

Justice as a Public Service

Delivering Better Outcomes



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DELIVERING BETTER OUTCOMES

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Foreword

Justice is experienced in everyday life, when people seek to resolve a family or housing problem, challenge a public decision, protect their livelihood or enforce an agreement. For businesses, it underpins confidence, investment and the ability to operate on a level playing field. Effective justice systems therefore matter not only for the protection of rights and the rule of law, but also for trust in public institutions, social cohesion and economic opportunity.

In recent years, governments and the international community have increasingly recognised that improving access to justice requires looking beyond institutions and procedures alone. The central question is whether justice systems actually help people, businesses and communities prevent and resolve the problems they face through pathways that are accessible, fair, timely and responsive to their needs. This shift is reflected in the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems, adopted in 2023, which provides a common framework for organising justice policies and services around people's legal needs, experiences and capabilities.

This agenda is also at the heart of the Justice Action Coalition (JAC), which brings together countries and organisations committed to advancing equal access to justice and accelerating the transition towards people-centred justice systems. Through its Data and Evidence workstream, led by the OECD and Canada in collaboration with partners including the World Justice Project and HiiL, the JAC has sought to strengthen the shared knowledge infrastructure needed to understand justice gaps, identify what works and help countries measure progress over time.

This report is an important contribution to that collective effort. It provides the first comparative assessment of the state of people-centred justice, as part of the implementation of the OECD Recommendation across OECD Member, JAC and other partner countries. Applying the OECD Measurement Framework for People-Centred Justice Systems, it brings together evidence on justice outcomes with information on the policies, services and institutional arrangements that support people-centred justice. It also introduces a set of internationally comparable indicators covering both outcomes and key dimensions of justice systems. Together, these provide an initial baseline for monitoring progress, supporting policy dialogue and strengthening peer learning across countries.

The findings show both progress and an important unfinished agenda. Many countries are developing new strategies, digital tools, local services, referral mechanisms and approaches to user engagement. At the same time, significant gaps remain in access to tailored assistance, in the use of evidence to guide priorities and resources, and in connecting services across institutional boundaries. These challenges reinforce a central message: people-centred justice cannot be delivered by any one institution alone. It requires coherent justice pathways, stronger co-ordination across public services and a shared focus on outcomes for people and businesses.

As the first cross-country application of the Measurement Framework and indicators, this report should be seen as a starting point. The baseline it establishes can support countries in identifying priorities, learning from one another and tracking change over time, while continued country engagement will help strengthen the indicators and improve the evidence base ahead of future monitoring of the Recommendation. Through the Justice Action Coalition and the OECD Justice Network, this work can help advance a broader shift towards justice as a responsive public service that people and businesses can rely on in practice.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ADR	Alternative dispute resolution
AI	Artificial intelligence
BOLD	Better Outcomes through Linked Data
CEPEJ	European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice
CONPES	National Council for Economic and Social Policy (Colombia)
CSO	Civil society organisation
DR MEL	Dominican Republic Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Platform
EU	European Union
FPS	Federal Public Service (Belgium)
GLNS	Global Legal Needs Survey
Hiil	The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law
HMCTS	His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (United Kingdom)
ICT	Information and communication technology
JAC	Justice Action Coalition
KPI	Key performance indicator
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NAJP	National Access to Justice Partnership (Australia)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NJSI	National Justice Statistics Initiative (Canada)
NRRP	National Recovery and Resilience Plan
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
R&D	Research and development
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
TIJ	Thailand Institute of Justice
UK	United Kingdom
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WJP	World Justice Project
WODC	Research and Data Centre of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security

Executive summary

Amid rapid technological and societal change, constrained public finances, and persistent concerns about trust in public institutions, justice systems must increasingly operate as responsive public services. Such services are accessible, understandable and able to direct people to the forms of assistance and dispute resolution that are most effective at resolving their problems. This is central to the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems.

This report offers an assessment of the state of people-centred justice across OECD and Justice Action Coalition Members and partner countries. It provides the first cross-country application of the OECD Measurement Framework for People-Centred Justice Systems, combining population-based evidence on people's justice problems, pathways and outcomes with an assessment of the government policies and institutional arrangements intended to support them. The findings suggest significant scope to improve how justice systems deliver for people and businesses.

Justice problems remain widespread and consequential

Justice problems remain common: in a typical country, more than four in ten people experience at least one non-trivial justice problem over a two-year period, and around half of those affected face wider consequences for their finances, employment, health or relationships. Across countries, the median resolution rate is 70%, meaning that around three in ten people do not consider their justice problem fully resolved at the end of their justice journey. And only 60% report that the process of resolving their problem was fair. Meanwhile the median trust in judges and magistrates stands at 56%. These findings show why the effectiveness of justice systems cannot be measured solely through caseloads, processing times or the number of completed cases. What ultimately matters is whether problems are resolved, processes are fair, and broader social and economic harm is prevented.

People face gaps in obtaining appropriate support

A key challenge emerges along the justice journey. While 67% of people with justice problems know where to find information, only 38% of those who need personalised assistance or advice obtain it, and only 42% of them are able to access the dispute resolution mechanism they need. These indicators cover different eligible populations and should not be interpreted as a sequential pathway. Nevertheless, they reveal a pronounced gap between making information available and enabling people to act. People need clear pathways that connect information to appropriate assistance, advice and, where necessary, tailored dispute resolution. Creating such pathways requires effective intake, triage, referral and follow-up across courts, legal aid providers, administrative bodies, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, ombuds institutions, social services and community-based justice providers, so that people are directed to appropriate support without having to navigate complex institutional structures.

Reforms remain fragmented across institutions and services

Countries are taking important steps towards more people-centred justice systems, but progress remains uneven and reforms are often fragmented. Commitments to access to justice and people-centred service delivery are increasingly reflected in justice strategies and institutional reforms, yet shared goals across justice systems remain underdeveloped. Likewise, while most countries have measures to address bias and discrimination, systematic analysis of differences in justice experiences and outcomes across population groups remains limited. Planning and accountability continue to be organised largely around institutional boundaries, even though people's justice problems often cut across them. Better co-ordination

does not require a single institutional model: it requires diverse institutions to work towards shared outcomes while respecting their distinct roles and independence.

Evidence is not used systematically to shape services and resources

Justice institutions routinely collect data on caseloads, backlogs, processing times and organisational activity, but these indicators provide only a partial picture. They do not capture problems that never reach an institution, people who disengage from a process, or situations that are not recognised as having a legal dimension in the first place. Regular evidence on legal needs should complement administrative data and be systematically linked to prevention, service design, planning and budgeting. Resource allocation and performance frameworks should more clearly connect demonstrated needs and expected outcomes with resources, services and results for people, including accessibility, service quality, fairness, problem resolution and the wider consequences of justice problems.

Digital transformation and data governance need a system-wide focus

Digital portals, electronic filing, remote hearings and electronic case management are widespread, but technology is still frequently used to transfer existing procedures online rather than redesign services around users. Only around one-third of assessed countries demonstrate a digital-by-design approach. Digital reform should simplify processes, connect services and reduce administrative burdens while preserving telephone, face-to-face and community channels for people who cannot use digital services. Stronger governance, common definitions, quality standards and secure data-sharing arrangements are also needed to make information usable across institutional boundaries.

Policy Recommendations

Finally, people-centred justice depends on a stronger culture of continuous improvement. Based on the findings and analysis in the report, countries are recommended to:

- Establish a people-centred purpose for the justice system, translated into measurable outcomes, shared goals and public accountability.
- Build an evidence base on legal needs, justice pathways and what works to achieve fair outcomes, and use it to guide reform, investment and evaluation.
- Develop coherent end-to-end pathways connecting information, personalised assistance, effective intake and referral and appropriate dispute resolution.
- Design services around differences in people's capabilities, preferences, circumstances, location and the nature of their problems.
- Shift from digitising existing procedures to transforming services around users, simpler processes and connected delivery.
- Strengthen justice data governance through clear responsibilities, common definitions, quality standards and appropriate information sharing.
- Put participation, user feedback and legal empowerment at the centre of policy design and continuous service improvement.
- Connect planning and financing more clearly to evidence on needs, services, performance and outcomes for people and businesses.
- Strengthen prevention and early intervention, including links with services addressing the wider consequences of justice problems.

The central challenge is to move beyond institution-by-institution reform towards strategic stewardship of the justice system as a whole. Stronger evidence, connected services, outcome-focused financing and continuous learning can help make justice systems more responsive, adaptive and effective.

1. Overview: Justice as a Public Service

This chapter sets the context for assessing justice as a public service across countries. Building on the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems, it highlights the importance of justice systems responding to evolving needs and expectations against a backdrop of rapid technological, societal and economic change. It explains how the report brings together comparative evidence on justice outcomes, government policies and system characteristics through the OECD Measurement Framework for People-Centred Justice Systems. The chapter also presents the main findings of the report and outlines priorities for reform and policy recommendations.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Access to justice is fundamental to the rule of law and to the ability of people, businesses and communities to participate fully in society and the economy. In practice, it is experienced through everyday problems: resolving a family or housing dispute, addressing difficulties at work, challenging a public decision, protecting a livelihood or enforcing an agreement. Whether these problems can be prevented or resolved fairly, effectively and within a reasonable time shapes people's lives, confidence in public institutions and businesses' ability to operate, invest and plan with certainty.

Over the past decade, a growing body of evidence has broadened understanding of what effective justice systems need to deliver. The sound administration, independence and integrity of courts and other justice institutions are indispensable. At the same time, research on legal needs has demonstrated the importance of looking beyond institutional activity to whether people and businesses can recognise their justice problems, understand their rights and options, obtain appropriate assistance and ultimately reach fair and effective resolution (OECD/Open Society Foundations, 2019^[1]). Many justice problems never reach a court or other formal justice institution, while others intersect with housing, employment, health, social protection, public administration or commercial activity. This has reinforced the need to consider justice from the perspective of the entire justice journey, rather than primarily through the procedures and institutions that people may encounter along the way.

These developments have progressively placed people-centred justice at the core of efforts to make the rule of law effective in practice. A people-centred approach asks how the justice system as a whole responds to the problems experienced by people, businesses and communities and how evidence on their needs, capabilities, experiences and outcomes can inform the design and continuous improvement of justice policies and services. This perspective is equally relevant to businesses, including SMEs, which may face different types of legal needs but similarly depend on accessible, predictable and effective justice services for resolving problems.

The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems, adopted in 2023, consolidated this evolution. It defines access to justice as the ability of people, businesses and communities to prevent conflicts and obtain effective, fair, equitable and timely resolution of their legal and justice-related needs. It calls for seamless, efficient, integrated, sustainable, resilient and user-centred justice pathways comprising the formal and informal, pre-court and court mechanisms and services that people actually use to prevent and resolve justice problems [\[OECD/LEGAL/0498\]](#). The Recommendation builds on more than a decade of OECD work on access to justice, including policy dialogue through the OECD Global Roundtables on Equal Access to Justice, as well as the broader international momentum generated by the 2019 *Justice for All* report.

People-centred justice forms part of a broader OECD understanding of a responsive rule of law: one in which rights and safeguards are not only formally established but can be effectively exercised in practice. This matters for individuals, but also for the wider functioning of societies and economies. Accessible and effective justice contributes to legal certainty, predictable enforcement, protection of rights, accountability for public and private actors and confidence in institutions (OECD, 2025^[2]). These conditions are important for investment, economic activity and social cohesion. This report is intended to be read alongside OECD work on judicial and justice governance, trust, integrity and anti-corruption, and institutional effectiveness, which examine the safeguards for justice systems to fulfil their constitutional and public-service functions.

This perspective has become particularly important in the wider context in which governments operate. Rapid technological and societal change, demographic shifts, new information ecosystems and the accelerating development of artificial intelligence are changing both the nature of legal needs and people's expectations of public institutions. At the same time, governments face constrained public finances and persistent challenges to public trust. Public institutions are increasingly expected to deliver better outcomes while safeguarding rights, ensuring accountability and managing growing complexity.

In their *Declaration on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy* [GOV/PGC/MIN(2022)3], OECD Ministers reaffirmed the importance of public institutions that uphold the rule of law and fundamental freedoms, operate with transparency, integrity and accountability, and remain responsive to changing citizens' needs and expectations. The OECD's emerging *Government Unstuck* agenda reinforces this focus on governments' capacity to deliver meaningful results for people, reduce unnecessary complexity, strengthen voice and make public institutions more accessible, responsive and capable of adapting to change. These objectives apply directly to justice systems. Approaching justice as a responsive public service provides one way of translating them into practice, while respecting the distinct constitutional roles and independence of justice institutions.

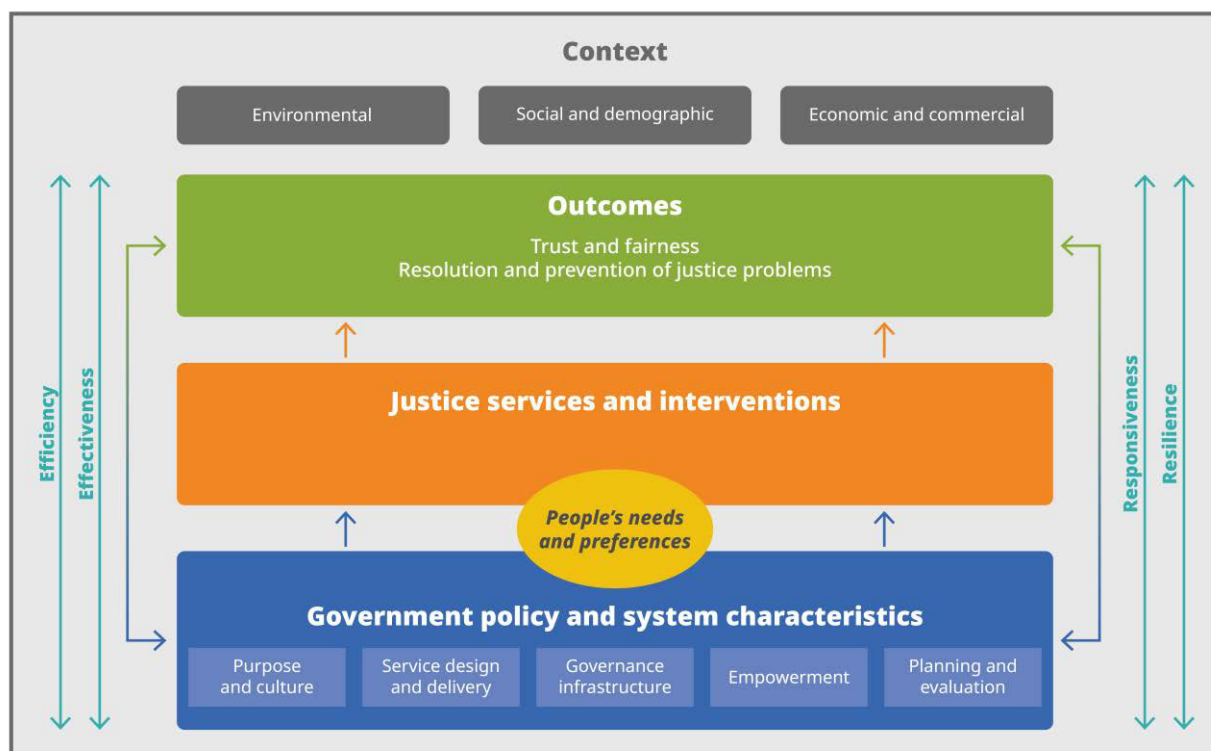
In parallel, the Justice Action Coalition has provided an important platform for translating the international commitment to people-centred justice into action. Established in 2021 following the publication of the flagship *Justice for All* report (Task Force on Justice, 2019^[3]), the Coalition brings together countries and partner organisations seeking to advance equal access to justice and achieve measurable improvements in justice outcomes. Its work has helped sustain political momentum around people-centred justice and has placed particular emphasis on strengthening data and evidence, strategy and innovation, communications and advocacy, and justice financing.

Justice measurement

A characteristic of people-centred justice systems is their focus on understanding their performance from the perspective of people and businesses and their use of data and evidence to inform policy priorities and reforms. This means combining information on institutions, caseloads and processes with evidence on the justice problems people face, their experiences with the pathways and services they use, and the outcomes they achieve. Such evidence can help governments identify unmet needs and unresolved problems, detect disparities between different groups, anticipate demand and direct resources towards areas where they can have the greatest impact. Combined with effective data governance and mechanisms for learning and feedback, it also enables justice systems to assess whether policies and services are achieving their intended objectives and to adapt them over time.

Justice systems generate substantial amounts of information, but data are frequently dispersed across institutions, based on different definitions and methodologies and disconnected from the outcomes that justice policies seek to achieve (Byrom, Piccinin-Barbieri and Wells, 2024^[4]). Justice systems can therefore be 'data-rich but information-poor'. The *OECD Measurement Framework for People-Centred Justice Systems* seeks to address this challenge by providing a common structure linking three dimensions: government policies and system characteristics; the justice services and interventions through which people address their justice problems; and the outcomes ultimately achieved for people and businesses (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[5]); see Figure 1.1. These connections provide a basis for strengthening indicators, definitions and methodologies and for progressively developing a more coherent evidence base for justice policymaking within and across countries.

Figure 1.1. OECD Measurement Framework for People-Centred Justice Systems



Source: (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[5])

This report represents the first cross-country application of this emerging measurement architecture. It brings together internationally comparable evidence on justice outcomes with systematic information on the policies and system characteristics through which countries are implementing the *OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems* (OECD, 2023^[6]). In doing so, it provides a common reference point for countries to take stock of progress, identify areas of relative strength and opportunities for further development, and learn from one another. It also establishes an initial baseline for monitoring implementation over time, from which the OECD and countries can progressively strengthen the indicators and evidence base and track progress towards more effective and people-centred justice systems.

