-looking policy strategies requires having the proper organizational arrangements, instruments and procedures at hand. At the same time, governments must also demonstrate the political will to create such capacities and then apply them in the ways intended. In other words, they must draw on evidence-based information to develop solutions able to deliver relevant outcomes and act accordingly. Governments that fail to do so will find themselves increasingly incapable of addressing today's wicked problems. For example, until the PiS government came to power in 2016, **Poland** scored consistently among the top ten in terms of its domestic capacity for strategy development (7.3). However, Poland's score on this criterion has since plunged to 4.0 points, bringing Poland down to its current third-to-last position on the ranking. According to the SGI experts, this nosedive can be attributed to the fact that the PiS shuns evidence-based policymaking in favor of ideologically driven decision-making. In addition, Poland records a sharp decline in the scope and quality of regulatory impact assessments (RIAs), in which sustainability aspects play only a subordinate role. The PiS government has also done little to ensure the compatibility of national governance structures with international requirements and has largely failed to align national policies to target global challenges such as climate change and inclusive economic and social development (Matthes et al. 2017).

Trends in strategy development, by country
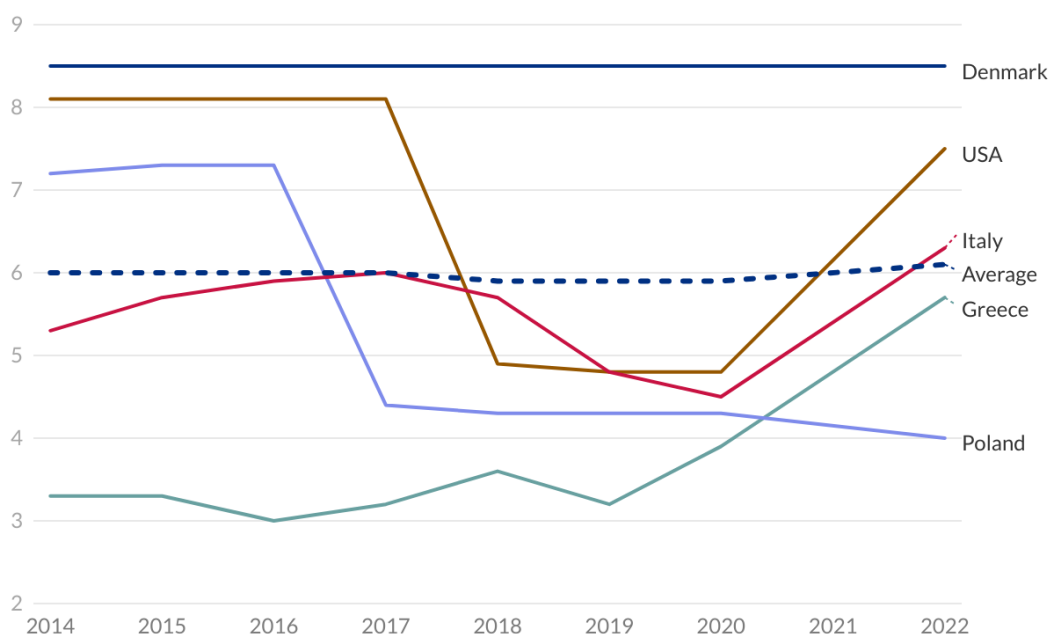
Changes in government have had a strong impact on the **United States'** strategic capacity as well. While the United States still ranked fifth among all SGI countries on this criterion (8.1 points) at the end of President Obama's term in office in 2016, the country recorded a dramatic decline under the Trump administration (4.9 points, rank 29, 2017). Organized deliberative processes, policy analysis and RIAs did not play a major role under the Trump administration, which largely ignored recommendations from the science community, particularly on issues relevant to climate change and healthcare (Quirk et al. 2018). Under the leadership of

President Joe Biden, the U.S. government has reintroduced efforts to ensure information-based policymaking that is aligned with sustainability goals and addresses global challenges (Béland et al. 2022). Our country experts also attribute the fluctuations in strategy development performance in Italy (Cotta et al. 2022) and Greece (Sotiropoulos et al. 2022) to the recent changes in government observed in these countries.

Robust democracies benefit from conditions that facilitate effective strategy development

Strong democracies and highly developed capacities for strategy development often go hand in hand. Accordingly, countries with high democratic standards and robust democratic institutions are generally more able to deliver strategic policymaking than are weak democracies.

Correlation: "robust democracy" and "strategy development"
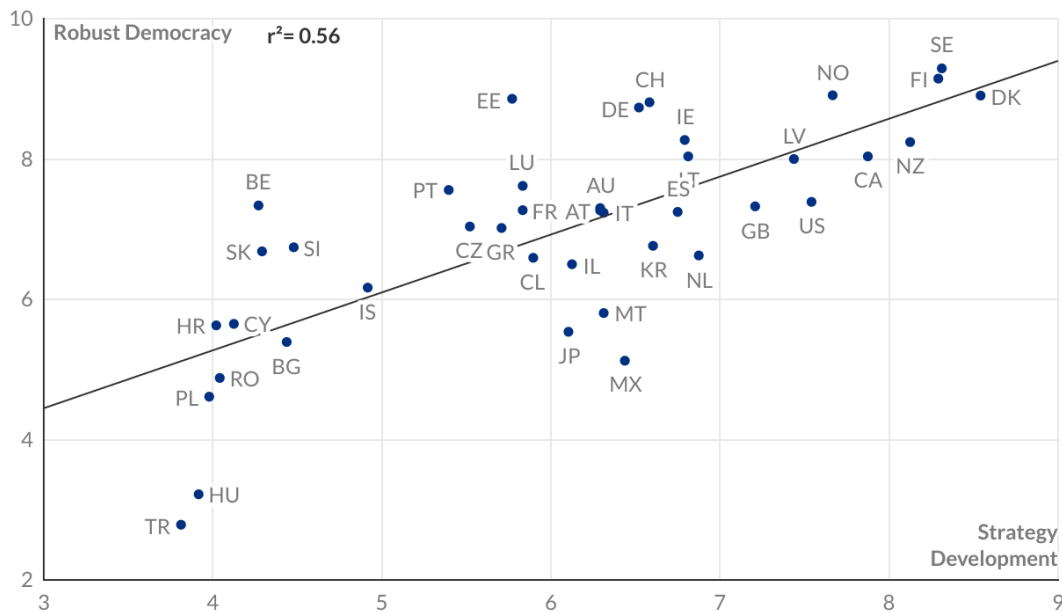
Strategy Development
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Denmark	8.48	8.54	8.54	8.54	8.54	8.54	8.54	8.54	+0.06
2	Sweden	8.31	8.31	8.31	8.31	8.31	8.31	8.31	8.31	0.00
3	Finland	8.79	8.79	8.79	8.79	8.54	8.54	8.60	8.29	-0.50
4	New Zealand	8.21	8.21	8.21	8.21	8.21	8.13	8.13	8.13	-0.08
5	Canada	7.27	7.21	7.21	7.67	7.67	7.73	7.81	7.88	+0.61
6	Norway	7.81	7.81	7.81	7.81	7.75	7.67	7.67	7.67	-0.14
7	United States	8.10	8.10	8.10	8.10	4.90	4.83	4.77	7.54	-0.56
8	Latvia	7.60	7.35	7.35	7.35	7.35	7.35	7.35	7.44	-0.16
9	United Kingdom	7.54	7.88	8.31	7.81	7.23	6.81	6.40	7.21	-0.33
10	Netherlands	7.21	7.13	7.06	7.13	7.33	7.02	7.27	6.88	-0.33
11	Lithuania	7.08	7.15	7.06	7.06	7.06	6.81	6.81	6.81	-0.27
12	Ireland	6.17	6.13	6.13	6.38	6.38	6.38	6.38	6.79	+0.62
13	Spain	5.77	5.92	6.04	6.04	6.02	6.27	6.44	6.75	+0.98
14	South Korea	6.67	6.67	6.67	6.10	6.67	6.60	6.60	6.60	-0.07
15	Switzerland	6.17	6.17	6.17	6.33	6.58	6.58	6.58	6.58	+0.41
16	Germany	6.33	6.21	5.96	5.96	6.02	6.02	6.27	6.52	+0.19
17	Mexico	6.96	7.02	6.71	6.25	6.19	6.13	6.50	6.44	-0.52
18	Italy	5.27	5.73	5.85	5.98	5.67	4.81	4.50	6.31	+1.04
	Malta	4.15	4.40	4.77	5.27	5.85	5.85	6.17	6.31	+2.16
20	Australia	6.85	6.73	6.73	6.48	6.48	6.42	6.29	6.29	-0.56
	Austria	5.90	5.90	5.90	5.71	5.71	6.40	6.40	6.29	+0.39
22	Israel	5.75	5.63	5.52	5.38	5.63	6.31	6.25	6.13	+0.38
23	Japan	6.08	6.21	6.27	6.27	6.19	6.10	6.17	6.10	+0.02
—	Average	5.99	6.01	6.02	5.97	5.94	5.91	5.90	6.05	
24	Chile	6.42	6.92	6.42	6.42	6.42	6.33	5.83	5.90	-0.52
25	France	5.60	4.46	4.77	4.94	6.25	5.75	5.75	5.83	+0.23
	Luxembourg	5.35	5.44	5.44	5.44	5.52	5.27	5.27	5.83	+0.48
27	Estonia	5.81	5.81	5.81	5.81	6.40	6.46	6.21	5.77	-0.04
28	Greece	3.33	3.33	3.02	3.17	3.63	3.23	3.85	5.71	+2.38
29	Czechia	4.98	5.04	5.29	5.29	5.35	5.60	5.52	5.52	+0.54
30	Portugal	4.96	4.58	4.92	5.54	5.29	5.56	5.65	5.40	+0.44
31	Iceland	4.15	4.40	4.40	4.73	4.73	4.98	4.98	4.92	+0.77
32	Slovenia	3.63	3.69	4.00	4.00	4.17	4.42	4.67	4.48	+0.85
33	Bulgaria	4.35	4.35	4.52	4.69	4.69	4.75	4.75	4.44	+0.09
34	Slovakia	4.92	5.17	5.10	4.85	4.60	4.60	4.29	4.29	-0.63
35	Belgium	4.44	4.44	4.52	4.52	4.27	4.58	4.27	4.27	-0.17
36	Cyprus	2.81	3.50	3.50	4.04	4.13	4.13	4.13	4.13	+1.32
37	Romania	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.48	4.04	4.04	4.04	4.04	-0.06
38	Croatia	4.65	4.58	4.58	4.33	4.27	4.27	4.02	4.02	-0.63
39	Poland	7.17	7.25	7.31	4.35	4.29	4.29	4.29	3.98	-3.19
40	Hungary	5.04	4.79	4.54	4.29	4.29	4.23	3.92	3.92	-1.12
41	Turkey	5.25	5.19	4.94	5.06	4.81	4.13	4.06	3.81	-1.44