Assessment and recommendations: Justice as a Public Service

The findings of this report point to a clear evolution in how effective justice systems are understood and governed. Across countries, access to justice is increasingly recognised not only as a matter of rights and institutional performance, but as a question of whether the justice system as a whole enables people and businesses to prevent and resolve the problems they encounter fairly, effectively and in ways that allow them to move forward. This implies approaching justice as a public service, while fully safeguarding the constitutional roles, independence and integrity of courts and other justice institutions.

Countries are moving in this direction, but the transition remains incomplete. The report identifies significant innovation across justice systems: stronger policy commitments to people-centred justice; new digital services; more accessible information; specialised and community-based services; greater use of user feedback; and growing attention to data and evidence. Yet these reforms frequently remain concentrated within individual institutions, programmes or channels rather than forming part of a coherent system for addressing people's justice problems from beginning to end. No country assessed

demonstrates equally advanced implementation across all dimensions of the OECD Recommendation, and there is considerable scope for countries to learn from one another.

The outcomes experienced by people reinforce the importance of this system-wide perspective. A median 70% of people whose resolution process had concluded considered their justice problem fully resolved, but this leaves around three in ten without full resolution. Only 60% considered the process fair, while median trust in judges and magistrates was 56%. Justice problems are also consequential: a median 52% of those experiencing a non-trivial justice problem report wider hardship. At the same time, access becomes weaker as people move through the justice journey. While 67% report knowing where to obtain information, only 38% of those needing assistance and advice obtain it and 42% of those needing a dispute resolution mechanism access one. The principal policy challenge is therefore not simply to increase the supply of individual justice services, but to ensure that the different parts of the system work together so that people can move from recognising a problem to obtaining suitable support and, ultimately, a fair and effective resolution.

These findings also demonstrate why institutional performance indicators alone cannot provide a sufficient picture of the state of the justice system. A case can be processed efficiently without resolving the underlying problem. Conversely, people may resolve problems without using a court or another formal institution. High rates of resolution do not necessarily coincide with high levels of perceived fairness or trust. Similarly, providing information does not ensure that people who require personalised assistance receive it, and access to a dispute resolution mechanism does not demonstrate that the resulting process is affordable, timely or effective. A more mature approach to justice policy therefore needs to connect institutional performance with people's needs, awareness, pathways, experiences and outcomes.

At the policy level, when it comes to securing commitment at the highest level of government, a people-centred purpose and culture in the justice system, and the delivery of justice as a public service, are increasingly reflected across countries. Some countries articulate this through explicit vision and mission statements, others through justice strategies, while elsewhere the commitment is operationalised through specific reforms or action plans. However, no country articulated people-centred objectives as a fully system-wide purpose extending across government and society. Similarly, while access to justice is strongly endorsed across all countries, shared and measurable goals, together with joint monitoring of progress towards them, remain underdeveloped. Monitoring of institution-specific goals is more common, but objectives directly linked to outcomes for people are still rare. All countries also report at least some measures aimed at addressing discrimination or the needs of specific groups, yet these are often concentrated on training and awareness-raising initiatives and are only rarely supported by systematic analysis of differences in justice experiences and outcomes across population groups. Overall, the findings suggest that the next step is to move from broad commitment to a more coherent system-wide approach, with clearer shared objectives, stronger outcome-oriented monitoring and greater use of data and evidence to assess whether justice is being delivered equitably in practice.

A major constraint is the evidence available to governments. Justice institutions generate substantial administrative data on caseloads, processing times, backlogs and expenditure, but these data largely capture people and problems that have already reached formal services. Only four of the 27 countries examined in detail conduct regular legal needs surveys, and none was assessed as having established a comprehensive set of people-centred variables covering needs, pathways, experiences and outcomes across the justice sector. This limits governments' ability to identify unmet needs, understand where people disengage, assess disparities between population groups and direct resources towards interventions likely to have the greatest impact.

Legal capability is receiving greater attention in justice policy and service design, but its systematic assessment remains limited. Few countries regularly examine whether people have the knowledge, confidence and practical ability to recognise and address justice problems, or whether the complexity of services and procedures is appropriately matched to those capabilities. Likewise, evidence on what

contributes to effective and sustainable problem resolution is not yet routinely incorporated into service design. Although some practices draw on behavioural science, psychology, conflict management and other disciplines to improve the capacity of justice services to effectively resolve problems and provide fair outcomes, the challenge that persists is moving from pilots towards a more systematic application.

Accessibility is more than the formal availability of a service. Over the past decade, the centralisation of physical services and rapid expansion of digital channels have generated important efficiencies but may reduce the accessibility for rural communities and for people facing digital, physical or socioeconomic constraints. Most countries assess geographic accessibility in some form, although approaches remain uneven and digital channels do not consistently compensate for reduced access to in-person or telephone services. Emerging locally-based approaches, including local justice hubs, proximity offices, mobile justice services and the use of demographic, spatial and transport data to determine service locations, illustrate how delivery can be adapted more closely to where and how people need support.

Countries are also making greater efforts to understand how people experience justice services, but feedback is not yet consistently converted into organisational learning. Many institutions use surveys, complaints, user-journey mapping or targeted research to understand experiences of accessibility, treatment, fairness and outcomes. However, approaches differ substantially across institutions and countries, limiting comparability and the development of a cumulative evidence base on what works. More fundamentally, mechanisms using feedback data to inform service design and delivery remain uneven. The emerging picture is therefore one of increasing attention to user experience, but a less developed capacity to close the loop between evidence, institutional learning and reform.

Digital transformation is now a near-universal feature of justice reform. Most countries have adopted digital transformation strategies and invested in e-filing, digital portals, electronic communications, electronic case files and remote proceedings, with clear potential to improve accessibility and efficiency. However, the contribution of these investments to people-centred outcomes varies considerably. Implementation often remains organised around individual institutions or stages of the justice journey, leaving users to navigate a fragmented system. Only around one-third of countries demonstrate a digital-by-design approach that uses technology and data to rethink processes, information flows and service delivery around users, rather than simply transferring existing procedures online. There is therefore a risk that digitalisation reproduces existing institutional complexity.

The ability to use data strategically remains another important dividing line. Data governance in justice is developing, but many countries continue to rely on general government data policies or institution-specific frameworks rather than an integrated and people-centred justice data strategy. Fragmented ownership, inconsistent definitions and uneven data obligations across providers constrain interoperability and make it difficult to build a comparable, system-wide picture of needs, pathways, services and outcomes. At the same time, there is clear progress in the sophistication with which data are being used. More advanced systems increasingly combine administrative information with user-experience data, feedback, population surveys and other evidence, demonstrating the potential to move from institution-specific reporting towards a richer understanding of how the justice system performs for people.

Participation presents a similar pattern. Engagement with professional stakeholders and civil society is well established across much of the justice sector, particularly in relation to legislative and policy reforms. Direct and sustained participation by users and people with lived experience is considerably less embedded, especially at the level of service design and implementation. Consultation therefore remains more institutionalised than co-design. Strengthening the participation of users and communities throughout the policy cycle can provide insights that administrative information alone cannot capture and help ensure that reforms respond to the practical circumstances in which people encounter the justice system.

Finally, countries have invested substantially in legal information, outreach, plain-language communication and self-help tools, but these initiatives often remain fragmented. Online legal information is almost universal and plain-language requirements are increasingly common, yet justice-wide approaches to

simplifying procedures, forms and institutional pathways remain less developed. Similarly, information is not always connected to personalised assistance, effective triage or referral. The result is an important distinction between making information available and enabling people to act on it. More coherent approaches to strengthening legal capability – combining accessible information, simplification, multiple service channels and “no wrong door” referral arrangements – remain an important frontier in the transition towards justice as a responsive public service.

The same challenge is visible in planning and budgeting. Most countries have mechanisms for justice-sector planning and many apply programme or performance budgeting, but these processes remain predominantly organised around institutional mandates. Evidence on legal needs and user outcomes is rarely embedded systematically in resource-allocation decisions, and the connection between public expenditure, the services financed and the outcomes achieved often remains difficult to trace. The report therefore points towards a broader understanding of performance: one that connects resources to the services they enable and assesses the justice system not by efficiency alone, but by the outcomes it produces for people and communities.

Taken together, the findings suggest a need to strengthen the strategic stewardship of justice systems. This does not imply centralising decision making or weakening the independence of justice institutions. Rather, it means developing the collective capacity to understand needs across the system, establish shared outcomes, ensure that different services and institutions connect effectively, use evidence to guide resources and reforms, and learn continuously from results. Such stewardship requires clear responsibilities and co-ordination across ministries, judiciaries, legal aid, alternative dispute resolution, administrative justice and community-based providers, as well as connections with social, health, housing, employment and other services where justice problems intersect with wider needs.

1.2. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems and the findings of this report, countries can prioritise the following areas:

1. Establish a people-centred purpose for the justice system and translate it into measurable outcomes and shared goals.

Articulate high-level commitments to access to justice through shared goals that describe what the justice system is expected to achieve for people and businesses, including effective problem resolution, fairness, accessibility, trust and prevention of wider hardship. Clarify the contribution of relevant institutions to these outcomes while respecting their distinct mandates and constitutional independence. Support shared objectives through co-ordination arrangements, monitoring frameworks and public accountability.

2. Build a sustained evidence base on legal needs, justice pathways and outcomes and use it to drive reform.

Complement administrative and institutional data with regular population-level evidence on the justice problems experienced by people and businesses, the actions they take, their experiences along their justice pathway and the outcomes they achieve. Disaggregate evidence, where appropriate, to identify disparities affecting different population groups and assess legal capability. Establish mechanisms that connect these findings directly to prevention, service redesign, investment decisions and evaluation.

3. Develop coherent, end-to-end justice pathways based on the nature of people’s problems.

Move from a collection of individual services towards a continuum of information, assistance, advice and dispute resolution proportionate to different needs and capabilities. Strengthen intake, triage, referral and follow-up so that people are not required to understand institutional boundaries

to obtain support. Apply a “no wrong door” approach, where appropriate, to connect courts, administrative bodies, legal aid, ADR providers, ombuds institutions, local authorities, social services and community organisations. Give particular attention to access to relevant assistance and advice, which emerges as a major pressure point across countries.

4. Design services around people’s capabilities and focus on effective resolution.

Adapt service design to differences in legal capability, problem type, vulnerability and location rather than assuming a standard user. Ensure that services are geographically, financially, digitally, practically and psychologically accessible and use demographic, spatial and other relevant evidence to identify gaps. Develop digital, telephone, face-to-face and community channels as complementary components of an integrated, multichannel service offer. Embed plain language, accessible forms, clear information on costs and timelines, and navigation support into service standards.

5. Shift from digitising procedures to transforming justice services.

Use digital transformation to simplify and redesign processes around users rather than reproducing existing procedures online. Develop digital-by-design approaches that reduce duplication, improve information flows and connect information, intake, triage, assistance and resolution more effectively. Test and evaluate innovations and scale those that demonstrably improve access, quality and outcomes.

6. Strengthen justice data governance and interoperability.

Develop coherent governance arrangements for justice data, including clear institutional responsibilities, common definitions and people-centred variables, data quality standards, privacy and security safeguards, personal data protection frameworks, cybersecurity measures and appropriate data-sharing arrangements. Improve interoperability where it can connect evidence on needs, services and outcomes across institutional boundaries. Focus data strategies not on data collection alone, but on making data usable for policy, service delivery, accountability and continuous improvement.

7. Put participation, feedback and legal empowerment at the centre of continuous improvement.

Create recurring opportunities for users, communities and relevant groups to contribute to policy and service design alongside established engagement with professional and institutional stakeholders. Systematically collect feedback on accessibility, treatment, procedural fairness and outcomes, and link it to clear mechanisms for service improvement. Use evidence on people’s needs and capabilities to target legal literacy and empowerment initiatives more effectively.

8. Connect planning and financing more clearly to needs, services and outcomes.

Expand justice-sector planning beyond individual institutional portfolios to consider the full range of services contributing to the prevention and resolution of justice problems. Combine population-level evidence on legal needs with caseload and institutional performance data when setting priorities. Make the relationship between resources, services and outcomes more visible in budgeting and performance frameworks, including accessibility, timeliness, fairness, quality and effective resolution. This can support stronger prioritisation under fiscal constraints and help identify opportunities for earlier and less resource-intensive interventions.

9. Strengthen prevention and address the wider consequences of justice problems.

Use evidence on recurring justice problems to inform improvements in laws, administrative processes, information provision and safeguards that can reduce avoidable disputes. Expand early information, assistance and referral to prevent problems from escalating. Strengthen links with health, housing, employment, financial and social services where justice problems generate wider hardship. Incorporate prevention more explicitly into justice strategies, planning and evaluation alongside resolution and institutional performance.

The overall direction is not towards a single institutional model. Countries have different constitutional arrangements, legal traditions and distributions of responsibility, and the report identifies effective practices emerging through different approaches. The common challenge is to ensure that these arrangements collectively deliver for people. The next stage of people-centred justice reform therefore lies increasingly in implementation and system coherence: connecting evidence to decisions, services to one another, resources to outcomes and people's experiences to continuous improvement.

Advancing people-centred justice is, in this sense, fundamentally a governance challenge. It calls for moving beyond a predominantly institution-by-institution approach towards strategic stewardship of a justice system that remains institutionally diverse while being collectively oriented towards fair and effective outcomes. Such an approach can strengthen the ability of justice institutions to fulfil their respective mandates, improve the use of public resources and make the rule of law tangible in people's everyday lives.

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2. Justice outcomes

This chapter examines the outcomes that justice systems produce for society across OECD Member countries, OECD accession countries and Justice Action Coalition countries where comparable data are available. It analyses a core set of seven indicators that aim to capture these outcomes: resolution of justice problems, fairness of processes, trust in justice actors, prevention of problems, access to information, access to assistance and advice, and access to dispute resolution mechanisms. The chapter also presents the findings, highlighting their policy implications and their relevance for assessing the implementation of the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems.

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Justice systems ultimately matter because of the difference they make in people's lives, and through the sum of these individual experiences, to broader outcomes for society and the economy. People encounter justice problems in the course of everyday life – when they lose a job, face difficulties with housing or debt, experience family breakdown, encounter problems with public services or become involved in disputes with businesses, neighbours or public authorities. How effectively these problems are prevented, addressed and resolved can have important consequences not only for individual rights, but also for people's economic security, health, family relationships and confidence in public institutions. It is also fundamental to the overall strength and responsiveness of the rule of law, as it determines whether rights are protected in practice, disputes are resolved fairly, laws have meaning in everyday life and public and private actors are held accountable.

From this perspective, justice cannot be understood principally through the performance of courts or other individual institutions. It depends on whether the justice system as a whole enables people to recognise problems early, understand their rights and options, obtain appropriate assistance, reach a suitable pathway for resolution and achieve outcomes that are fair, timely and sustainable. It also depends on whether justice problems are prevented from escalating or recurring and whether their wider consequences for people's lives are contained. This places people's experiences and outcomes at the centre of the assessment of justice system performance, and provides a basis for understanding how the justice system, as a public service, contributes to outcomes for society.

This calls for a broader conception of justice policy. Rather than focusing primarily on institutional capacity, caseloads or procedural outputs, people-centred justice policy asks whether the overall system is capable of responding to the problems people experience. This means looking across formal and informal pathways; connecting courts and legal services with administrative, social and community-based responses; investing in prevention and early intervention; and organising services around the needs and circumstances of users and potential users rather than around institutional mandates. Different justice problems and different population groups will require different combinations of information, advice, assistance, dispute resolution and social support.

The OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems [\[OECD/LEGAL/0498\]](#) provides a policy framework for this shift, calling on Adherents to design and deliver justice policies and services around people's needs and experiences and to promote accessible, responsive and evidence-based justice systems oriented towards fair outcomes. An outcome-oriented perspective helps translate the Recommendation into a practical question for policymakers: to what extent does the justice system enable people to resolve the problems they face and avoid the harms that unresolved or poorly addressed justice problems can create? Or, put differently, to what extent does the justice system, through the services it provides, contribute to the societal outcomes that effective and people-centred justice systems are intended to support? Building on the Recommendation, the OECD Measurement Framework for People-Centred Justice Systems aims to guide data collection and measurement of the outcomes justice systems deliver for people, businesses and society (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[1]). By linking government policies, justice services and outcomes, it provides the conceptual basis for designing and developing the outcome indicators presented in this chapter.

This chapter examines these outcomes of the justice system using internationally comparable evidence on people's justice experiences across OECD Member countries, OECD accession countries and Justice Action Coalition countries. It considers whether people resolve their justice problems, experience resolution processes as fair, trust justice actors and avoid the recurrence and wider consequences of justice problems. It also examines whether people know where to obtain information, and access assistance, advice and dispute resolution support they need along the justice journey. These dimensions provide a picture not simply of how justice institutions operate, but of how justice is experienced by people in practice (see Table 2.1).

The chapter uses these findings to illustrate possible policy patterns and potential pressure points within people-centred justice systems, while recognising that more granular national data are needed to diagnose causes and design specific reforms. Its purpose is therefore not to rank countries according to individual measures, but to illuminate where justice systems appear to be meeting people's needs, where gaps persist and how different aspects of the justice journey interact. In doing so, it provides a basis for considering how governments can move towards justice systems that resolve problems earlier and more effectively, provide fair and understandable processes, reduce the wider harms associated with justice problems and contribute to trust, well-being and economic growth over time.