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Scandinavian countries and New Zealand lead the way, Eastern Europe and Turkey lag far behind

Denmark, Sweden, Finland and New Zealand continue to feature the most favorable conditions for sustainable policymaking, while Turkey, Hungary and Poland feature the least favorable conditions. Other countries, such as Croatia, Romania, Cyprus, Belgium, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Iceland and Portugal are also poorly positioned to develop viable strategies able to properly address long-term challenges and budding crises. The United States, Greece and Italy have recorded the largest gains on this issue since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. While **Greece** has significantly improved its use of evidence-based tools, both in terms of frequency and quality of procedures, **Italy** has strengthened its strategic institutions. For example, under the government of Prime Minister Draghi, a dedicated steering committee on the National Recovery and Resilience Plan has proved relevant as a unit responsible for coordinating, monitoring and managing the country's fiscal stimulus package (Cotta et al. 2022).

Strategic Planning
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Denmark	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Finland	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
3	Canada	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Latvia	9	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	-1
	Lithuania	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	New Zealand	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Spain	7	7	7	7	6	7	7	8	+1
	Sweden	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	United States	8	8	8	8	5	5	5	8	0
10	Australia	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Austria	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	+1
	Belgium	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Chile	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Ireland	5	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	+2
	Italy	6	6	6	6	6	5	4	7	+1
	Malta	3	4	5	6	7	7	7	7	+4
	Netherlands	6	6	6	6	7	7	8	7	+1
	Norway	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	South Korea	7	7	7	6	7	7	7	7	0
—	Average	5.9	5.9	6.0	5.9	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.1	
20	Estonia	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	6	0
	Germany	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	6	+2
	Greece	5	4	3	3	4	4	5	6	+1
	Israel	7	7	6	6	6	7	7	6	-1
	Japan	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Mexico	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	6	-2
	United Kingdom	7	8	9	9	8	7	6	6	-1
27	Czechia	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	+1
	France	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Luxembourg	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	+1
	Poland	7	7	7	5	5	5	5	5	-2
	Portugal	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Switzerland	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	+1
	Turkey	5	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	0
34	Bulgaria	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	-1
	Croatia	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	-1
	Cyprus	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	+2
	Slovakia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Slovenia	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	+1
39	Hungary	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
	Iceland	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
	Romania	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0

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Strategic planning

The presence of institutionalized planning units that take a long-term view of political challenges and feasible solutions to them is a marker of a country's strategic capacity. Similarly, the extent to which such units influence government decision-making also provides insight into the impact of such a capacity.

Planning units with impact in decision-making: Denmark and Finland show how it's done

Although strategic planning units exist in all 41 countries surveyed, according to the SGI experts, only Denmark and Finland feature units that palpably shape government decision-making on a regular basis. In **Denmark**, the Ministry of Finance plays a consequential role in initiating and coordinating strategic planning processes. The ministry helps formulate long-term, comprehensive policy plans aimed at aligning public spending and revenue development with medium- and long-term policy decisions (Klemmensen et al. 2022).

Finland's strategic planning unit drafts annual strategy documents that are based on the government's agenda and include a plan for pursuing priority goals, a statement of intent for major decisions, and indicators for evaluating government performance. Halfway through a government's term, the unit evaluates the progress of implementation and determines how to proceed in terms of achieving stated goals through the end of the term. Occasionally, experimental projects are used to evaluate the impact of reforms (Hiilamo et al. 2022).

In 15 countries, strategic planning units have only sporadic and moderate influence on government decision-making. This is particularly true in Hungary, Iceland and Romania. In **Iceland**, although objectives are set as part of the political planning process, the lack of institutional mechanisms needed to realize such objectives means they are rarely achieved. For example, because the Strategic Regional Policy Plan approved by parliament every four years is little more than a resolution passed by parliament that carries no legal obligation, the government is not bound to implement the plan (EyÞórsson et al. 2022).

Evidence-based instruments

The strategic capacity of governments depends to a great extent on whether evidence-based instruments are regularly and systematically applied in order to identify and assess the likely effects of planned policies and the observable effects of existing policies. Such information-driven approaches enable policymakers to develop measures that are as tailored-to-the context as possible. Alternatively, they allow policymakers to take timely action if regulations are not having the desired effects. However, this requires that impact assessments not only take place but are based on procedural quality standards if such assessments are to create substantial added value. Markers of quality in RIA processes involve consulting those stakeholders affected by a potential regulation in order to obtain empirical information about their needs and likely reactions to it. A second marker is that of transparency – the extent to which impact assessment findings are made available to the public. A third marker involves ensuring that an independent body regularly evaluates impact assessment results and procedures with the aim of improving quality over time.

Evidence-based Instruments
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	New Zealand	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.0	9.0	9.0	-0.3
2	Denmark	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	0.0
	Finland	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	0.0
4	Germany	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	0.0
	United Kingdom	8.7	9.0	9.0	9.0	8.7	8.0	7.3	8.3	-0.4
6	Netherlands	8.3	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.0	-0.3
7	Austria	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.7	+0.4
	Norway	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.7	7.7	7.7	-0.3
	United States	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	5.3	5.3	5.3	7.7	-1.0
10	Czechia	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.3	7.3	-0.4
	Switzerland	6.7	6.7	6.7	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	+0.6
12	Canada	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.7	6.7	6.7	7.0	7.0	+0.7
	Mexico	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	-0.3
	Sweden	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	0.0
15	South Korea	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	0.0
16	Chile	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.3	6.3	6.3	-0.4
	Estonia	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.3	6.3	6.3	+0.3
18	Latvia	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	6.0	+0.3
	Lithuania	6.3	6.3	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	-0.3
20	Japan	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.0	5.7	5.7	5.7	-0.6
—	Average	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.7	
21	Greece	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.7	2.0	1.7	1.7	5.3	+4.0
22	Bulgaria	3.7	3.7	4.3	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	+1.3
	Cyprus	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.7	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	+1.0
	Israel	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.0	3.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	+3.0
	Italy	4.3	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	5.0	5.0	5.0	+0.7
	Malta	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.7	4.7	4.7	5.0	+0.7
	Spain	3.3	3.7	3.7	3.7	4.3	4.3	5.0	5.0	+1.7
28	Australia	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	0.0
	Iceland	1.3	1.3	1.3	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	+3.4
	Ireland	4.7	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.7	0.0
	Romania	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	0.0
	Slovakia	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	0.0
33	Croatia	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	0.0
	France	3.7	3.3	3.3	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.3	+0.6
35	Slovenia	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	+0.7
36	Luxembourg	2.7	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	+0.6
	Portugal	1.3	2.3	2.7	2.7	2.7	3.0	3.3	3.3	+2.0
38	Turkey	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	0.0
39	Hungary	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	0.0
	Poland	7.7	8.0	8.0	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	-5.0
41	Belgium	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	+1.3

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But just how often and thoroughly do SGI countries examine the impacts of planned and existing policy measures? How effective are the applied procedures and instruments? Our data shows major differences among OECD and EU countries.

Good marks for New Zealand, Denmark and Finland…

The best-positioned countries in terms of the scope, regularity and quality of evidence-based impact evaluations are New Zealand, Denmark and Finland. In each of these countries, subjecting new and existing regulations to impact assessments involving minimum standards is standard practice. In **Finland**, where systematic impact assessment is a routine part of the legislative process, an independent council prepares opinions on government proposals and the respective underlying regulatory impact assessments. Guidelines that provide a general framework for the regulatory impact assessment process are used to ensure the quality of RIAs. Identifying various kinds of impact, these guidelines recommend methods and information resources to use in the assessment process and specify the scope of information on which assessments are based (Hiilamo et al. 2022).

In **Denmark**, all legislative proposals must undergo impact assessments. These assessments must identify, among other things, environmental and economic impacts, as well as the economic impact on states and municipalities specifically. Another marker of quality in the Danish approach is the integration of relevant stakeholders into the RIA process. In addition, RIAs must be written in plain language so that the public can understand them (Klemmensen et al. 2022).

Greece has made considerable progress with regard to informed policymaking since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. Although formally compulsory as of 2006, RIAs were not implemented until recently. As of October 2020, RIAs have become mandatory in practical terms, as introducing a bill to parliament now

requires an RIA. The process involves a consultation phase in which feedback from relevant stakeholders is collected, which is then followed by the incorporation of amendments to the bill. The documents upon which an RIA is based are made available to legislators and the public (Sotiropoulos et al. 2022).

...serious deficits in half of the countries surveyed

In 21 of all SGI countries, evidence-informed policymaking is poorly developed, with the most serious shortcomings evident in Belgium, Poland, Hungary and Turkey. In **Belgium**, where there are few formal RIA procedures, the short period of time allotted for preparing RIAs means methodological standards are rarely met. Also, RIAs are often conducted ex post, that is, after decisions regarding a specific policy measure have already been made. Our country experts thus conclude that Belgian authorities are usually "flying blind," which often results in unexpected policy outcomes (Castanheira et al. 2022). Our experts are also critical of the state of RIAs in **Hungary**, where relevant stakeholders are not properly involved and RIA quality control is often biased. Hungary also lacks transparency in this area, as RIA results are rarely made available (or only portions thereof are made available) to political actors, and the annual report on RIAs is not made publicly accessible (Ágh et al. 2022).

We see a similar state of affairs in **Turkey**. Although RIAs have been mandated by law since 2007, the quality of procedures is lacking, as their results are not communicated to parliament and are not made available to the public (Arslantaş et al. 2022).

Sustainability Check
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Denmark	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Finland	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	New Zealand	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	United Kingdom	10	10	10	10	10	8	8	9 ⬇	-1
5	Austria	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Germany	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Netherlands	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8 ⬆	+1
	United States	8	8	8	8	6	6	6	8	0
9	Canada	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Norway	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Sweden	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Switzerland	5	5	5	7	7	7	7	7 ⬆	+2
13	Czechia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Estonia	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6 ⬆	+1
	Israel	2	2	2	1	2	6	6	6 ⬆	+4
	Lithuania	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Mexico	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	South Korea	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
—	Average	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.9	5.1	
19	Bulgaria	3	3	4	5	5	5	5	5 ⬆	+2
	Chile	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Ireland	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5 ⬆	+1
	Italy	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Spain	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	5 ⬆	+2
24	Croatia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Cyprus	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4 ⬆	+1
	France	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4 ⬆	+1
	Greece	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4 ⬆	+3
	Malta	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4 ⬆	+1
29	Latvia	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3 ⬆	+1
	Luxembourg	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
	Romania	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
	Slovakia	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
	Slovenia	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3 ⬆	+1
	Turkey	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
35	Belgium	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2 ⬆	+1
	Hungary	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
	Iceland	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
	Japan	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2 ⬇	-1
	Poland	7	7	7	2	2	2	2	2 ⬇	-5
	Portugal	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
41	Australia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0