Table 2.1. Overview of outcome indicators for a people-centred justice system

Final Outcome Indicators	Intermediate Outcome Indicators
People solve their justice problems	People obtain the information they need to recognise and solve their justice problems
People experience the process of resolving their justice problem as fair	People obtain the assistance and advice they need to solve their justice problems
People trust the justice system	People obtain access to the dispute resolution mechanism they need to solve their justice problems
People experience fewer justice problems	

Source: (OECD/HiiL/WJP, forthcoming^[2]).

2.2. JUSTICE OUTCOMES

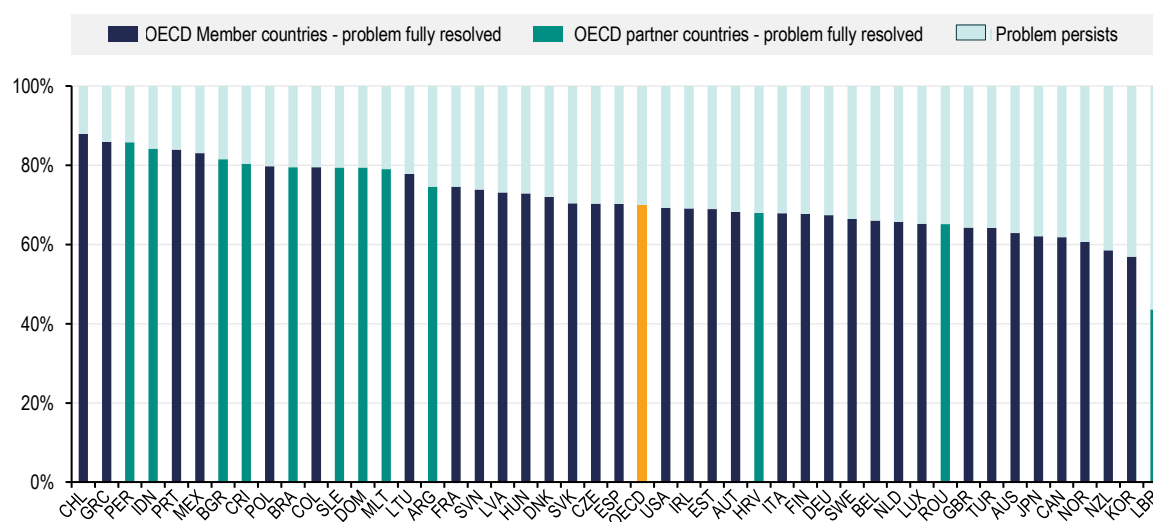
People solve their justice problems

An essential function of justice systems as a public service is to enable people and businesses to resolve the justice problems they experience, contributing to better outcomes for society and the economy. A justice problem is an issue arising in people's lives that has a legal dimension, regardless of whether those involved recognise it as such, pursue legal action or take any steps to address it (Genn, 1999^[3]; Pleasence, Balmer and Sandefur, 2013^[4]; Sandefur, 2007^[5]). A justice problem is considered resolved when the person involved experiences it as such, regardless of the pathway taken. Thus, resolution of a justice problem is determined by people's own assessment, rather than by whether a formal decision or agreement has been reached, whether the person recognises the issue as a legal matter or whether they have used formal legal processes. This provides an important measure of whether the justice system, understood broadly across the range of services and pathways available, is enabling people to resolve the problems they face.

For people and businesses, the effective delivery of justice is ultimately reflected in whether the justice problems they face are resolved in a way that allows them to move forward. From this perspective, problem resolution provides an important measure of the performance of the justice system as a whole. It goes beyond the closure of cases by individual institutions: a case may be concluded without resolving the underlying problem, while a problem may be resolved without ever becoming a formal case. What ultimately matters is whether people consider that the problem they faced has been resolved and no longer requires further action.

Figure 2.1. Justice problem resolution rate

Percentage of respondents with a concluded resolution process for a nontrivial justice problem experienced in the previous two years, by outcome (fully resolved or persisting)



Note: Data were collected between 2017 and 2024, with the reference year varying by country. Respondents with a nontrivial justice problem were asked whether the problem was ongoing or “done with”, meaning that it had either been fully resolved or persisted but the respondent and all other parties had ceased taking further action to resolve it. The indicator includes only problems reported as “done with” and distinguishes between those fully resolved and those that persisted; ongoing problems, “too early to say” responses and missing responses are excluded. Nontrivial justice problems are those with a self-reported seriousness of 4 or more on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means “not serious at all” and 10 means “extremely serious”. Because ongoing problems are excluded, the indicator might present a more positive picture of resolution than would emerge from an analysis of all justice problems, particularly for problem types that often take longer to resolve, such as family, land, housing or inheritance-related disputes.

Source: Elaborated based on WJP’s estimates from the World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey.

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Across the countries surveyed, the median country-level justice problem resolution rate is 70%. In three-quarters of countries, between 62% and 82% of respondents whose resolution process had concluded considered their problem fully resolved. More than half reported full resolution in all but one country. Among OECD Member countries, the results range from 57% to 88%, which indicates a meaningful variation in the extent to which people consider their justice problems to have been resolved.

These findings suggest that a substantial share of people never fully resolve their problem, even after the resolution process has concluded. A median resolution rate of 70% means that, in a typical country, around three in ten people do not fully resolve their justice problems. The indicator should not be understood solely as a measure of the performance of formal justice institutions. It captures resolution across the full range of pathways used by people, including direct negotiation, assistance from personal or community networks, administrative procedures, mediation and adjudication. Differences between countries do not reflect only the effectiveness of formal institutions, but of the justice system as a whole, including the availability and quality of alternative pathways.

The results need to be interpreted in light of the reference population for this indicator. They cover problems for which the resolution process is considered to have concluded. Ongoing justice problems are not included, while some processes may have ended because people abandoned further action rather than because an effective remedy was obtained. A high resolution rate among concluded processes may therefore coexist with a large number of ongoing processes, caused by lengthy processes or disengagement.

Resolution should be considered alongside the fairness, accessibility and sustainability of the process. A problem may be considered resolved even where the pathway to resolution was costly, difficult to navigate or experienced as unfair. Conversely, a process may be experienced positively without producing a lasting resolution. The indicators should therefore be considered together to assess whether lower resolution rates may be associated with gaps at earlier stages of the justice journey, including access to information, assistance and advice, suitable dispute resolution mechanisms or other conditions affecting people's ability to participate effectively.

These results underline the need for countries to assess more systematically whether justice problems are effectively resolved. Justice systems can use resolution data to identify where people's needs are being met and where existing pathways are failing to deliver sustainable outcomes. Improving justice delivery at the national level requires more granular analysis than internationally comparable data can provide, including a detailed understanding of which problems remain unresolved, for whom, at what stage and why. Such assessment can draw on disaggregated results by problem type, pathway, duration, population group and geographic area. Justice problems related to housing, family, employment, debt and access to public services, for example, may each require different combinations of information, advice, social support and dispute resolution mechanisms to ensure a higher rate of problem resolution.

A policy implication is that countries may wish to examine whether stronger early intervention, intake and triage could improve resolution outcomes. The data presented above do not show directly whether unresolved problems result from weak triage, lack of information, limited assistance or unsuitable pathways. However, they emphasise the importance for countries to investigate where people's justice journeys stall and whether entry points are helping people recognise their problem, understand their options and reach the service best placed to resolve it. Clear referral arrangements between courts, administrative bodies, legal assistance providers, ombuds institutions, social services and community organisations can reduce unnecessary escalation. They can also prevent people from moving repeatedly between institutions and facilitate more effective resolution of justice problems. The state of implementing such measures is further discussed in Section 3.3 of Chapter 3, which analyses the design and delivery of people-centred legal and justice services.

The indicators help decision makers assess not only whether people resolve their justice problems, but also how they do so, whether the process is fair and sustainable, and where service design could be improved to prevent problems from recurring or escalating.

People experience the process of resolving their justice problem as fair

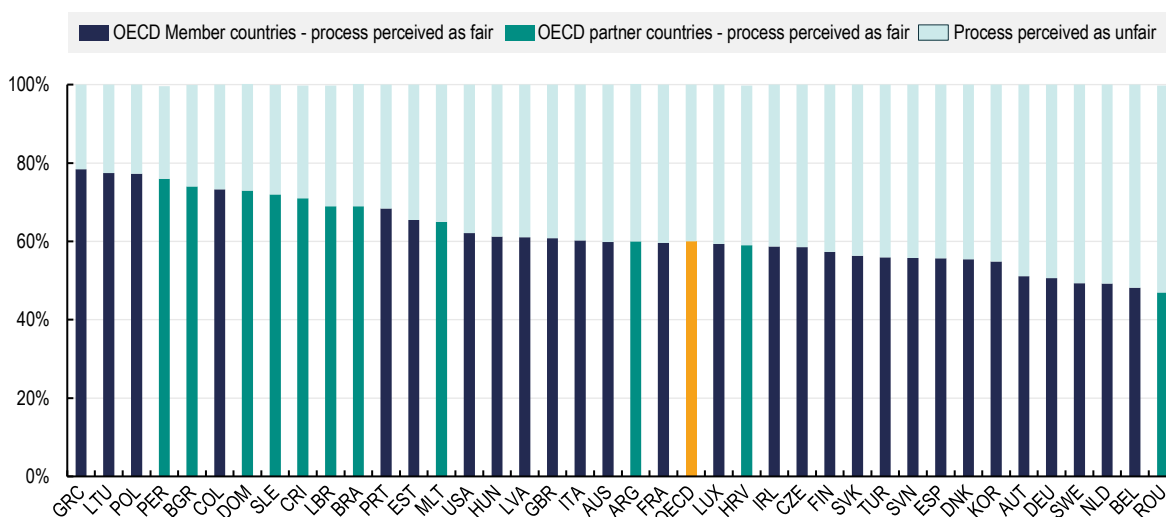
For justice systems to contribute effectively to fairness in society, and hence to people's confidence in the rule of law, resolving justice problems is necessary but not sufficient. How people experience the process through which their problem is resolved matters, and in practice process and outcome are often closely intertwined. This connects to a responsive rule of law, which is given practical effect not only through legal frameworks and institutions, but through people's experiences of whether their rights are upheld and justice is delivered fairly and effectively (OECD, 2025^[6]). Whether people feel heard, treated with dignity and able to understand and participate in the process, can influence both their ability to reach an effective resolution and whether they regard that resolution as fair. Processes experienced as fair are therefore an important dimension of justice delivery, contributing to trust and institutional legitimacy.

This outcome centres on how fair people experience the justice problem resolution process to be. Research on procedural justice indicates that people's sense of fairness depends less on the outcome of the process and more on their interactions with justice actors (Tyler, 2006^[7]; Tyler, 2000^[8]; Tyler and Huo, 2002^[9]; Hough, 2010^[10]). People form their assessments of fairness through multiple experiences, combining them into an overall judgement. Factors such as integrity and impartiality of justice actors, respectful treatment, the chance to express one's views and clarity of procedures play a significant role in

shaping these experiences. In turn, such experiences are essential for fostering compliance, institutional legitimacy and trust in the justice system.

Figure 2.2. Experience of fairness in justice processes

Percentage of respondents with a nontrivial justice problem whose resolution process had concluded, showing the share who experienced the process as fair and the share who experienced it as unfair, regardless of the outcome



Note: Data were collected between 2017 and 2024, with the reference year varying by country. Nontrivial justice problems are those with a self-reported seriousness of 4 or more on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means “not serious at all” and 10 means “extremely serious”. Respondents with a nontrivial justice problem reported as “done with” were asked, regardless of the outcome, whether they considered the process followed to resolve the problem to be fair. The indicator includes only respondents whose problem-resolution process had concluded and who answered the fairness question; ongoing problems and “don’t know” or missing responses are excluded. The estimate for Japan is not presented due to insufficient sample size for this sub-estimate (fewer than 50 respondents), which limits the reliability of the estimate.

Source: Elaborated based on WJP’s estimates from the WJP Global Legal Needs Survey.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/qv4rke>

The results indicate considerable scope to improve how people experience justice processes. At the median, 40% of respondents whose resolution process had concluded did not consider the process fair. In three-quarters of the countries surveyed, between 51% and 73% of respondents whose resolution process had concluded considered the process fair, regardless of the outcome. The share falls below 50% in four countries. Among OECD Member countries, values range from 48% to 78%, with Greece, Lithuania and Poland recording some of the highest results.¹

A majority of respondents in most countries experience the process as fair, which provides a positive first indication of how justice is experienced in practice. However, these initial and general scores across countries indicate that there is room for improvement. It is important to highlight that people’s assessment of justice is not determined only by whether they obtain their preferred outcome. How they are treated, how they perceive the integrity of the process, whether they have an opportunity to participate and whether procedures and decisions are understandable may shape their overall assessment.

Variation across countries may reflect differences in the conduct of justice actors, the clarity and consistency of procedures, the perceived integrity of justice institutions and the extent to which people can raise concerns or challenge decisions. Perceptions and experiences of corruption may also affect assessments of fairness and broader trust in the justice system. However, fairness and trust do not always move together: relatively positive experiences of individual justice processes may coexist with lower confidence in the system as a whole. The variation may also reflect the mix of mechanisms used. Fairness

is relevant not only in courts, but in administrative complaint procedures, mediation, community-based processes, legal aid services and other points of contact across the justice journey.

As an overall measure, the indicator does not reveal which elements of the process most strongly influenced respondents' views. Similar results across the countries may therefore conceal different experiences. One country may perform strongly in respectful treatment but less well in timeliness or explanation of decisions. Another may provide clear procedures while offering limited opportunities for people to express their views. More detailed national analysis and standardised data collection on elements of fairness would help identify where improvements are most needed.

These findings underline the importance of treating people's experience of fairness as a core dimension of justice service delivery. The variation observed across countries suggests that users experience justice processes differently, even where formal procedures may be similar. Procedural fairness should therefore be embedded throughout the design and delivery of justice services, informed by evidence on people's experience of fairness. This includes ensuring that people have a meaningful opportunity to be heard, are treated with dignity and respect, can understand the procedure and the reasons for decisions, and have access to review or correction mechanisms where appropriate.

Procedural fairness principles can be translated into practical service standards, and improved over time through feedback and learning loops. Institutions can adopt requirements on communication in plain language, explanation of decisions, participation, timeliness, consistency and handling of complaints. Training for judges, court staff, mediators, administrative officials and other service providers can reinforce the application of these standards in everyday interactions including through active listening, empathy and communication that enables people to feel heard and understand how their circumstances have been considered.

Countries may also consider using user feedback to identify stages of the justice journey where experiences of fairness deteriorate. Short feedback surveys, complaint data, qualitative interviews and legal needs surveys can provide complementary insights into how people experience justice processes in practice. Disaggregated analysis can help identify whether certain groups experience lower levels of procedural fairness, including by gender, age, disability, income, migration status or legal capability, and whether service design needs to be adapted to support more equal access to justice. The state of implementing related measures is further discussed in Section 3.3 of Chapter 3 on the design and delivery of people-centred legal and justice services. The related issue of communication in plain language is discussed in Section 3.5 of Chapter 3 on empowerment.

People trust the justice system

Trust in the justice system is an important dimension of its contribution to society and to promoting the rule of law. It reflects people's expectations that justice institutions and actors will exercise their functions competently, independently and with integrity, and that they will treat people fairly when they need to turn to them for resolution. Trust and experienced fairness are related but distinct: trust captures a broader view of the justice system, while experienced fairness reflects people's assessment of a specific process or interaction.

Trust can shape the willingness of people and businesses to seek assistance, use justice services, accept decisions and co-operate with institutions, as well as their willingness to respect rules and comply with the law. As with trust in other public institutions, trust in the justice system is both informed by how institutions are perceived to perform and an important condition for their effective functioning (Tyler and Huo, 2002^[9]; OECD, 2022^[11]).

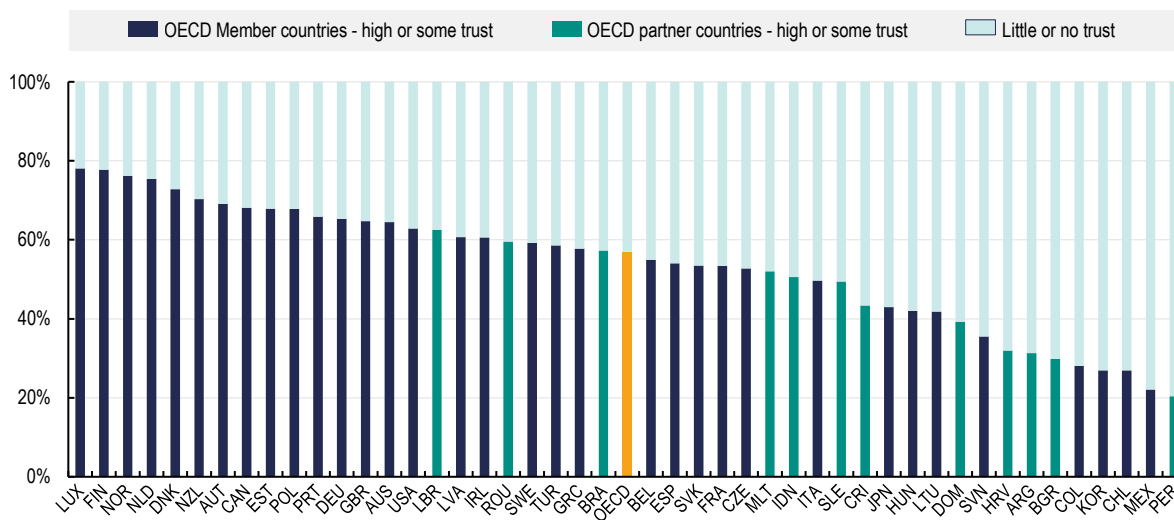
Trust develops over time and reflects both people's direct experiences and their broader perceptions of how the justice system functions. At the societal level, it provides an indication of the perceived legitimacy and effectiveness of the justice system and of the confidence people place in it. For a more extensive discussion of this outcome, see (OECD/HiiL/WJP, forthcoming^[2]).