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Sustainability checks underdeveloped in 23 countries

As part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) announced in September 2015, the international community has created a comprehensive set of targets for sustainable development. Governments can therefore be expected to make sustainability checks a common and integral part of regulatory impact assessments and thereby anticipate the short-, medium- and long-term effects of planned or existing policy measures with the help of a comprehensive set of indicators.

Nonetheless, all three requirements for high-quality sustainability checks are met only by Denmark, Finland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. In **Finland**, where sustainability aspects are an integral part of RIAs for planned legislation, any deviations of predicted policy outcomes are regularly monitored on the basis of a comprehensive set of indicators (Hiilamo et al. 2022). **New Zealand** has instituted a quality-assurance monitoring process that aims to identify all significant economic, social and environmental impacts and to assess whether the objectives pursued by each policy measure have been achieved. For example, the Child Poverty Reduction Act, which requires the government to set three- and ten-year targets for reducing child poverty, draws on dedicated metrics designed to determine progress in this regard (Hellmann et al. 2022).

In another 14 countries, only two of the requirements described above are met. However, in just over one-half of the surveyed countries (23), sustainability checks are not systematically integrated into the RIA process or are of insufficient quality.

Quality of Ex Post Evaluation
Unit: Score

Rank	Country	Sustainable Governance Indicators								change to 2014
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	
1	United Kingdom	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10	10	10	
2	Finland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
	Switzerland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9	9	
4	Canada	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	8	
	Germany	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	8	
	Norway	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
	Sweden	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	
8	Denmark	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Estonia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	France	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Japan	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	Lithuania	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	
	South Korea	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	7	7	
	United States	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	7	
15	Australia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Chile	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Czechia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Israel	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Latvia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Malta	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Mexico	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	6	6	
	Netherlands	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	6	6	
	New Zealand	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Slovenia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
	Spain	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	6	6	
—	Average	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.3	5.2	5.4	
26	Italy	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	
27	Greece	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	2	4	
28	Austria	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
	Bulgaria	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
	Croatia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
	Hungary	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
	Ireland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
	Poland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
	Portugal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
	Romania	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
	Slovakia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	
37	Belgium	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	2	2	
	Cyprus	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	2	2	
	Iceland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	2	2	
	Luxembourg	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	2	2	
	Turkey	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	2	2	

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Spotlight: Need for stronger integration of RIA findings and ex post evaluation into all countries' policymaking processes

A closer look at the findings shows that even countries featuring robust evidence-based instruments still show room for improvement. For example, **Finland's** Regulatory Impact Assessment Council concluded in its 2017 and 2018 reviews of regulatory proposals that a significant share of RIAs were of poor quality. Weak RIAs have led to parliament's constitutional committee rejecting several government bills, including those targeting welfare and healthcare reform and efforts to contain the COVID-19 virus (Hiilamo et al. 2022).

It is important that RIAs adhere to high standards of quality and be carried out on a regular basis. Equally important is the need for governments to take their findings seriously when formulating policy. A positive development in this respect can be observed in **Denmark** where evaluations have recently been explicitly integrated into the policy formulation process (Klemmensen et al. 2022). In contrast, RIA results are not systematically integrated into the **United Kingdom's** decision-making process (Busch et al. 2022).

The extent to which implemented policy measures deliver their intended outcomes should also be assessed at regular intervals. The **United Kingdom** can be cited as a positive example in this regard, as ex post evaluations are systematically carried out for all important policy measures. This involves assessing the impact of measures in terms of the desired effect so that they can be revised or, if necessary, new measures can be introduced. Behavioral research findings are also applied to facilitate the use of modern evaluation methods, as seen by the example of the independent Behavioral Insights Team and the What Works Network, which is coordinated by the Cabinet Office (Busch et al. 2022).

Coherent communication

Successful strategy development also demands that all levels of government communicate policies in ways that are factually consistent with the government's broader strategy.

Our experts find that coherent communication capacities across OECD and EU governments have declined overall, worsening from an average score of 6.4 in 2012 to 6.0 in 2022. Performance with regard to the coherent communication of strategic goals has worsened in 15 countries since 2012 and improved in only five.