Internationally comparable data on trust in the justice system as a whole remain limited, and no single global dataset provides consistent coverage across the countries included in this report. This represents an important gap in the measurement of this aspect of people-centred justice. This report therefore uses the best available comparable measure: the share of people who report confidence in judges and magistrates.² In the absence of more comprehensive comparable data, this provides a proxy for an important dimension of trust in the justice system, but should not be interpreted as capturing confidence in the system as a whole, perceptions of the fairness of justice processes or confidence in the full range of institutions and actors through which justice is delivered.

The indicator should also be distinguished from broader concepts of trustworthiness and diffuse institutional trust. Trustworthiness concerns the qualities institutions are expected to demonstrate, such as competence, integrity, independence, effectiveness and fairness. The indicator used here captures a more specific perception of confidence in judges and magistrates among respondents who experienced a nontrivial justice problem. Thus, the population for this indicator may have systematically different trust perceptions from the general population, as recent experience of a justice problem may affect both exposure to justice actors and views of the system.

Figure 2.3. Trust in judges and magistrates

Percentage of respondents with a nontrivial justice problem, showing the share who report high or some trust in judges and magistrates and the share who report little or no trust



Note: Data were collected between 2017 and 2024, with the reference year varying by country. Respondents with a nontrivial justice problem were asked how much trust they had in judges and magistrates, which is used here as a measure of trust in the justice system. "High" or "some" trust is classified as trust, while "little" or "no" trust is classified as lack of trust; "don't know" and missing responses are excluded. Nontrivial justice problems are those rated 4 or higher on a 0–10 scale, where 0 means "not serious at all" and 10 means "extremely serious." "High" and "some" trust responses are combined; "little" and "no" trust responses are coded as no trust.

Source: Elaborated based on WJP's estimates from the WJP Global Legal Needs Survey.

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Trust in judges and magistrates varies more widely than several of the other indicators. The median country-level rate is 56%, while the middle range extends from 31% to 69%. Among OECD Member countries, the average is 57%, and 20 of the 34 members with available data record results above this level. Luxembourg, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands and Denmark – all OECD Member countries – are among the countries reporting the highest levels of trust.

The results show substantial differences across countries and considerable scope to strengthen trust in justice actors. At the median, only slightly more than half of respondents report confidence in judges and magistrates. This variation may be shaped by a combination of direct experiences and broader perceptions of institutional integrity, competence, independence and responsiveness. Because the reference population consists of respondents who recently experienced a justice problem, the results may be impacted, both positively or negatively, by how justice actors communicate, manage proceedings and interact with users.

Trust in judges and magistrates is nevertheless only one dimension of trust in the justice system. People may have different experiences with and hence hold different views of judges, prosecutors, police, administrative authorities, legal aid providers, community-justice workers or the system as a whole. They may also distinguish between confidence in institutional independence and confidence in the ability of an individual actor to perform a particular function effectively.

The comparatively low results observed in several Latin American countries may merit analysis alongside the relatively high rates of problem resolution recorded in parts of the region. This combination may indicate that people are able to resolve problems through non-judicial, administrative or informal pathways even where confidence in judges and magistrates remains limited. It also illustrates why resolution cannot be treated as a proxy for trust in formal justice institutions.

Box 2.1. Measuring trust in courts and the judicial system through the OECD Trust Survey

The OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions provides internationally comparable evidence on people's trust in public institutions and the factors associated with it. The OECD framework defines trust as a person's belief that another person or institution will act consistently with their expectation of positive behaviour. The current survey does not include questions on most justice actors or on trust in the justice system as a whole. It does measure trust in the courts and the judicial system. For this, the survey asks respondents to indicate their level of trust on a scale from 0, meaning "not at all", to 10, meaning "completely". Responses from 6 to 10 are classified as high or moderately high trust, a response of 5 as neutral and responses from 0 to 4 as low or no trust.

The 2025 OECD Trust Survey covered representative samples of the adult population in 33 OECD Member countries. On average, 54% of respondents across the OECD reported high or moderately high trust in the courts and judicial system. The share with high or moderately high trust is equal to or exceeds 50% in 21 of the 33 participating OECD countries. Nevertheless, there is substantial variation in the recorded trust levels across countries, ranging from 24% to 77% of the overall population. Courts and the judicial system were among the most trusted public institutions covered by the survey, alongside the police and armed forces. Trust in the courts and judicial system has remained relatively stable over time, with the point estimate rising by approximately one percentage point between 2023 and 2025 among a stable group of participating countries.

As a survey of the general population, the OECD Trust Survey captures broad public perceptions, irrespective of whether respondents have recently interacted with a justice institution. It therefore complements legal needs surveys and user surveys that examine trust among people with recent justice problems or direct experience of justice services. As the Trust Survey measures the overall level of trust in the courts and judicial system, there is scope to deepen this measurement through a justice-

specific assessment of trust drivers. Such an analysis could distinguish between different justice institutions and actors, capture people's recent experiences with justice services and examine how trust relates to perceived responsiveness, reliability, fairness, openness and integrity. Disaggregating these results across population groups and between users and non-users of justice services could help explain not only whether people trust the justice system, but also why, providing a stronger evidence base for targeted reforms and regular comparative monitoring.

Note: Data from the OECD Trust Survey are not used to construct the trust indicator in this chapter because the survey does not cover all countries included in the report and measures trust among the general adult population, rather than specifically among people who have recently experienced a non-trivial justice problem. Annex A provides further information on the methodologies, reference populations and comparability of the data sources considered.

Source: (OECD, 2026^[12]).

These findings underline both the importance of trust as an outcome of people-centred justice and the need to strengthen its measurement at the country level. At the national level, more comprehensive measurement can distinguish between trust in the justice system as a whole, trust in specific institutions and actors, and people's expectations of their competence, integrity, independence, fairness and responsiveness.

Moreover, evidence from the justice literature highlights that trust is closely linked to how people experience justice processes (Tyler, 2006^[7]; Tyler and Huo, 2002^[9]; Grimes, 2006^[13]), particularly in terms of procedural fairness – such as whether they are treated with respect, whether decisions are explained and whether processes are experienced as neutral and consistent. Trust may also be shaped by the extent to which these experiences meet, exceed or fall short of people's expectations of justice institutions.

These findings highlight the value of making justice processes more accessible, transparent and responsive throughout the justice journey. Strengthening these aspects of service delivery can contribute to more positive user experiences and support the conditions under which trust is formed and maintained. Section 3.3 of Chapter 3 provides further analysis of how countries are addressing these issues through the design and delivery of people-centred legal and justice services.

Trust should be understood as both an outcome and an enabling condition for access to justice. Low trust can discourage people from seeking help, reporting problems, disclosing information, complying with procedures or using formal channels when needed. This can leave problems unresolved, contribute to the accumulation of related legal and non-legal difficulties and, over time, reinforce the conviction that engagement with the justice system is ineffective or not worthwhile (OECD, 2017^[14]). This also points to the importance of measuring trust across the overall population, not only among people with recent interactions with justice institutions, as individuals displaying lower trust levels may be less likely to engage with the system in the first place.

People experience fewer justice problems over time

The objective of a justice system is not to prevent all justice problems from occurring. As in other areas of public policy, including health, some problems are an inevitable part of people's lives and of increasingly complex societies and economies. From a people-centred justice and rule of law perspective, justice systems can contribute to prevention by helping identify recurring problems, supporting early resolution and limiting the wider consequences of problems that do occur. Data collected through justice institutions and related services can help reveal patterns in legal needs and justice problems, systemic shortcomings and service gaps, informing upstream policy responses beyond the justice sector. From this perspective, the prevalence of justice problems is relevant alongside their severity and the hardships they create. It provides a broader indication of how effectively justice systems and other public services prevent problems from developing into more significant or persistent difficulties in people's lives.

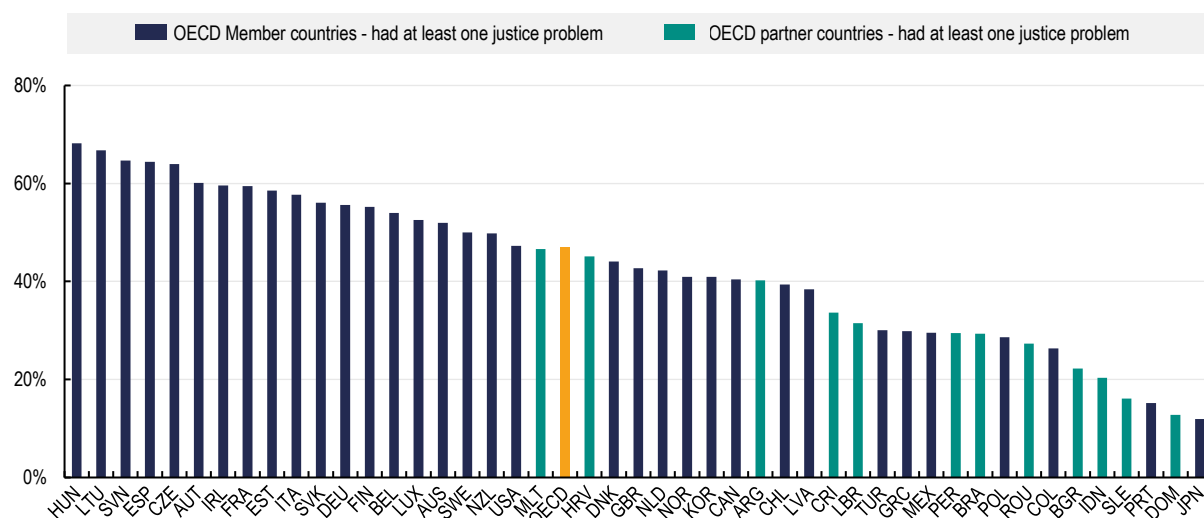
Within this broader objective, prevention can be understood as falling into three categories. Primary prevention seeks to avert avoidable justice problems before they occur, for example by improving the clarity of laws and procedures, providing clarity on expected behaviour in key relationships, providing accessible information and addressing recurring sources of problems such as housing, employment or debt-related issues. Secondary prevention emphasises the early identification of issues and prompt intervention to prevent them from worsening. Tertiary prevention aims to mitigate harm once a problem has already arisen. Preventing justice problems is a shared responsibility across the justice system, with all actors playing a role in improving this outcome. Although problem occurrence may be driven by factors beyond the justice system, such as vulnerability, power differentials, economic instability or gaps in social and human services, justice actors need to understand needs and experiences of individuals in order to more effectively prevent the occurrence, worsening and consequences of justice problems (for a more extensive discussion of this outcome, see (OECD/HiiL/WJP, forthcoming^[2])).

While Figure 2.4 presents the prevalence of nontrivial justice problems for surveyed countries, Figure 2.5 shows the percentage of respondents with a nontrivial justice problem who experienced any of four types of hardship arising from their justice problem in other areas of their lives: loss of income or employment, need to relocate or financial strain; physical ill health, injuries or stress-related illness; relationship breakdown or damage to a family relationship; and problems with alcohol or drugs.

The two indicators should be read together, but they measure different dimensions. Figure 2.4 captures how widespread nontrivial justice problems are in the overall population, while Figure 2.5 captures how often such problems lead to wider hardship among the subset of people who experienced a nontrivial justice problem. A country may therefore have a relatively lower prevalence of justice problems but a relatively higher share of hardship among those affected, or vice versa.

Figure 2.4. Prevalence of justice problems

Percentage of respondents who experienced at least one nontrivial justice problem



Note: Data were collected between 2017 and 2024, with the reference year varying by country. Respondents were asked whether they had experienced any of a specified list of justice problems in the previous two years and to rate the seriousness of each problem on a scale from 0 to 10. The indicator identifies respondents who experienced at least one nontrivial problem, defined as having a severity of 4 or above; respondents reporting only less serious problems or no problems are classified as not having experienced a nontrivial problem, while “don’t know” and missing responses are excluded.

Source: Elaborated based on WJP’s estimates from the WJP Global Legal Needs Survey.

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The prevalence of justice problems varies more than any other indicator across the surveyed countries. The median country-level rate is 43%, meaning that in a typical country, about 4 in 10 people report experiencing at least one justice problem over that period. Overall prevalence levels are between 22% and 61% for three-quarters of countries surveyed³, that is, in most countries, between about 2 and 6 in 10 people report experiencing at least one such problem. The data suggest a broader challenge across countries: in over four-fifths (85%) of countries surveyed, at least one-quarter of respondents reported having experienced a justice problem over the previous two years.

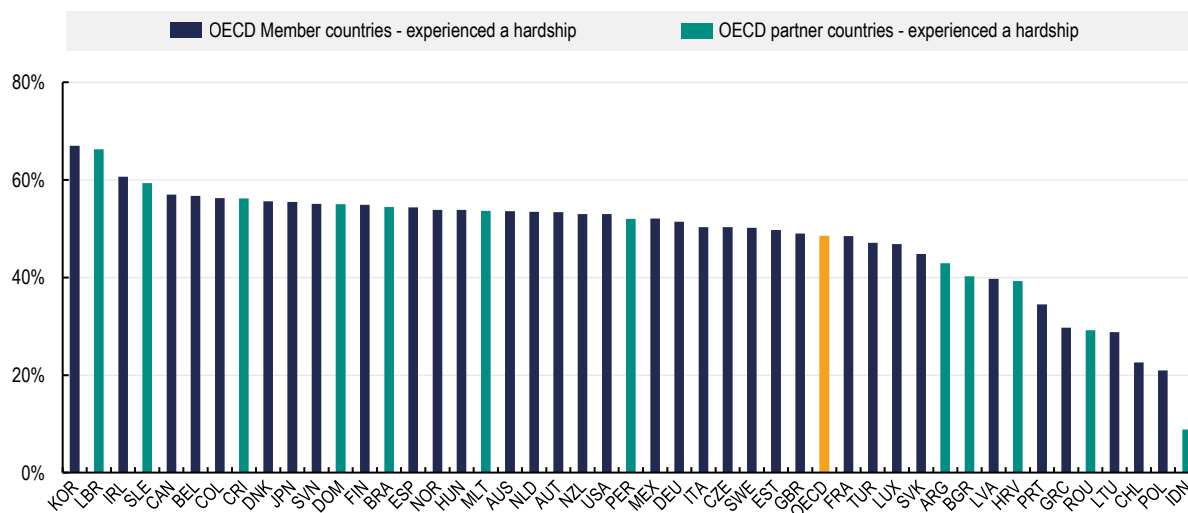
Higher prevalence may reflect greater exposure to legal, social or economic risks, but it may also reflect differences in recognition, reporting and expectations across contexts. Standardised measures also help contextualise these data and shed light on the conditions under which people may underreport their justice problems. Indeed, more comprehensive comparative research by WJP (2023^[15]; 2023^[16]) indicates that, in low-income countries, justice problems that people rank as more serious are also more common. The *Dissecting the Justice Gap in 104 Countries: WJP Justice Data Graphical Report I* (WJP, 2023^[16]) finds that people in low-income countries are more likely to normalise their problems.⁴ Moreover, the prevalence of problems involving the quality of public services tends to be lower in low-income countries, which could indicate relatively fewer justiciable issues in the quality of state functions, but could also reflect more limited coverage of those functions or lower access to public services.

Similarly, societal disparities that limit women's access to areas of public life are associated with lower reported prevalence of these types of problems among women, and may also affect the recognition and reporting of family-related problems (WJP, 2023^[15]). Conversely, in other contexts, women's participation in these domains is associated with higher exposure to such disputes. Overall, these differences should not be interpreted solely as indicating that some countries are more heavily affected than others. Rather, they may also reflect variation in exposure to more complex economic and institutional environments, as well as to differences in participation between men and women in the public and private spheres.

In sum, these patterns underscore that variation in prevalence reflects not only differences in justice system performance, but also differences in social structure, economic and participation in the public sphere, and the types of problems people are able to recognise and report. Further analysis is therefore needed to disentangle variation by problem type, severity, institutional and socioeconomic context, and population group.

Figure 2.5. Hardships experienced as a consequence of justice problems

Percentage of respondents who experienced at least one hardship as a result of a justice problem, among those who experienced a nontrivial justice problem



Note: Data were collected between 2017 and 2024, with the reference year varying by country. Respondents with at least one nontrivial justice problem, defined as having a severity of 4 or above on a scale from 0 to 10, were asked whether the problem had caused physical or stress-related ill health, damage to relationships, financial or employment difficulties, relocation or problems with alcohol or drugs. The indicator identifies respondents reporting at least one hardship; those reporting none are classified as not experiencing hardship, while respondents who answered “don’t know” or provided no answer to all hardship questions are excluded.

Source: Elaborated based on WJP’s estimates from the WJP Global Legal Needs Survey.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/87s9wh>

Regarding the indicator of hardships arising from justice problems, the countries surveyed show a median rate of 52%. This means that about half of respondents with nontrivial justice problems experienced a hardship in at least one area of their lives. In most countries surveyed (three out of four), this score ranges from 33% to 57%. Among OECD Member countries, the share ranges more widely, from 21% to 67% respondents. This indicator should not be interpreted as the share of the total population experiencing hardship from justice problems. Rather, it shows the likelihood that a nontrivial justice problem will produce wider consequences for those who experience such a problem.

These findings indicate that justice problems are often associated with wider adverse consequences beyond the immediate problem itself. The indicator therefore provides an important lens on tertiary prevention, as it captures whether justice problems lead to cascading harms in areas such as health, relationships, employment, income or substance use.

Variation across countries should nevertheless be interpreted with caution. Differences in reported hardship may reflect both the severity of justice problems and variation in how people experience and report their consequences. In some contexts, individuals may be less likely to associate or report sensitive or stigmatised outcomes, including stress, relationship breakdown or substance use, as consequences of justice problems. More broadly, cultural norms, social inequalities and differences between population groups may influence both exposure to compounding risks and reporting behaviour (Khirikoekong and al, 2023^[17]; Lipinski et al., 2023^[18]).

Despite these caveats, the findings provide a comparable basis for examining how justice problems affect people’s lives across countries. Further analysis can help identify which types of justice problems are most likely to generate specific forms of hardship, and how these relationships vary across institutional and socioeconomic contexts.

Prevention policies should address the occurrence, escalation and consequences of justice problems. Prevalence and hardship data can help countries identify where preventive action is most likely to improve well-being and reduce demand for justice and other public services. Primary prevention focuses on recurring sources of avoidable problems, including through reforms to administrative procedures, consumer and labour protection, housing regulation, family-related services and access to public benefits. Secondary prevention requires accessible entry points, such as information services, community-based providers, legal assistance, ombudsperson institutions and social services, to identify and resolve emerging problems early. Tertiary prevention mitigates the wider consequences of problems that have already occurred, including through closer co-ordination between justice services and health, housing, employment, financial counselling and social protection systems.

Countries can also use prevalence and hardship data to support strategic planning and budgeting. Repeated legal needs surveys, linked where possible with administrative and evidence at the service level, can show whether reforms reduce the frequency of priority problems, limit their escalation or mitigate their effects. Longitudinal and subnational analysis would further strengthen the capacity to identify emerging risks and evaluate preventive interventions.

Related country practices are examined in Section 3.2 of Chapter 3, in relation to the use of legal needs and justice-problem data for preventative action and structural solutions, and in Section 3.6 of Chapter 3, in relation to people-centred, data-driven and evidence-based planning and budgeting.

People can obtain the information they need to recognise and solve their justice problems

The following three indicators turn from the final outcomes for people and businesses, to the functions that justice systems ought to provide. While justice systems perform a broad range of functions, the available internationally comparable data allow this report to examine three that are central to the justice journey: enabling people to obtain relevant information, providing assistance and advice, and providing mechanisms through which disputes and justice problems can be resolved. These dimensions represent important functions of a justice system, connecting its policies, institutions and services with the broader outcomes it seeks to achieve.

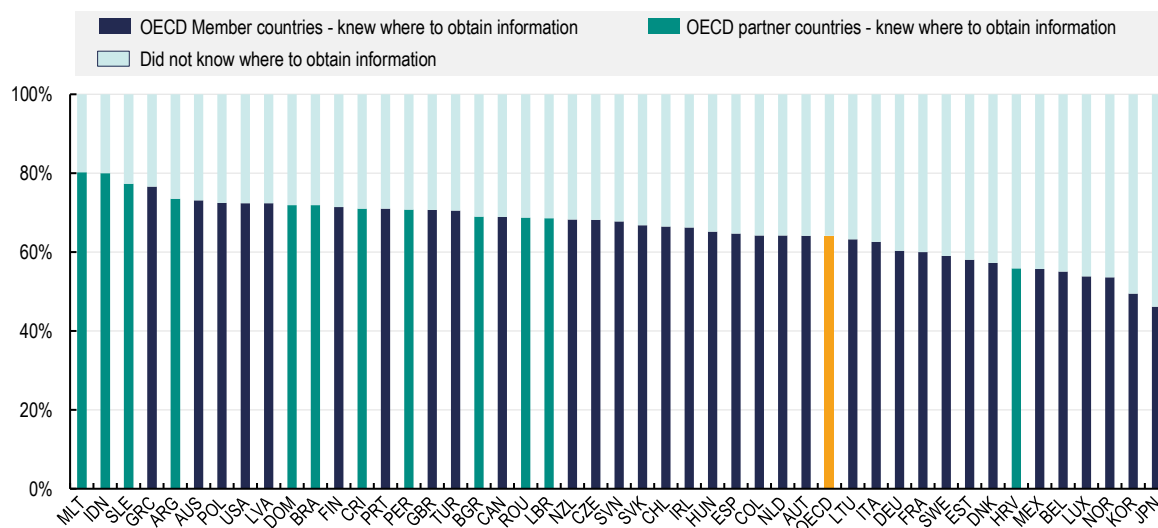
Access to information is a cornerstone of government transparency and open government as highlighted by the OECD Recommendation on Open Government [[OECD/LEGAL/0438](#)]. It enables people to seek, receive, use and share information, supports more informed engagement with public institutions and can help improve the relationship between government and citizens (OECD, 2022^[19]). In the justice context, the openness of institutions is equally important. In the case of this outcome indicator, however, the relevant information function is more specific: it concerns people's ability to obtain information that helps them recognise, understand and resolve justice problems. Open justice efforts contribute to the transparency of the justice system in general and support people's ability to obtain the information they need, but more tailored effort is needed to ensure meaningful access to information.

Thus, the fourth indicator concerns whether people know where to get relevant information and advice about resolving their justice problems. The goal of this function is to improve people's understanding of the nature of their problem, the conflict dynamics involved, and the rights and interests in play. The information should also outline possible pathways to resolve problems, what they entail and what is their effectiveness, and offer a practical framework for navigating the justice system. Access to information is often an entry point to resolving justice problems. People need information to recognise and understand their problems and identify the (legal and other) options available to address them. Information must be timely, clear, accurate, actionable and widely available through trusted entry points in communities, so that problems can be resolved effectively. Information relevant to resolving justice problems may include legal information, but also information about available services, effective ways to deal with conflicts, how to navigate power differentials, and practical options and pathways available towards resolution. Information

is distinct from broader assistance or advice in that it involves no specific directive, recommendation, or guidance on how users should respond to their justice problems (for a more extensive discussion of this outcome, see (OECD/HiiL/WJP, forthcoming^[2]).

Figure 2.6. Information to recognise and resolve justice problems

Percentage of respondents who experienced a nontrivial justice problem and reported that they knew where to get good information and advice about resolving the problem



Note: Data were collected between 2017 and 2024, with the reference year varying by country. Respondents with at least one nontrivial justice problem were asked whether they agreed that they knew where to obtain good information about resolving it. “Strongly agree” or “agree” is classified as knowing where to obtain information, while “disagree” or “strongly disagree” is classified as not knowing; “don’t know” and missing responses are excluded. The indicator captures perceived knowledge of where to access information rather than whether information was obtained. Nontrivial justice problems are those rated 4 or higher on a 0–10 scale, where 0 means “not serious at all” and 10 means “extremely serious.”

Source: Elaborated based on WJP’s estimates from the WJP Global Legal Needs Survey.

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Gaps remain in people’s knowledge where to obtain information about resolving justice problems. The median country-level rate is 67%, meaning that, in a typical country, around one in three respondents on average report not knowing where to obtain good information and advice about resolving their problem. In three-quarters of the countries surveyed, between 56% and 73% of respondents with justice problems report knowing where to obtain good information about resolving them. Moreover, in 91% of countries, at least one-quarter of respondents report that they did not have access to the information they needed. Among OECD Member countries, values range from 46% to 77%.

The results indicate that information is available to many in most countries, but coverage remains incomplete. Country-level differences may reflect the visibility and reach of information services, public awareness of available channels, legal capability and the accessibility of digital, institutional and community-based entry points.

Knowing where information may be found also does not necessarily mean that the information is usable. Its contribution to resolving a problem depends on whether it is accurate, current, understandable and relevant to the user’s circumstances. People may formally have access to information but remain unable to identify the most effective approach or process, assess their options or take the next step. Awareness-raising is therefore important not only to help people locate existing public information, but also to ensure

they understand how to request further information where this is needed to clarify rights, procedures or available services.

Where people seek and obtain information when faced with a justice problem is itself an empirical question. The existence of an authoritative source of information does not necessarily mean that people know about it, regard it as relevant or trusted, or encounter it at the point at which they need it. Understanding the channels people use in practice, including public institutions, digital services, professionals, community organisations and personal networks, can therefore help countries assess whether information provision is reaching its intended users and where gaps remain.

Improving this intermediate outcome at the country level requires looking beyond the supply side, of making information available, to whether it reaches people in forms they can understand and use to resolve their problems. Justice-related information should be designed around the questions and circumstances people encounter in their daily lives, rather than primarily around institutional structures. This may involve organising information by problem type, life event or user journey and explaining available options, likely costs, expected timelines and sources of further assistance.

Information provision should reflect evidence on where and how people seek information in practice and be available through multiple accessible channels. Digital platforms can extend reach, but should be complemented by radio, television, telephone, in-person and community-based provision for people facing digital exclusion, language barriers, disability or low legal capability. Standards related to communication in plain language, accessibility requirements and user testing can improve the usability of information across these channels.

Countries may also benefit from applying a “no wrong door” approach.⁵ Information provided by courts, administrative bodies, legal aid services, local authorities and community organisations should connect users to effective triage and referral. People should not be expected to understand institutional mandates before seeking help.

Quality assurance is also important. Public information relevant to justice problems, available services and resolution pathways should be regularly reviewed, updated and aligned across institutions. Clear institutional responsibility for content, referral directories and service information can reduce inconsistency and prevent people from being directed towards outdated or unsuitable pathways. Depending on the institutional context, ombuds institutions, central government authorities or co-ordination bodies within the justice sector may also support quality assurance by promoting standards, monitoring compliance and helping ensure that information is accurate, accessible and up to date.

Measurement should extend beyond whether information exists. Relevant questions include whether people can find it, understand it, trust it and use it to take effective action. Disaggregation can help identify groups for whom information provision remains inaccessible or insufficient.

Chapter 3 examines these issues further in Section 3.3 on people empowerment, particularly in relation to clear, communication in plain language and access to legal information, and in Section 3.4 of Chapter 3, in relation to seamless pathways and co-ordination across services.

People obtain the assistance and advice they need to solve their justice problems

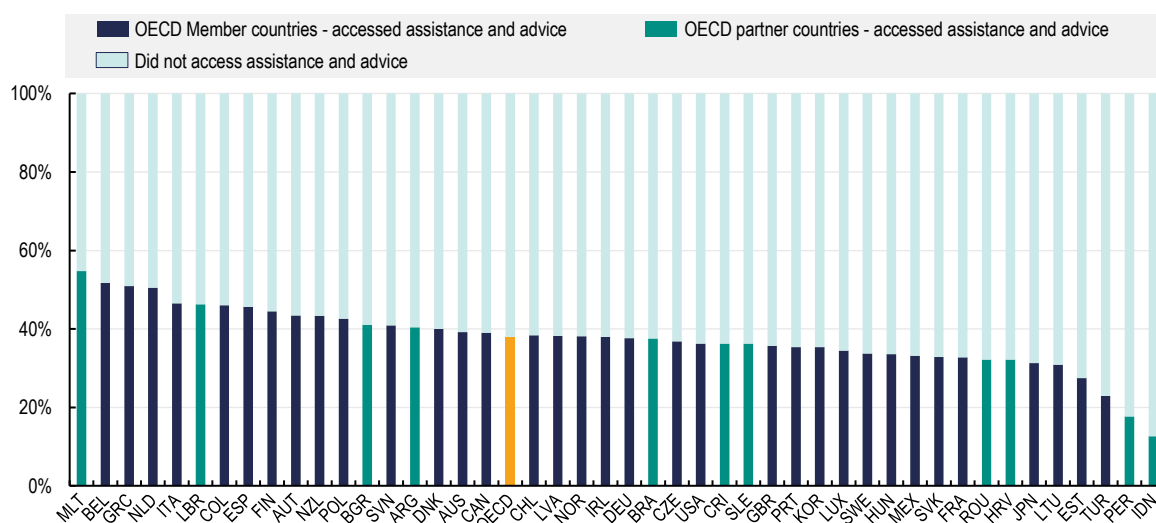
Information alone will not always enable people to resolve a justice problem. At the same time, not every justice problem requires assistance or advice: some people may be able to resolve their problem through self-help, direct engagement with the other party or the use of information that is sufficiently clear and actionable. Depending on the nature of the problem and people’s circumstances and capabilities, they may need tailored assistance or advice to understand their situation, assess the options available and take meaningful steps towards resolution. Unlike general information, assistance and advice involve applying relevant expertise, skills and knowledge to individual circumstances, including through analysis,

personalised guidance, referrals or support with specific tasks. For individuals with stronger legal capability, limited support, such as brief guidance, communication templates or referral to an appropriate service, may be sufficient. Those with lower legal capability, overlapping vulnerabilities or multiple justice problems may require more comprehensive and integrated support, accessible through trusted community-based entry points.

Such support can help people resolve problems before they escalate or generate wider consequences, improving outcomes for people while also reducing costs and demand on courts, justice services and other public services. Regardless of which intermediary provides it, assistance and advice can be essential, particularly for those navigating fragmented justice systems or systems with weak referral pathways (for a more extensive discussion of this outcome, see (OECD/HiiL/WJP, forthcoming^[2])).

Figure 2.7. Assistance or advice to resolve justice problems

Percentage of respondents with a nontrivial justice problem who needed assistance, advice or representation, by whether they obtained such support from a qualifying source



Note: Data were collected between 2017 and 2024, with the reference year varying by country. Respondents with at least one nontrivial justice problem were asked whether they, or someone acting on their behalf, obtained information, advice or representation and from which source. Among respondents who needed such support, assistance obtained from a qualifying professional, public, workplace, health, welfare, community or civil society source, or a personal contact with a legal background, is classified as adequate; assistance obtained only from a non-qualifying source or not obtained at all is classified as inadequate. Respondents who considered assistance unnecessary, and “don’t know” or missing responses, are excluded. Nontrivial justice problems are those rated 4 or higher on a 0–10 scale, where 0 means “not serious at all” and 10 means “extremely serious.”

Source: Elaborated based on WJP’s estimates from the WJP Global Legal Needs Survey.

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The data show that, among respondents who needed tailored support, access to assistance and advice is lower than awareness of where to obtain good information and advice. This comparison should be interpreted with caution: lower use of assistance and advice is not necessarily problematic where people can resolve their problems through self-help, direct negotiation or information that is sufficient for their needs. However, among those who needed such support, the results indicate that many did not obtain it. The median country-level rate is 38%, and in three-quarters of countries between 32% and 46% of those who needed assistance or advice obtained it. In most countries, therefore, most people who needed tailored support did not receive it.

Among the 40 countries with complete information across the three parts of the justice journey captured by these indicators, assistance and advice constitute the most common point at which people do not obtain a service they need. This is the largest access gap in 24 countries, while only four countries report access by a majority of those needing support.

The OECD average is 39%. Thirteen OECD Member countries record values above this level and Australia is at the average. Belgium, Greece and the Netherlands report access exceeding 50%. The findings suggest that assistance and advice represent a significant gap for people whose needs cannot be met through information or self-help alone. People may recognise that they have a problem and find general information but still be unable to interpret their options, take practical steps, prepare documents, engage with another party or navigate a procedure. Appropriate assistance or advice seeks to enable solutions that remove the need for further or more formal mechanisms. Where provided early and effectively, such support may help resolve problems before further escalation or the use of more formal mechanisms becomes necessary.

Differences in access may reflect not only the volume of available services, but also eligibility rules, cost, geographic coverage, awareness, trust and the organisation of referral pathways. Available services may also be insufficiently tailored to what people need or to intimidating to contact. Fragmentation among providers may result in people approaching several organisations without obtaining the support needed to progress.

For countries, these findings point to the need to treat assistance and advice as a core public-service function within their justice system. Support should be available through an appropriate mix of legal aid institutions, lawyers, public authorities, community organisations, unions, social and health professionals and qualified non-lawyer providers. The key question is whether people can obtain reliable help at the point in time and place where they need it, through simple and accessible channels, and whether triage and referral arrangements can match the intensity of support to the complexity of the problem.

This requires clear eligibility rules, strong intake services, accessible application processes, community-based and digital channels, quality standards and follow-up where users face a heightened risk of disengagement. Funding and commissioning arrangements can also support outcomes by encouraging early intervention, effective resolution, avoided escalation and fair and sustainable results, rather than only volumes of activity. Related country approaches are discussed in Section 3.3 of Chapter 3, on the design and delivery of people-centred legal and justice services, and Section 3.4, on governance arrangements that support seamless pathways across services. The link between resources, services and outcomes is further addressed in Section 3.6 of Chapter 3, on participatory and evidence-based planning, monitoring and evaluation.

People obtain access to the dispute resolution mechanism they need to solve their justice problems

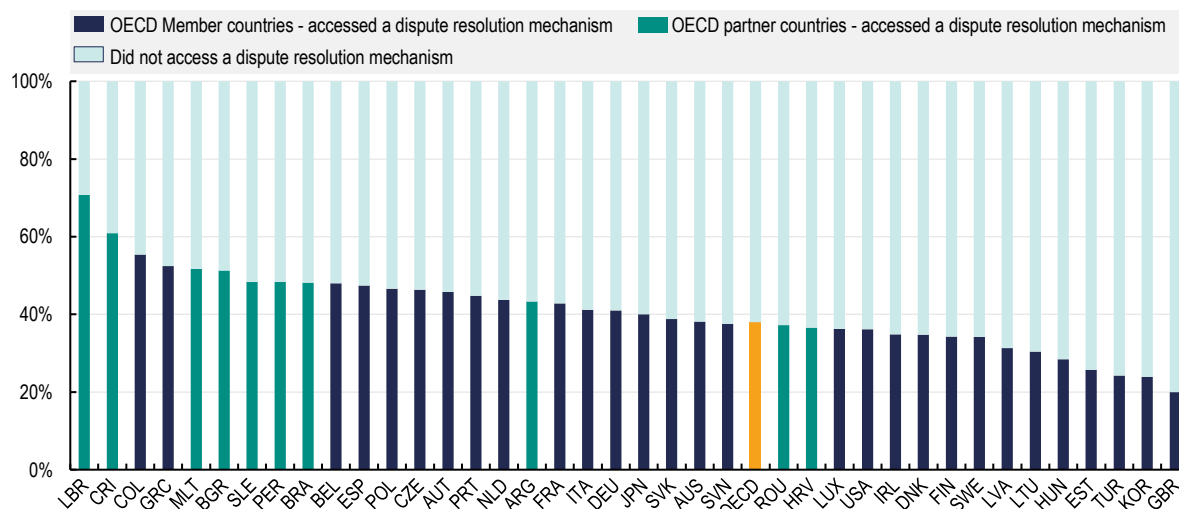
Many justice problems can be effectively and fairly resolved through information, advice, assistance or direct engagement between those involved. Where these efforts do not lead to resolution, or where the nature of the problem requires additional intervention, people need access to an appropriate dispute resolution mechanism. Such mechanisms provide an important means of reaching agreement, obtaining a third-party determination or securing a remedy, and should enable people to do so without disproportionate financial or other costs.