Coherent Communication
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022		change to 2014
1	Canada	8	8	8	9	9	9	9	9	↑	+1
	Sweden	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9		0
3	Australia	9	9	9	8	8	8	8	8	↓	-1
	Denmark	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8		0
	Ireland	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7		0
	Latvia	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8		0
	Luxembourg	8	8	8	8	8	8	7	8		0
	Norway	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8		0
	Switzerland	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8		0
	United States	9	9	9	9	4	4	4	8	↓	-1
11	Finland	9	9	9	9	8	8	8	7	↓	-2
	France	7	3	4	4	9	7	7	7		0
	Israel	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7		0
	Malta	4	4	4	5	6	6	7	7	↑	+3
	Mexico	6	6	5	5	5	5	7	7	↑	+1
	Netherlands	9	9	9	9	8	7	7	7	↓	-2
	New Zealand	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7		0
	Portugal	7	5	6	8	7	8	8	7		0
	Spain	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	↑	+1
	United Kingdom	8	8	8	6	5	5	5	7	↓	-1
21	Hungary	10	9	8	7	7	7	6	6	↓	-4
	Iceland	6	7	7	5	5	6	6	6		0
	Italy	5	6	6	6	5	4	4	6	↑	+1
	Japan	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6		0
	South Korea	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6		0
—	Average	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.1	6.0	5.9	5.9	6.0		
26	Austria	5	5	5	4	4	6	6	5		0
	Czechia	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	↑	+1
	Germany	6	6	5	5	5	4	5	5	↓	-1
	Greece	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	5	↑	+3
	Lithuania	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	↓	-1
	Slovenia	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	5	↑	+1
32	Bulgaria	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4		0
	Chile	6	8	6	6	6	6	4	4	↓	-2
	Estonia	5	5	5	5	6	6	5	4	↓	-1
	Poland	7	7	7	5	5	5	5	4	↓	-3
	Romania	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4		0
	Slovakia	6	7	7	6	5	5	4	4	↓	-2
38	Belgium	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	↓	-2
	Croatia	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	↓	-1
	Cyprus	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	↑	+1
	Turkey	7	6	5	5	5	4	4	3	↓	-4

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The most drastic fluctuations on this indicator have been registered by the United States, Chile, France, Turkey and Hungary in the period between 2012 and 2022. While in several countries this trend is associated with changes in government, inconsistent messaging is a constant feature of governance in seven countries: Cyprus, Croatia, Belgium, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Czechia. In each of these countries, citizens cannot rely on their government's messaging to track progress in policy outcomes. It remains unclear to what extent or whether the governments of these countries even have a strategic plan that has been shared across government and internalized by individual ministries and agencies.

Institutional learning

Given the rapid pace of change, governments worldwide must not only improve their strategic planning and policy evaluation, they must review their respective institutional arrangements on a regular basis. In addition, they must optimize their organizational structures and underlying processes in order to adapt them to international developments (e.g., sustainable economic transformation) and thereby increase the speed and quality of decision-making. This involves, among other things, building the institutional capacity to help protect global public goods and aligning national policies with these global challenges.

The best-positioned countries in terms of institutional learning are once again the three northern European countries of Sweden, Denmark, Finland and New Zealand. By contrast, the greatest deficits can be seen in Hungary, Turkey, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Croatia, Bulgaria and Belgium.

Institutional Learning
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022		change to 2014
1	Sweden	9.25	9.25	9.25	9.25	9.25	9.25	9.25	9.25		0.0
2	Denmark	8.25	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50		+0.3
	Finland	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50		0.0
	New Zealand	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50		0.0
5	Lithuania	8.00	8.25	8.25	8.25	8.25	8.25	8.25	8.25		+0.3
6	Norway	8.25	8.25	8.25	8.25	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00		-0.3
7	Latvia	7.75	7.75	7.75	7.75	7.75	7.75	7.75	7.75		0.0
8	Canada	6.75	6.50	6.50	7.00	7.00	7.25	7.25	7.50	↗	+0.8
	Ireland	7.00	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	↗	+0.5
	United Kingdom	6.50	6.50	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.50	↗	+1.0
11	Italy	5.75	6.25	6.75	7.25	7.00	5.25	5.00	7.25	↗	+1.5
12	France	6.75	6.50	6.75	6.75	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00		+0.3
	Luxembourg	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	7.00		+0.3
	Spain	6.75	7.00	6.50	6.50	6.75	6.75	6.75	7.00		+0.3
15	Estonia	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.50	6.50	6.75	↗	+0.5
	Germany	7.00	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75		-0.3
	Japan	6.00	6.50	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	7.00	6.75	↗	+0.8
	South Korea	7.00	7.00	7.00	6.75	7.00	6.75	6.75	6.75		-0.3
19	Greece	5.00	5.00	4.75	5.00	5.50	5.25	5.75	6.50	↗	+1.5
	Israel	7.00	6.50	6.75	6.50	6.50	6.25	6.00	6.50	↘	-0.5
	United States	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	5.25	5.00	4.75	6.50		-0.3
—	Average	6.29	6.30	6.34	6.35	6.29	6.20	6.16	6.32		
22	Chile	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.25		+0.3
	Malta	5.25	5.25	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	6.00	6.25	↗	+1.0
	Portugal	6.50	6.00	6.00	6.50	6.50	6.25	6.25	6.25		-0.3
25	Iceland	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.00		-0.3
	Switzerland	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00		0.0
27	Mexico	6.50	6.75	6.50	6.00	5.75	5.50	5.00	5.75	↘	-0.8
28	Australia	6.75	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.00	5.50	5.50	↘	-1.3
	Austria	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.50	5.50	5.25	5.25	5.50		+0.3
	Netherlands	5.50	5.50	5.25	5.50	6.00	5.75	5.75	5.50		0.0
31	Slovenia	4.50	4.75	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.25	↗	+0.8
32	Belgium	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	5.00	4.75	4.75		0.0
	Bulgaria	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	5.00	5.00	4.75		0.0
	Croatia	5.25	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	↘	-0.5
	Czechia	4.25	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	↗	+0.5
36	Cyprus	3.25	4.00	4.00	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	↑	+1.3
	Romania	4.75	4.75	4.75	5.25	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50		-0.3
	Slovakia	5.00	5.00	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.50	4.50		-0.5
39	Poland	7.00	7.00	7.25	4.75	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.25	↓	-2.8
	Turkey	6.00	5.75	5.75	6.25	5.25	4.50	4.25	4.25	↓	-1.8
41	Hungary	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.25	4.00	4.00	↘	-0.5

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In **Finland**, a coordination system has been established to bring domestic positions in line with European Union policy. This system involves various ministries, a cabinet committee for EU affairs and various EU subcommittees. Another example of Finnish adaptability is demonstrated by the effective ways in which the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare cooperated with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and WHO in coordinating the country's pandemic response. Within the context of this collaboration, national policies were assessed for their impact and the findings were then incorporated into the formulation, coordination and monitoring of further policies (Hiilamo et al. 2022). In **Hungary**, however, past reforms have not resulted in national government structures being adapted to international and supranational developments. On the contrary, the government's drastic reduction in the number of ministries has meant that the organization of ministries is no longer compatible with other EU member states or the structure of the EU Council of Ministers (Ágh et al. 2022).

Self-monitoring
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Finland	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0
2	New Zealand	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	Sweden	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
4	Canada	8	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Denmark	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Greece	5	5	5	5	6	6	7	8 ↑	+3
	Latvia	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Lithuania	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Norway	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Switzerland	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	United Kingdom	5	5	7	8	8	8	8	8 ↑	+3
12	Hungary	10	10	9	9	9	8	7	7 ↓	-3
	Ireland	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Israel	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Italy	4	4	5	6	6	5	5	7 ↑	+3
	Japan	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	United States	7	7	7	7	5	5	5	7	0
—	Average	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.1	6.1	5.9	5.9	6.1	
18	Chile	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Estonia	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	Luxembourg	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6 ↑	+1
	Malta	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6 ↑	+1
	Mexico	6	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
	South Korea	7	7	7	6	7	6	6	6 ↓	-1
24	Australia	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	5 ↓	-1
	Austria	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5 ↑	+1
	France	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Germany	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Iceland	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Netherlands	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	0
	Portugal	6	5	5	6	6	5	5	5 ↓	-1
	Spain	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	5 ↓	-1
	Turkey	6	6	6	8	7	5	5	5 ↓	-1
33	Bulgaria	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Croatia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Cyprus	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4 ↑	+1
	Czechia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Poland	6	6	6	4	4	4	4	4 ↓	-2
	Romania	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	Slovenia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
40	Belgium	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	0
	Slovakia	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0

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Institutional Reform
Unit: Score

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Rank	Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	change to 2014
1	Lithuania	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
	New Zealand	9	9	9	9	9	8	9	9	0
	Sweden	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
4	Denmark	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	8 ↑	+1
	Germany	8	8	7	7	8	8	8	8	0
	Latvia	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	Norway	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
	United Kingdom	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
9	Australia	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Canada	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7 ↑	+1
	Chile	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7 ↑	+1
	Finland	7	7	7	7	7	8	7	7	0
	France	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	7 ↑	+1
	Greece	6	6	5	6	6	5	6	7 ↑	+1
	Iceland	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	7 ↓	-1
	Ireland	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7 ↑	+1
	Israel	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	7	0
	Italy	6	7	8	8	7	5	5	7 ↑	+1
	Japan	5	6	7	7	7	7	7	7 ↑	+2
	Luxembourg	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
	Malta	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	7 ↑	+1
	Spain	6	7	6	7	7	6	6	7 ↑	+1
—	Average	6.1	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.0	6.1	6.2	
23	Austria	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6 ↑	+1
	Czechia	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6 ↑	+1
	Estonia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6 ↑	+1
	South Korea	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0
27	Bulgaria	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Croatia	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	5 ↓	-1
	Cyprus	3	4	4	5	5	5	5	5 ↑	+2
	Mexico	8	8	8	7	6	5	5	5 ↓	-3
	Netherlands	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5 ↓	-1
	Portugal	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5 ↓	-1
	Slovakia	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	5 ↓	-1
	Slovenia	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5 ↑	+1
	Switzerland	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
	Turkey	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	5 ↓	-1
37	Poland	7	7	7	4	4	4	4	4 ↓	-3
	United States	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
39	Belgium	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
	Romania	4	4	4	5	3	3	3	3 ↓	-1
41	Hungary	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0

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Only sporadic and selective monitoring of institutional arrangements in 18 countries

Improving structures and processes requires that they be regularly and effectively put to the test and evaluated. This kind of self-monitoring can be observed on a regular basis in Finland, New Zealand and Sweden but only occasionally in 18 of the countries surveyed (Slovakia, Belgium, Slovenia, Romania, Poland, Czechia, Cyprus, Croatia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Iceland, Germany, France, Austria and Australia). An effective monitoring of structures and processes alone, however, is not enough to improve a government's strategic capacities. Ultimately, the extent to which action is taken as a result of such efforts is what matters. In Lithuania, New Zealand and Sweden, for example, these efforts have resulted in their governments adapting their institutional arrangements to changing conditions.