Access to fair, trusted and effective mechanisms for resolving disputes is a key function of the justice system when problems cannot be resolved through earlier or less formal means, or where third-party intervention is otherwise required. Such mechanisms may include courts, administrative bodies, arbitration, mediation, conciliation, customary or community-based forums, or restorative processes. A people-centred justice system ensures that a range of resolution options are available, affordable, geographically

accessible and linked through effective referral pathways, allowing individuals to reach the mechanism that best meets their needs. Regardless of how formal a mechanism is or who provides it, this outcome focuses on whether people facing justice problems can access the dispute resolution support they require (for a more extensive discussion of this outcome, see (OECD/HiiL/WJP, forthcoming^[2]).

Figure 2.8. Access to dispute resolution mechanisms

Percentage of respondents who accessed a dispute resolution mechanism, among those with a nontrivial justice problem who needed such a service



Note: Data were collected between 2017 and 2024, with the reference year varying by country. Respondents with at least one nontrivial justice problem were asked whether they, someone acting on their behalf, the other party or anyone else had approached a court or another third party to adjudicate, mediate or otherwise help resolve the problem. Among respondents who needed such a mechanism, its use is classified as access, while non-use due to procedural delays, fear or power imbalances, lack of knowledge, practical access barriers or distrust is classified as lack of access. Respondents whose reasons were classified as choosing not to use a mechanism, and “don’t know” or missing responses, are excluded. Nontrivial justice problems are those rated 4 or higher on a 0–10 scale, where 0 means “not serious at all” and 10 means “extremely serious.”

Source: Elaborated based on WJP’s estimates from the WJP Global Legal Needs Survey.

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The median country-level rate of access to dispute resolution mechanisms is 42%. In three-quarters of countries, between 30% and 51% of those who needed third-party support accessed an appropriate mechanism. At the median, therefore, fewer than half of those who needed third-party support were able to access it, and in many contexts, therefore, a substantial share of people who need adjudication, mediation or another form of facilitated resolution are unable to reach it.

Among the 40 countries with complete data across the access indicators, dispute resolution constitutes the largest access gap in 16 countries. Only six countries report that most people who needed a mechanism accessed one. The range among OECD Member countries is also wide, from 20% to 61%.

Country results illustrate the diversity of institutional settings through which dispute resolution is delivered. Across the OECD Member countries, Costa Rica reports the highest access rates, followed by Colombia, Greece and Malta. These pathways may include courts, administrative bodies, mediation, conciliation, ombudsperson services and community-based mechanisms.

Access to a mechanism should not, however, be treated as synonymous with effective resolution. Mechanisms may differ in timeliness, affordability, enforceability, procedural safeguards and capacity to respond to the underlying problem. Conversely, some people may resolve their problems directly and have

no need for third-party intervention. The indicator appropriately focuses on those who needed a mechanism, but further information is required to determine whether the mechanism accessed was suitable and effective.

The relationship with assistance and advice is also important. People may be unable to identify the appropriate forum, understand procedural requirements or assess the implications of different options without prior support. Weak referral pathways can lead to delay, repeated transfers between institutions or the use of processes poorly suited to the problem.

A key policy consideration is whether the available mix of dispute resolution mechanisms enables people to access the form of intervention best suited to their problem. It is also important that common justice problems are mapped against the mechanisms available to resolve them. In practice, this can help identify geographic gaps, overlapping mandates and problem types for which no appropriate pathway exists. Such an approach can also support clearer rules on jurisdiction, referral, costs, timelines and the enforceability of outcomes.

Factors that can prevent or discourage people from using an appropriate mechanism, including cost, distance, complexity, fear of consequences and uncertainty about where to go should be addressed systematically. Simplified procedures, proportionate fees, remote participation and accessible local entry points may improve reach. For users who fear retaliation, stigma or escalation, confidential advice, safe reporting channels, protection measures and referrals to specialised support may be needed. Digital mechanisms can provide additional options but should not replace in-person channels for users who need them.

All mechanisms should provide appropriate standards of impartiality, integrity, participation, transparency and review, adjusted to their function and level of formality. Access to dispute resolution should be connected to information, assistance and advice. Strong intake, triage and referral systems can help people reach the forum suited to their problem without unnecessary delay where third-party intervention is needed. Where a mechanism cannot provide the required remedy, the institution or service provider first contacted should conduct a proper intake, help triage the case and refer users to an appropriate alternative, rather than expecting them to restart their justice journey. Such a responsibility may concern courts, legal aid providers, alternative dispute resolution bodies, ombuds institutions, administrative complaint bodies, community justice services or other front-line providers, depending on the entry point.

Monitoring should cover not only whether a mechanism was accessed, but also the type of mechanism, reasons for use or non-use, timeliness, cost, user experience, effectiveness, outcome and subsequent compliance. This would enable policymakers to assess whether the available mix of mechanisms provides effective and sustainable routes to justice.

Chapter 3 further examines these issues in Section 2, in relation to understanding legal needs and justice problems and ensuring access to appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms; Section 3, in relation to the design and delivery of a continuum of legal and justice services; and Section 6, in relation to monitoring, evaluation and evidence on what works to resolve people's problems.

Cross-cutting policy insights

The following policy implications should be read in light of the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems, particularly its emphasis on people-centred purpose and culture, evidence-based planning, seamless pathways to legal and justice-related services, innovation and co-ordination across justice, legal, human and social services. Chapter 3 analyses countries' progress in advancing people-centred justice systems across these dimensions.

The analyses above emphasise the value of assessing the justice system through the lens of the outcomes achieved for society. No single measure provides a complete picture of whether a justice system meets

people's needs. Problems may be resolved, but through processes experienced as unfair. Information may be available but not followed by the assistance needed to act on it. Trust in the judiciary may remain low even where people succeed in addressing their problems through formal pathways. Therefore, it is important to examine how the different outcomes reinforce, or fail to reinforce, one another across the justice journey.

Resolution and procedural fairness need to be pursued together

The findings indicate that achieving resolution is not only a question of providing a final decision or settlement. In several countries, comparatively high problem resolution rates coincide with positive experiences of fairness. Greece, Poland, Lithuania and Colombia, for example, record relatively high values for both indicators. This pattern may indicate that people are more likely to regard a problem as genuinely resolved when they feel heard, respected and able to understand how the process reached its outcome. However, the relationship is not uniform. For example, countries such as France and Argentina report comparatively strong resolution rates but more moderate experiences of fairness.

These scores make it evident that the quality of problem-resolution process and substantive resolution should be pursued together. For policymakers, this underlines the importance of embedding procedural fairness throughout justice services, including at early points of contact and in administrative, community-based and informal mechanisms. Opportunities to participate, respectful treatment and just, transparent procedures all affect whether people accept outcomes. These principles matter beyond courts. They are relevant wherever people interact with institutions or third parties to seek a solution to their justice problem.

High resolution does not necessarily translate into trust in the judiciary

A second pattern is the coexistence, in several countries, of high problem-resolution rates and low trust in judges and magistrates. Particularly visible in parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, this combination can be seen in Chile, Peru, Mexico and Colombia. It may suggest that people are resolving problems through a wide range of channels, including administrative bodies, complaint mechanisms, mediation, community-based services, direct negotiation and informal support. Resolution should therefore not be interpreted as evidence that people necessarily trust, or even use, the formal judicial system. Nor does a positive resolution outcome necessarily address wider concerns about judicial integrity, independence or institutional performance.

This has implications for the design of people-centred justice systems. Governments need to look beyond institutional silos and recognise the full ecosystem through which people seek help. Courts remain essential, especially where authoritative decisions or enforceable remedies are required as a last resort. But many justice problems may be prevented or better addressed through earlier, simpler or more specialised pathways. In line with the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems [[OECD/LEGAL/0498](#)], a balanced system would offer a range of accessible mechanisms, supported by clear mandates, safeguards and referral arrangements. The objective is not to steer all problems towards a single institution. It is to help people reach the pathway most likely to meet their needs and most effective at resolving their problems.

The differences between experienced fairness and trust also merit attention. In Lithuania, Bulgaria, Colombia and Peru, for example, assessments of the fairness of resolution processes are substantially more positive than reported trust in judges and magistrates. This may reflect the difference between a direct experience with justice services and a broader perception of institutional integrity, independence or competence. A person may consider a particular process fair without developing greater confidence in the judiciary as a whole. Building trust is therefore likely to require more than improvements in individual case handling. It may also depend on institutional integrity, transparency, accountability and the visible capacity of justice actors to respond to people's needs over time. For this reason, experience- and perception-based indicators are most useful when interpreted alongside administrative and institutional data. These

sources can provide a more complete picture of whether justice systems have the necessary safeguards in place, how people experience those safeguards in practice and whether they translate into confidence in the justice system.

Table 2.2. Overview of data for justice outcome indicators

Region	Country	Problem is fully resolved	Perception of process as fair	Trust judges and magistrates	Had at least one justice problem	Experienced a hardship	Accessed information	Accessed assistance and advice	Accessed a dispute resolution mechanism
Africa	Chile	88%		27%	39%	23%	66%	38%	
	Greece	86%	78%	58%	30%	30%	77%	51%	52%
	Peru	86%	76%	20%	29%	51%	71%	18%	48%
Asia	Indonesia	84%		51%	20%	9%	80%	13%	
	Portugal	84%	68%	66%	15%	34%	71%	35%	45%
	Mexico	83%		22%	30%	52%	56%	33%	
	Bulgaria	82%	74%	30%	22%	40%	69%	41%	51%
	Costa Rica	80%	71%	43%	34%	56%	71%	36%	61%
	Poland	80%	77%	68%	29%	21%	72%	43%	47%
	Brazil	80%	69%	57%	29%	54%	72%	38%	48%
Europe	Colombia	80%	73%	28%	26%	56%	64%	46%	55%
	Sierra Leone	79%	72%	49%	16%	59%	77%	36%	48%
	Dominican Republic	79%	73%	39%	13%	55%	72%		
	Malta	79%	65%	52%	47%	54%	80%	55%	52%
	Lithuania	78%	77%	42%	67%	29%	63%	31%	30%
	Argentina	75%	60%	31%	40%	43%	73%	40%	43%
	France	75%	60%	53%	59%	48%	60%	33%	43%
	Slovenia	74%	56%	35%	65%	55%	68%	41%	38%
	Latvia	73%	61%	61%	38%	40%	72%	38%	31%
	Hungary	73%	61%	42%	68%	54%	65%	34%	28%
	Denmark	72%	55%	73%	44%	56%	57%	40%	35%
	Niger	72%	62%	56%	21%	35%	53%	26%	44%
	Slovak Republic	70%	56%	53%	56%	45%	67%	33%	39%
	Czechia	70%	59%	53%	64%	50%	68%	37%	46%
	Spain	70%	56%	54%	64%	54%	65%	46%	47%
	United States	69%	62%	63%	47%	53%	72%	38%	36%
	Ireland	69%	59%	61%	60%	61%	66%	36%	35%
	Estonia	69%	66%	68%	59%	50%	58%	27%	26%
	Austria	68%	51%	69%	60%	53%	64%	43%	46%
	Croatia	68%	59%	32%	45%	39%	56%	32%	37%
	Italy	68%	60%	50%	58%	50%	63%	47%	41%
	Finland	68%	57%	78%	55%	55%	71%	44%	34%
	Germany	67%	51%	65%	56%	51%	60%	38%	41%
	Sweden	66%	49%	59%	50%	50%	59%	34%	34%
	Belgium	66%	48%	55%	54%	57%	55%	52%	48%
	Netherlands	66%	49%	75%	42%	53%	64%	51%	44%
	Luxembourg	65%	59%	78%	53%	47%	54%	34%	36%
	Romania	65%	47%	60%	27%	29%	69%	32%	37%
LAC	United Kingdom	64%	61%	65%	43%	49%	71%	36%	20%
	Türkiye	64%	56%	59%	30%	47%	70%	23%	24%
	Australia	63%	60%	64%	52%	54%	73%	39%	38%
	Japan	62%		43%	12%	55%	46%	31%	40%
	Canada	62%		68%	40%	57%	69%	39%	
	Norway	61%		76%	41%	54%	54%	38%	
	New Zealand	59%		70%	50%	53%	68%	43%	
North America	Korea	57%	55%	27%	41%	67%	49%	35%	24%
	Liberia	44%	69%	63%	31%	66%	69%	46%	71%

Note: The table presents the data included in Figures 2.1–2.8 above. Higher values indicate greater attainment for resolution, fairness, trust and access indicators. For the prevalence and hardship indicators, higher values indicate a greater incidence of justice problems or associated hardship. Data were collected between 2017 and 2024, with the reference year varying by country, and covers respondents with at least one nontrivial justice problem reported in the two years preceding the interview. Nontrivial justice problems are those rated 4 or higher on a 0–10 scale, where 0 means “not serious at all” and 10 means “extremely serious.”

Source: Elaborated based on WJP's estimates from the WJP Global Legal Needs Survey.

Information should enable self-help and referral

The access-related indicators point to an important distinction between awareness of information and access to tailored support where it is needed. Across many countries, people appear able to identify where information can be found, but fewer obtain personalised support among those who need it. This situation is especially pronounced in Indonesia, Peru and the Republic of Türkiye. Australia and the United Kingdom also report comparatively broad access to information but considerably lower access to assistance and advice. Information can open the door to justice, but it does not by itself ensure that people can use the system. This should not be read as suggesting that all justice problems require assistance or advice. In some cases, clear information, self-help tools or direct engagement may be sufficient. The policy concern arises where people need more tailored support to interpret their options, make decisions or take the next step, but are not able to obtain it.

These considerations suggest a need to strengthen continuity across services, in line with the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems, which emphasises seamless pathways to legal and justice services across justice, legal, human and social services. Public legal information should be connected to effective triage, referral and follow-up where further support is needed. Digital platforms, hotlines, community services and public institutions should not operate as isolated entry points. They should guide people to either act on reliable information themselves or reach appropriate advice, social support or dispute resolution where needed. Particular attention may be required for people with lower legal capability, limited digital access, language barriers, disabilities or overlapping social and economic vulnerabilities.

Assistance and advice appear to be a common pressure point for people who need more tailored support. Even in countries where many people know where to seek good information, those who need more tailored support may still not receive it. Policy responses may therefore need to focus not only on increasing the number of services, but also on how those services are organised and delivered. This includes simplifying eligibility rules, reducing cost and distance barriers, expanding community-based provision, improving co-ordination among providers and ensuring that support is available early enough to prevent problems from escalating. The lower levels of access to assistance relative to awareness of information suggest that the transition from general information to personalised support may represent a break in the justice journey for those who need such support.

Access alone does not guarantee effective resolution

The relationship between assistance, access to dispute resolution and final resolution is nevertheless not automatic. Liberia, for example, reports comparatively broad access to dispute resolution mechanisms but a considerably lower resolution rate. Mexico and Portugal, by contrast, combine a high resolution rate with the level of access to assistance and advice below the OECD average. Indonesia presents a similar contrast between high resolution and very low access to assistance. These patterns may reflect differences in problem type, institutional quality and the extent to which people resolve matters independently or with the support of family and community networks. They also underline that lower use of assistance and advice does not necessarily indicate a poorer outcome where people are able to resolve problems effectively through self-help or informal support. Access should therefore be assessed together with the appropriateness, quality and effectiveness of the service provided. Reaching a mechanism is only one step. Whether it delivers a timely, fair and sustainable outcome is equally important.

Prevention requires attention to both the frequency and consequences of justice problems

The indicators on problem prevalence and hardship further underline the case for a stronger focus on prevention. Countries with relatively low reported prevalence can still record substantial hardship among those who experience a justice problem. Sierra Leone and the Dominican Republic provide examples of this pattern. Conversely, comparatively high prevalence of justice problems does not always coincide with the most severe consequences: Lithuania reports one of the higher prevalence rates but a comparatively low level of hardship. The number of problems people experience and the harm those problems cause are distinct policy concerns. Both matter.

Prevention strategies should therefore address different stages of the justice journey. Primary prevention can target recurring sources of disputes through clearer regulation, better administrative processes and stronger consumer, labour, housing and family protections. Earlier access to information and assistance can support secondary prevention by helping people act before problems intensify. Where hardship has already occurred, co-ordination with health, social protection, employment and housing services may be needed to mitigate wider consequences and reduce the risk of further problems. In countries where substantial hardship coincides with limited access to assistance, such as Korea or Mexico, the results may require closer examination of opportunities for earlier intervention and more integrated support. Chapter 3 further examines these issues through country approaches to translating data on legal needs and justice problems into preventative action and structural solutions, and through related discussions on people-centred service design and seamless pathways across justice and other public services.

Overall, patterns visible across indicators point towards an end-to-end approach to justice policy. Countries may benefit from using the outcome indicators as a diagnostic tool: to identify where people lose access, where processes are not experienced as fair, where trust remains fragile and where justice problems generate wider harm. Different combinations of outcomes will call for different policy responses.

High awareness of where to obtain information combined with low access to assistance, as observed in Indonesia or Peru, may signal either that information and self-help are sufficient for some users, or that referral systems and tailored support remain insufficient for those who need them. Further national analysis is needed to distinguish between these explanations.

High resolution combined with low trust, as in several Latin American countries, may point to the importance of non-judicial pathways while also indicating broader institutional concerns. High hardship alongside limited support may justify stronger early intervention and cross-sector co-ordination.

These patterns remain descriptive and should be interpreted in light of national contexts, differences in reporting practices and the characteristics of the problems covered. Even so, they underline a central policy message: justice systems depend not on the performance of one institution or service, but on whether the system as a whole enables people to recognise their problems, obtain appropriate support, experience fair processes, reach effective resolution and avoid further harm.

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NOTES

¹ These results have to be treated with caution. They are based on a single question in the WJP survey regarding the fairness of the process, which may be difficult to interpret for respondents who have been involved in a number of processes on their pathway to resolution. The state of the art in procedural justice research is to break down procedural fairness in components related to feeling heard, interests being recognised, being able to participate in finding solutions, being respected as a person, being informed about the process, being able to submit and correct information, as well as perceived impartiality of the process.

² The OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions was not used for this indicator in order to preserve comparability across countries. While the survey includes a question on trust in “courts and the judicial system”, the wording differs from the measure used in this report, which focuses on confidence in “judges and magistrates”. In addition, the latest OECD Trust Survey data do not cover all OECD Member countries for this specific indicator. Therefore, this report uses the best available comparable measure across the country sample.

³ This range covers the central 75% of countries in the distribution (i.e. between the 12.5th and 87.5th percentiles).

⁴ For example, homelessness is considered a problem with a severity of 4 out of 10, while in high-income countries people experiencing this problem rank it, on average, at around 7 out of 10

⁵ A “no wrong door” approach means that people can access help through any entry point in the justice or broader service system and be guided to the appropriate support, rather than being turned away because they contacted the “wrong” institution. In practice, this approach requires effective referral pathways, co-ordination among providers, shared information protocols and sufficient capacity across legal, administrative, social, health and community-based services.

3. Making justice systems more effective and people-centred

This chapter examines how countries are translating the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems into practice, and where further policy action can strengthen justice outcomes for people and businesses. Drawing on evidence from 27 countries, it highlights progress, persistent gaps and emerging approaches across the five pillars of the Recommendation, with a focus on system-wide coherence, service delivery, data and evidence, empowerment, and planning and accountability. It also identifies practical policy directions and good practices to support implementation, peer learning and continued progress towards more effective and people-centred justice systems.

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Justice systems are evolving to respond more effectively to the needs and expectations of the people, businesses and communities they serve. Governments are pursuing reforms that seek to make justice more accessible and responsive, address justice problems earlier and more effectively, and ensure that services are organised around people's needs and problems, rather than primarily around institutions and procedures. This involves changes across the justice system, from better understanding justice needs and problems and how policies and services are designed, to the use of data and technology. It also involves co-ordination between justice and other public services and the empowerment of people and communities to be involved in service design and delivery. Drawing on countries' experiences and shared policy priorities, the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems (hereafter "the Recommendation") reflects their collective understanding of the key elements needed to expand access to justice and improve the effectiveness of justice systems. Recognising that countries are advancing from different starting points and through different legal and institutional arrangements, this chapter considers the key elements of the Recommendation, providing an overview how these elements are taking shape in practice.

The analysis complements the discussion of justice outcomes in Chapter 2. That chapter considers what justice systems ultimately deliver for people — including whether justice problems are resolved, processes are experienced as fair, people trust justice institutions, and they can obtain the information, assistance and dispute resolution they need. This chapter turns to the government policies and system characteristics that can support those outcomes. It examines whether countries are putting in place the conditions for justice systems to understand legal needs, design appropriate services and pathways, empower users, make effective use of data and technology, and plan, finance, monitor and improve justice services in a more people-centred way. The relationship is not assumed to be mechanical: particular policies or institutional arrangements do not automatically produce specific outcomes, and outcomes are shaped by wider legal, institutional, social and economic contexts. Rather, considering the two dimensions together provides a more complete basis for understanding both what justice systems deliver and the policy environment within which those results are produced.

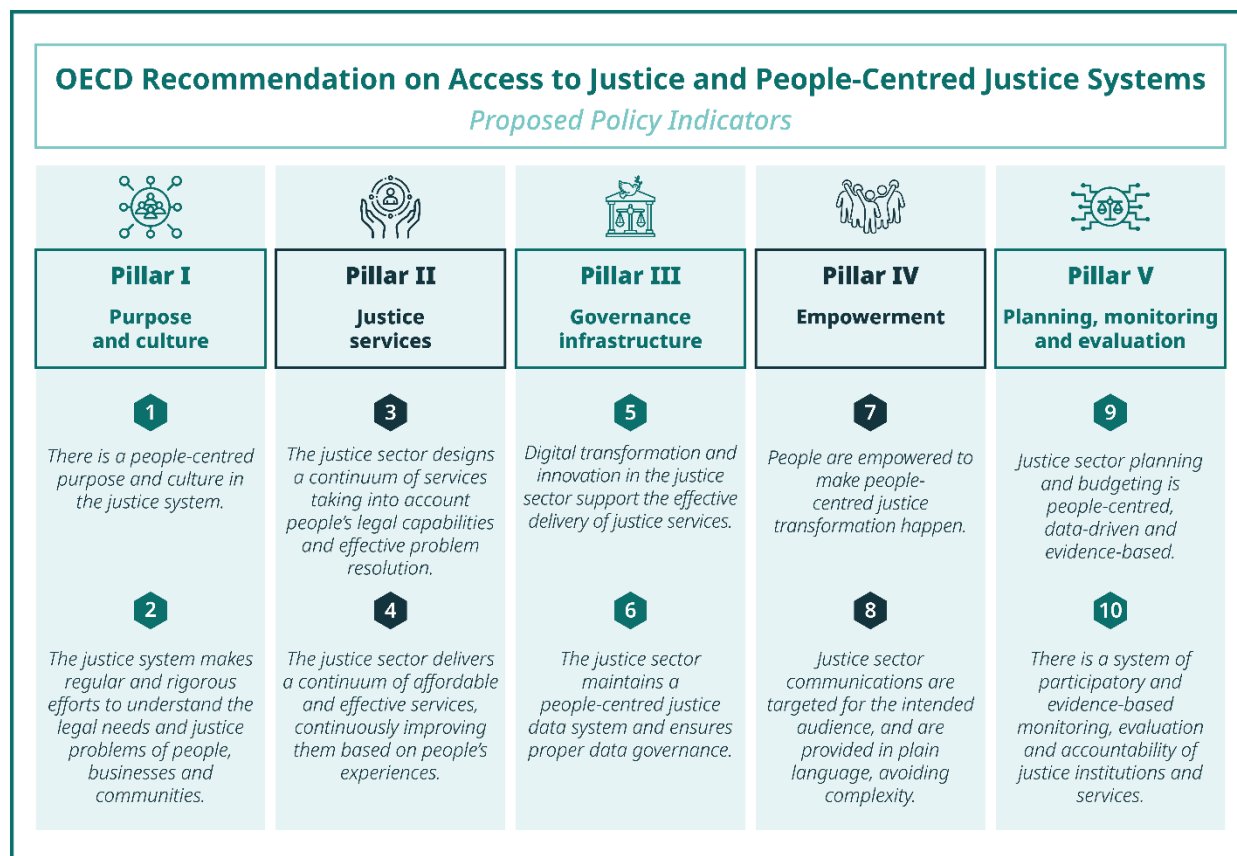
The following five sections provide an evidence-based assessment of progress in implementing the necessary policies and practices, making justice systems more responsive and people-centred, in line with the Recommendation. Rather than assessing individual policies or institutions in isolation, the approach considers the different dimensions of people-centred justice as parts of a coherent system. In doing so, it provides countries with a common reference point for examining progress, identifying relative strengths and recognising areas where further development may be valuable.

At the core of this approach is a set of policy indicators that operationalise the provisions of the Recommendation into observable dimensions of implementation. The framework comprises 10 indicators and 31 underlying elements, with 2 indicators corresponding to each pillar of the Recommendation. Developed iteratively between 2024 and 2026, the indicators were refined through policy discussions and dialogue with countries and other justice stakeholders. Read alongside the outcome indicators presented in Chapter 2, they connect the assessment of people's justice experiences and outcomes with an examination of the policy, service and governance arrangements intended to support them. Together, they provide a common framework for examining implementation across countries, supporting comparability while recognising that countries have different legal and institutional arrangements and may pursue the objectives of the Recommendation through different policy approaches.

Based on the responses from 27 countries, including 24 OECD countries and 3 non-OECD countries (Dominican Republic, Malta, Thailand), the resulting analysis is intended to support both monitoring and learning. By applying a common framework of policy indicators across countries, the report provides a systematic picture of the policies and institutional arrangements that support effective and people-centred justice systems and help achieve justice outcomes (as highlighted in Chapter 2). In addition to enabling

developments to be monitored over time, the framework can help countries take stock of their own progress, identify areas of relative strength and areas where further reforms may be needed, and learn from the experience of others. By establishing a common evidence base across different dimensions and country contexts, the report aims to inform policy dialogue, facilitate peer learning and support countries in advancing the implementation of the Recommendation.

Figure 3.1. Policy Indicators for the OECD Recommendation



Source: (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[1]).

3.2. A PEOPLE-CENTRED PURPOSE AND CULTURE IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Justice systems provide a critical public service. For justice systems to be effective at meeting the needs of people and businesses, all of their component parts – from justice ministries and courts to the police, prisons, consumer support services and non-governmental service providers – need to be oriented towards people-centred service provision. This requires that planning, budgeting and design of services be directed to activities and ways of working that respond to the most common legal needs and justice problems experienced by people. It also requires reliable data and evidence that help to identify these needs and target effective services accordingly. Achieving this necessitates significant reforms of institutions, policy and implementation across the justice system.

If different stakeholders are to be brought on board behind these reforms, justice systems will need to articulate a clear people-centred purpose and culture. This should be developed at the highest levels of government and disseminated across the whole justice system - at national, regional, and local levels, among governmental and non-governmental providers, and including other sectors such as health and housing that are closely linked to justice. This whole-of-state and whole-of-society purpose and culture should be supported by mandates that are aligned across institutions, co-ordinated planning, and collaboration mechanisms to harmonise data collection, plans and processes.

Establish a people-centred purpose and culture in the justice system

Justice reforms in most countries focus primarily on improving the efficiency and performance of justice institutions, sometimes shifting attention away from the people they are meant to serve. As a result, they may struggle to respond effectively to people's everyday legal needs, and access to the justice system can remain uneven or difficult. These shortcomings can lead to a large number of unmet legal needs, unnecessary administrative costs, persistent inequalities and diminished public trust and confidence. The Executive, through the Ministry of Justice, through legislation, regulation, policymaking and funding decisions shapes conditions and the system characteristics that determine whether the justice sector as a whole delivers to society. In this context, embedding a people-centred purpose and culture in the justice system is essential to ensure that the functioning of justice services align more closely with people's needs and expectations, and that they are accessible, responsible and fair. To drive this shift, intentions alone are not sufficient. The justice system needs a clearly stated and agreed commitment, as a reference point to continually remind reform efforts to focus on achieving that purpose, alongside the resources and institutional support required to deliver on that commitment.

Box 3.1. Indicator 1: There is a people-centred purpose and culture in the justice system

- a. The government and/or the ministry of justice have explicitly committed to promote people-centred justice as the purpose and culture for the justice system, through whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.
- b. Key justice institutions and service providers have publicly embraced the goal of ensuring equal access to justice for all, define shared goals for collaboration between them and regularly monitor progress towards these goals.
- c. The roles and independence of justice sector stakeholders are clearly recognised, while ensuring mutual co-operation and co-ordination.
- d. Strategies are implemented to identify, analyse and eradicate any explicit or implicit bias and discrimination within the justice system and in the outcomes it produces.

Source: (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[1]).

The government and/or the ministry of justice have explicitly committed to promote people-centred justice as the purpose and culture for the justice system, and key justice institutions and service providers have publicly embraced the goal of ensuring equal access to justice for all, established shared goals for collaboration, and regularly monitored progress towards these goals

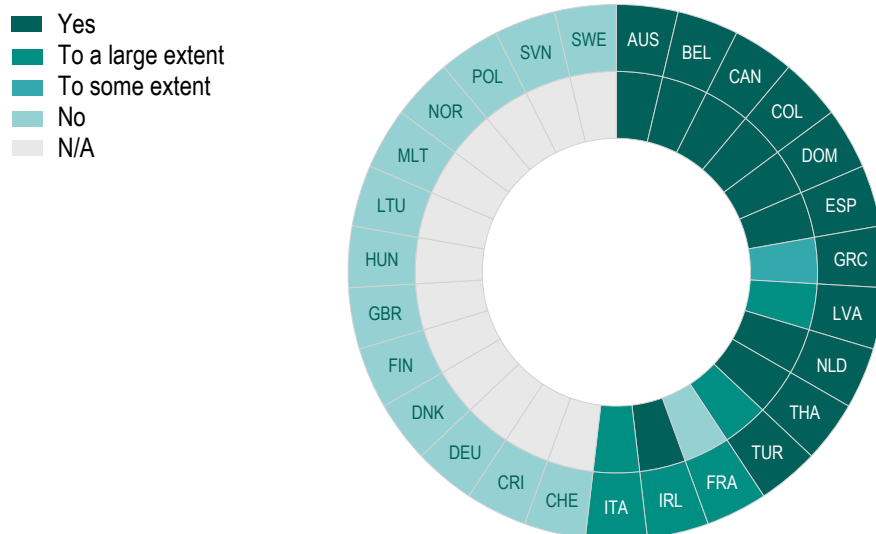
A shift towards the outcomes people need requires the deep embedding of a people-centred purpose and culture within the justice system. This demands an explicit commitment from governments or ministries of justice to making people-centred justice part of the core mission of the system. Such a commitment can take various forms, including legislation or a national justice strategy, but should be binding enough to guide the country's commitment nationally, and go beyond time-limited or project-based initiatives. It should clearly highlight a human-centred approach that takes outcomes for people as a starting point. People should be at the core when designing, delivering, implementing and evaluating justice policies, services and legal procedures. Particular attention should also be given to the perspectives and needs of specific groups (e.g. women, children, indigenous groups, elderly and people with disabilities) (OECD, 2023^[2]).

The Recommendation stipulates the need to adopt a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to people-centred justice. This involves extending this commitment across all types of justice providers and across relevant sectors and clearly defining the roles and independence of these stakeholders, while promoting mutual co-operation and co-ordination between them. Justice providers such as community justice services, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, paralegals, and social services can be explicitly integrated into the approach and contribute to people-centred justice. Equally important is the development and implementation of monitoring mechanisms to track progress in people-centred approaches (OECD, 2023^[2]).

Explicit commitment to promoting people-centred justice as the purpose and culture for the justice system is relatively common among the 27 countries assessed. Nearly half of these countries (14 countries) have formalised such commitments (see Figure 3.2). These are articulated through a variety of instruments including national justice sector plans, typically multi-year strategies (e.g. in Belgium, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Latvia, Spain, Thailand, Türkiye) or annual action plans like in Greece (Ministry of Justice, Greece, 2024^[3]; 2023^[4]); formal communications from the Minister of Justice to Parliament, as in the Netherlands; a framework and programming law in France,¹ and policy commitments published on official government websites in Australia (Government of Australia, Attorney-General's Department, n.d.^[5]) and Canada (Government of Canada, 2026^[6]; Government of Canada, 2024^[7]).

In other countries, commitments are more narrowly framed around access to justice, sometimes also acknowledging the needs of specific groups. However, they do not consistently consider people and their legal needs and justice problems as the starting point for policymaking, nor do they see the resolution of people's justice problems as the objective of justice as a public service. Instead, strategies frequently take an institutional perspective, that is more abstract and normative. In some cases, reference to people exist but are limited to protection of human rights, equality before the law and legal safeguards. While these elements are foundational in a democratic system, these principles remain largely articulated as normative commitments. As such, they do not in themselves reflect an approach in which people's experiences, informed by data and evidence, meaningfully guide justice policymaking so as to concretely deliver meaningful access to justice for all.

Figure 3.2. Commitment to people-centred purpose and culture in the justice system



Note: The outer ring illustrates countries scorings to the question 'Has the ministry of justice explicitly committed to promoting people-centred justice as the purpose for the justice system?'. The inner ring illustrates countries scorings to the question on whether 'these documents take a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach'.

Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/lt2ij1>

Formal and informal justice stakeholders are understood as part of a single, interconnected justice system that works collaboratively to offer solutions that are tailored to people's different legal needs and problems. This system encompasses the full range of legal and justice services, including legal aid, ADR, paralegal and community justice. Importantly, it also extends beyond the justice sector itself, as justice problems are frequently intertwined with issues in areas such as social protection, health, education, housing and employment. Responding effectively to these interrelated needs requires co-ordination across multiple ministries and agencies supported by explicit co-ordination mechanisms (e.g. inter-ministerial council, cross-agency strategies) and by a clearly articulated shared understanding among ministries. Extending co-ordination with regional and local governments is also important to ensure that people's needs and problems are identified and addressed at the level closest to them whenever feasible.