In **Lithuania**, institutional arrangements are subject to regular monitoring and evaluation. The implementation of the Public Administration Improvement Program is monitored by a committee composed of representatives from various ministries, the Government Office and other state institutions. The program uses quality management instruments to review not only administrative structures, but also rules of procedure and processes. A recent outcome of such efforts is the Šimonytė government's reform of the country's innovation system which has entailed merging several innovation-related institutions to develop a more effective innovation ecosystem. Despite this overall positive assessment, our country experts for Lithuania conclude that the country's monitoring results have yet to be fully leveraged and that some institutional adjustments are short-sighted and driven by partisan-political aims (Kuokstis et al. 2022). **New Zealand** introduced its Public Service Act in 2021 to replace the State Service Act established in 1988 with the aim of reducing silo thinking in ministries and government agencies and promoting cross-institutional collaboration (Hellmann et al. 2022).

The will or ability to reform institutional reforms remains weak in 15 countries. **Hungary** in particular performs poorly in this area. As documented by our experts, recent institutional reforms such as the establishment of a new supervisory authority for regulated activities (SARA) have served primarily to consolidate Orban's power by limiting the strategic options of a possible opposition successor government (Ágh et al. 2022).

6. Conclusion

The last decade can hardly be seen as an era in which progress was made in terms of building robust, resilient state and governance capacities. In fact, the overall trajectory of developments with regard to the three key dimensions of democratic governance in EU and OECD countries is cause for concern. Despite a slight upward tick registered at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen no significant improvement in the areas of coordination, consensus-building or strategy development since 2012. Consensus-building and strategy development are the areas demanding the most attention.

Dimension trends
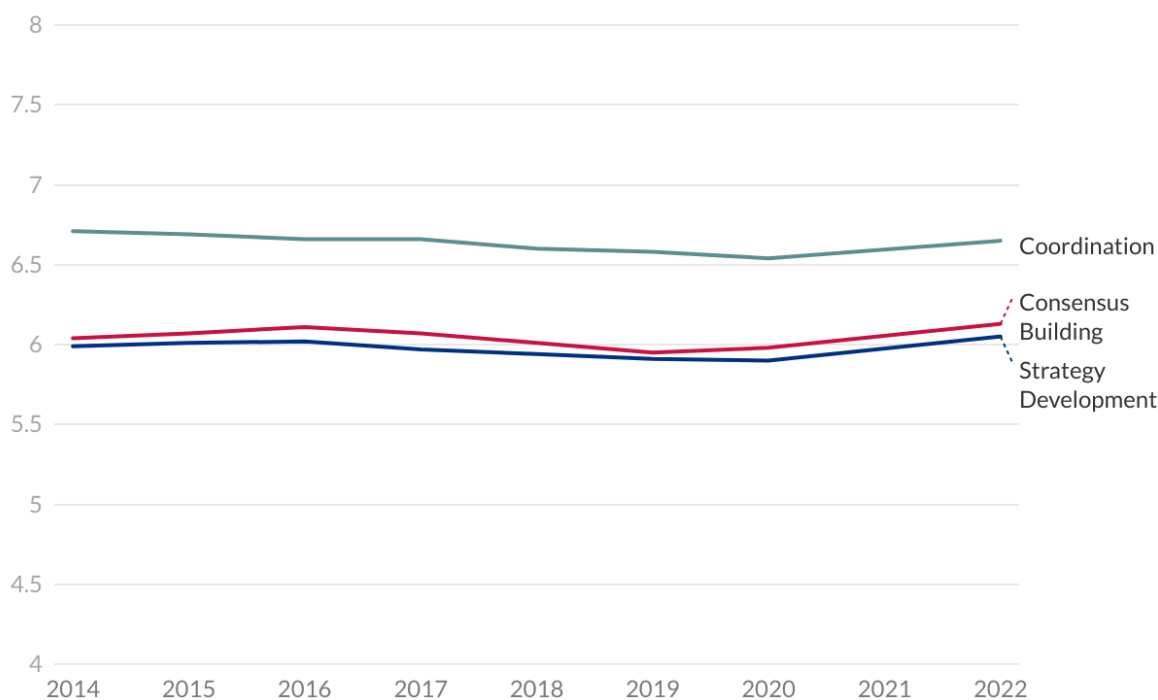
Our analysis has highlighted the key differences found among EU and OECD countries with regard to their capacity to develop long-term, sustainable policy strategies, their ability to horizontally and vertically coordinate policy, and their acumen in building public consensus. Although further improvements are needed in all 41 countries, some countries feature good governance practices of potential relevance for others.

In **Finland,** policy goals are a structural feature of strategic planning. Policies are also well-coordinated, in large part because the PMO has the capacity to track progress in policy implementation and coordinate communication within the government.

Denmark offers a good example of information-based policymaking. Relevant stakeholders are involved in the conduct of impact assessments, and evaluations have been explicitly integrated into the policy formulation process.

In the **United Kingdom,** important policy measures are subject to ex post evaluations that assess the impact of each measure in terms of their desired effect. In turn, policy measures can thus be revised or new measures introduced, if necessary. In addition, the government draws on behavioral research findings for decision-making.

Estonia stands out in terms of digital coordination efforts. The country's Information System for Legal Drafts allows users to search proposals currently under consideration and participate in public consultations. A data exchange platform supports coordinated and integrated policymaking and monitoring across sectors.

Looking ahead, if governments are to respond quickly and ably to the complex set of challenges we face, leaders in all countries are called upon to monitor closely the progress made in other countries and adapt their own governance arrangements and thereby facilitate innovation.

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