A key standard in this regard is the explicit anchoring of a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach within people-centred justice strategies and other high-level commitments to people-centred justice. This supports the formalisation of a shared purpose and clear arrangements for co-ordination and accountability, including cross-cutting co-ordination tools and standards for a culture-change. In a context of scarce public resources, effective co-ordination and collaboration is essential to avoid fragmentation, duplication and ensure coherence across government actions and ultimately deliver better outcomes for people. CSOs, communities, academia and the private sector should also be meaningfully integrated in the overall vision, and support implementation and oversight processes through well-defined roles.

Among the 14 countries that have explicitly committed to promote people-centred justice as the purpose and culture for the justice system, 12 countries also demonstrate strong elements of a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach (rated as 'yes' or 'to a large extent') (see Figure 3.2). While these take different forms across countries, they share a common emphasis on co-ordination and collaboration, with dedicated governance structures for the implementation of the strategies, shared tools, and sometimes performance indicators, such as those tracked by the government of Canada. Several countries place a strong emphasis on a whole-of-society approach, broadening participation beyond

government. Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Spain and Türkiye, for instance, explicitly recognise roles for civil society, academia, legal professionals, community organisations and other non-state actors. Even where the strategy is institutionally narrower, as in the Dominican Republic, participatory processes can bring a wider range of stakeholders into planning and overall governance of the strategy (see Box 3.2). Across these examples, effective people-centred justice therefore depends not on a single institutional model, but on mechanisms that align responsibilities, facilitate co-ordination, engage stakeholders and focus institutions on shared outcomes for people.

Box 3.2. Embedding whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches into people-centred justice commitments

Colombia's Plan Decenal de Justicia 2017-2027 is explicitly designed as a whole-of-government justice framework. It treats justice as a system, not a branch. Justice is framed as a public service oriented towards people, with shared responsibilities across multiple authorities and an emphasis on measuring outcomes and impacts. The plan explicitly sets co-ordination and synergies among justice actors as one of the objectives of the strategy. Its scope extends beyond formal justice institutions to include, territorial authorities, community justice actors, academia and expert advisory bodies, and informal and ADR mechanisms. This relies on cross-cutting co-ordination tools such as integrated and interoperable information systems, unified justice statistics observatories and territorial data linked to legal needs. Civil society and citizens are assigned roles in oversight of justice institutions, monitoring integrity and performance, participation in reforms aimed at legitimacy and trust.

Spain's Justicia 2030 strategy sets out the objective of transforming the justice 'ecosystem'. As such it involves ministries, regional governments, justice stakeholders, academia and civil society organisations. The strategy explicitly mentions the establishment of a dedicated interministerial working group to ensure the co-ordination of projects for the implementation of the strategy.

In **Türkiye**, the Twelfth development plan 2024-2028 covers a wide range of policies including specific objectives for the justice sector. It emphasises a shared public-sector culture built around citizen-centred, participatory, transparent, and accountable governance, while promoting common tools and standards across institutions. The Plan contains explicit cross-agency co-ordination structures (especially through the Presidency of Strategy and Budget and the National Sustainable Development Co-ordination Council) and repeatedly describes integrated implementation across justice, health, education, social services, local government. It also recognises roles for civil society, academia, the private sector, and citizens, with a commitment to promoting the active engagement of civil society in decision-making processes. The objective of strengthening access to justice extends beyond formal justice institutions, with commitment to promoting alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, restorative juvenile justice and victim support services.

In the **Netherlands**, strengthening access to justice takes a whole-of-government approach, reflected in a shared responsibility across ministries, justice institutions, and justice service providers. The Minister's reports to the Parliament have articulated a mission and a vision for access to justice, that underlines that providing people-centred services, laws and regulations is a government-wide task that extends beyond the remit of a single ministry. The letters highlight collaboration with other ministries on strengthening people's access to information and the importance of co-operation between central government, regions and municipalities. People-centred justice is pursued collectively through cross-ministerial co-ordination, shared cross-cutting tools, and collaboration with actors beyond the formal justice system, including dispute resolution bodies and legal aid desks.

In **Belgium**, the Strategic Plan 2022-2024 includes a dedicated table specifying all stakeholders that might have an interest in or influence over implementing the strategy's objectives. It reflects a whole-of-

government and whole-of society approach with the mention of a broad range of stakeholders from the judiciary, legal professions (lawyers, bailiffs, notaries, etc), Parliament, prison population (detainees and detainees consultation bodies) and other federal public services (FPS Foreign Affairs, FPS BOSA, FPS Finance, FPS Public Health, FPS Home Affairs, etc.). The document also mentions collaboration with regional and local authorities (communities and regions and their services, municipalities, and local police), the civil society (citizens, representative bodies of religions and secular organisations), trade unions and academic partners.

In **Thailand**, the 4th Master Plan for National Justice Administration is designed as a co-ordination mechanism across the justice sector and broader government. It identifies co-operation with the ministry of justice, the police, courts, prosecutors, other ministries (Interior, Labour, Public Health, and Social Development and Human Security), local government bodies and other public agencies. The implementation framework requires alignment of agency work plans, budgets, and operational activities with the Master Plan.

In **Canada**, Justice Canada explicitly frames justice as a shared responsibility involving the Executive (Justice Canada, federal departments), the Judiciary (courts, constitutional litigation), prosecution and policing (RCMP, Public Safety, prosecutions), legal professionals, social services, community organisations including indigenous rights organisations, as well as provinces, territories and municipalities. This reflects an understanding that people-centred justice requires co-ordinated action across the government and society. In addition, the 2024-25 Departmental Plan frames efforts to safeguard the rights of indigenous people as a whole-of-government responsibility. The plan includes detailed performance indicators, targets, and results tables that directly measure user experience, access, fairness, and outcomes such as: public confidence in fairness and accessibility of the justice system, access to legal aid, duty counsel, indigenous court workers, availability of restorative justice programmes. Results are tracked annually and linked to Government Canada InfoBase. Co-ordination across governmental agencies is also foreseen to strengthen the strategic management of high-profile litigation cases.

Dominican Republic's Plan Estrategico del Poder Judicial 2020-2024 is primarily framed as a judiciary strategy, but stakeholders' engagement is expressly mentioned. The plan was developed through participatory processes involving lawyers, businesses, academia, media, civil society, and vulnerable groups. Periodic consultation and participation processes are highlighted as elements of the governance scheme.

Source: (Government of Colombia, 2017^[8]), (Government of Spain, 2021^[9]), (Government of Türkiye, 2023^[10]), (Government of the Netherlands, 2023^[11]), (Government of the Netherlands, 2024^[12]), (Government of Spain, 2022^[13]), (Government of Latvia, 2022^[14]), (Government of Thailand, 2023^[15]), (Government of Canada, 2021^[16]), (Poder Judicial de la República Dominicana, 2020^[17]).

For commitments to a people-centred purpose and culture in the justice system to translate into practice, such high-level statements, whatever their form, should be accompanied by action plans and reporting and monitoring mechanisms or performance agreements that track progress towards outcomes. Such progress should be measured in terms of the impact of justice policies, rather than merely intentions or activities. Accordingly, shared outcomes for people could include targets such as 'reducing the number of people that took no action when faced with discrimination by 5%' rather than focusing solely on actions (e.g. establishment of a working group) or co-ordination processes (e.g. 'five co-ordination meetings held'). In addition to underpinning implementation, a robust accountability framework plays a critical role in ensuring public reporting, enhancing transparency and providing legitimacy for the use of public resources (see Participatory and evidence-based planning, monitoring and evaluation).

Strategies are implemented to identify, analyse and eradicate any explicit or implicit bias and discrimination within the justice system and in the outcomes it produces

At the core of a people-centred justice system is the ambition to provide equal access to justice for all. The Recommendation therefore stresses the importance of identifying, analysing and working to eradicate any possible explicit or implicit bias and discrimination within the justice system and in the outcomes it produces. Certain population groups, including women, children, indigenous people, people with disabilities, migrants and refugees, ethnic minorities and people living in remote rural areas, have traditionally been either discriminated against or overlooked by justice systems. To redress this and ensure the promise of access to justice for all is a reality, explicit strategies are needed. They should concretely support the identification, analysis and eradication of explicit or implicit bias and discrimination within the justice system and in the outcomes it produces.

The majority of OECD countries have adopted at least one national strategy aimed at addressing discrimination and promoting equality. These strategies often focus on a specific population group, such as women, persons with disabilities, children and youth, indigenous peoples, Roma, migrants and racialised communities. They generally involve multiple actors, inter-ministerial co-ordination and consultation with multiple stakeholders. Ministries of Justice often play a co-ordinating or implementing role alongside other ministries, equality bodies, and civil society organisations.

Justice-specific strategies dedicated to identifying, measuring, and addressing discrimination and promoting equality within formal and informal judicial processes remain rare. A positive exception is Canada, where the *Black Justice Strategy* and the *Indigenous Justice Strategy* include measures to strengthen access to culturally appropriate policing services, expand community-based and Indigenous-led correctional programmes, and improve case management and reintegration supports. In Colombia, the *Red Justas strategy* promotes access to justice, amongst others, for women, children and youth, through a restorative and differential approach, while strengthening institutional and community capacities to respond to violence against women.

In most countries, the justice sector is included as one policy area within broader national anti-discrimination frameworks. The justice sector also has an important role in combating discrimination by other actors in society. Many countries, for example, have adopted strategies on combatting hate crime involving police, prosecution services and judges. These have included strategies related to fighting racism like in Spain,² Malta³, Italy⁴ Latvia⁵, Belgium,⁶ Greece,⁷ France⁸ and Denmark⁹, and to promote equality between women and men like in Costa Rica¹⁰ and Norway.¹¹ In a few cases, the strategies are complemented by action plans providing further guidance for implementation. A range of recurring measures identified within various strategies are the following: targeted training and capacity building initiatives; the development of tools to support the identification, handling and recording of hate crimes; measures to enhance reporting; mechanisms for disaggregated data collection and data analysis; the establishment of specialised police units; the establishment of multi-stakeholder co-ordination mechanisms. Some strategies also have targeted measures for addressing hate speech, including hate spread on social media.¹²

Elsewhere, justice-related considerations are typically addressed indirectly through policies targeting internal processes within public institutions, such as workforce representativity and ethics, rather than directly tackling discrimination or bias affecting people benefiting from public services. For example, Finland's 'Equality planning' tool focuses on organisational practices such as recruitment, management, and communication within institutions (Equality.fi, n.d.^[18]). Finally, all countries have at least one supporting structure, such as equality bodies, ombud's offices, advisory committees, or specialised agencies. Such structures play an important role in monitoring discrimination and supporting victims within justice institutions.

While strategies often aim to ensure equal treatment before the law, there is often scope to strengthen efforts to measure justice outcomes for specific population groups and monitor the extent to which these strategies effectively reduce disparities in practice. Relevant indicators could include differences in case duration, access to representation or treatment during proceedings (Box 3.3). Embedding this objective more explicitly within justice strategies would help ensure that the necessary capacities, resources, and monitoring mechanisms are mobilised to support their effective implementation and assess progress over time.

Box 3.3. Measuring justice outcomes for specific groups

Disparities in justice outcomes for ethnic minority groups in the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) has developed a questionnaire to measure access to justice in court services, enabling the identification of potential disparities in justice outcomes across population groups. The data collected points out to systemic disparities affecting people from ethnic minority groups across both criminal and civil justice. Data from the divorce cases involving ethnic minority applicants take longer, averaging 15 weeks compared to 11 weeks at the interim stage, and 25 weeks compared to 22 weeks at the end stage. In criminal justice, disparities are evident in sentencing outcomes, with average custodial sentence lengths of 18.4 months for White defendants, compared to 32.2 months for Asian defendants, 28.6 months for Black defendants, and 22.9 months for defendants from mixed ethnic groups, according to Ministry of Justice accredited official statistics.

Disparities in sentencing outcomes for First Nations people in Australia's criminal justice system

In Australia, research has highlighted disparities in criminal justice system outcomes for First Nations peoples. Although they comprise less than 4% of the population, they account for approximately 36% of the prison population. Disparities are particularly evident in sentencing outcomes between First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are significantly more likely to “be charged with criminal offences”, 12.5 times more likely to “receive a sentence of imprisonment”, more likely to “receive a short sentence of imprisonment” and less likely to “receive a community-based sentence”. The Australian government has acknowledged the role of systemic racism in contributing to this overrepresentation, and through its *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* supports community-led approaches and joined-up partnership across the justice sector to improve justice outcomes for First Nations people.

Source: (OECD, 2024^[19]), (Government of Australia, 2025^[20]), (Government of Australia, 2025^[20]), (Government of Australia, 2017^[21]).

For formal equality to translate into people's experiences and outcomes, a robust framework for collecting and analysing disaggregated justice data including demographic information is essential. Along this line, the Slovak Republic has introduced legal obligations for the national statistical office to collect sex-disaggregated data and data on social and demographic characteristics. This includes the indicator of equality between women and men that addresses topics such as criminality, violence, justice. Costa Rica has made efforts to develop statistics incorporating sociodemographic variables that allow the identification of user characteristics, with institutional support from the Standing Committee that monitors the application of the Law against Domestic Violence and the Law on Criminalisation, as well as the Technical Secretariat for Gender and Access to Justice, which documents and analyses cases of violence against women. Some countries have also established policy tools to assess how legislation and policies affect different groups, thereby preventing unintended inequalities. Notable examples include Canada's Gender-Based Analysis

Plus and the Netherlands's policy compass (*beleidskompas*), which integrates equality impact assessments into policymaking procedures.

Looking at the justice sector specifically, many countries have developed training programmes on topics such as human rights, discrimination and bias for justice actors, including judges, prosecutors, and police officers. These broader training programmes vary in scope and approach, ranging from more comprehensive and institutionalised programmes to more targeted initiatives focused on professional conduct and ethical behaviour. The judicial council programme of Ireland, for instance, includes modules on unconscious bias, judicial conducts, and courtroom dynamics as well as specialised workshops to reduce re-traumatisation of victims. In Belgium, the Judicial Training Institute and the public equality institution Unia, deliver modules for police and magistrates on recognising, recording and handling hate crimes. In Canada, the National Judicial Institute provides training on judicial ethics, preventing wrongful convictions and addressing stereotypes in cases such as intimate partner violence, and the Black Justice Strategy provides for mandatory training in anti-Black racism and cultural competence for the federal public service. In France, the Ministry of Justice, following recommendations from the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH), has introduced training on the judicial treatment of discrimination and hate-related offences. The interministerial delegation for the fight against racism (DILCRAH) also conducts trainings within schools for police and magistrates. The Judicial Diversity and Inclusion Strategy of the United Kingdom involves training across the judiciary and initiatives such as reverse mentoring scheme pairing judges with legal professionals from diverse backgrounds. Broader initiatives to promote professionalism and awareness on this issue includes specific guidance for judges and judicial staff such as the *Guide to dignified treatment for access to justice* in Dominican Republic, which includes practical tools to ensure respectful and non-discriminatory treatment of people within the justice system.

Within justice systems, countries have also established specialised courts or procedures aim to address common forms of discrimination. For example, Canada and Australia have established indigenous courts and restorative programmes to address cultural bias that sometimes may lead to applying norms or assumptions that disadvantage indigenous defendants. These alternative to traditional courts encourages participation in dispute resolution processes and enhance perceived fairness among communities. In Canada, 'Gladue' reports, helping judges understanding the specific circumstances of an Indigenous offender, are often requested once the court determines the accused is Indigenous. Both countries also have introduced health and wellness courts, as well as family and domestic violence courts. In the former, particular attention is given to avoiding the criminalisation of health-related behaviour and to preventing misinterpretation of conduct linked to mental health conditions. In the latter, these specialised courts seek to address bias that can lead to the minimisation of domestic violence or the blaming of victims. Similarly, Spain and Costa Rica have established specialised courts for violence against women, where trained staff support judges to ensure a less harmful experience for victims. In addition, the Costa Rican judiciary has established several observatories and dedicated commissions such as the 'Observatory on Gender Violence against Women and Access to Justice', the 'Access to Justice Commission', and specialised sub-committees for indigenous people, older persons, afro-descendants, and victims of discrimination.

Alternatively, some countries have developed mechanisms to tailor justice processes to specific groups that are often discriminated or negatively impacted by unconscious bias. Colombia developed an ethnic approach to justice with a dedicated website offering information on justice relating to ethnic peoples and tools to improve access to justice and bring justice services closer to this specific group. Lastly, the United Kingdom has a dedicated portal with guidance on how to make a discrimination claim and what to show in court, thereby improving access to justice for victims of discrimination and strengthening the enforcement of equality legislation (Citizens Advice, n.d.^[22]).

Understanding the legal needs and justice problems of people, businesses and communities

From a people-centred perspective, the primary purpose of the justice system is to protect rights and help people, businesses and communities resolve their justice problems fairly and effectively. This requires ensuring that people can access support services and appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms whenever they experience a justice problem. To deliver satisfactory outcomes, a prerequisite is therefore understanding the legal needs and justice problems people, communities and businesses encounter, how they attempt to resolve them, the outcomes they achieve and how they experience the overall resolution process. This empirical knowledge enables policymakers to design targeted and effective responses, prioritise issues that require the most attention, and ensure that no one is left behind.

Box 3.4. Indicator 2: The justice system makes regular and rigorous efforts to understand the legal needs and justice problems of people, businesses and communities

- a. The legal needs and justice problems of people, businesses and communities are assessed and monitored, through legal needs surveys.
- b. Research is done or other efforts are undertaken to assess and monitor the most common legal needs and justice problems for specific groups.
- c. Mechanisms exist to ensure that the data and evidence on legal needs and justice problems is translated into preventative action and/or structural solutions.

Source: (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[1]).

The legal needs and justice problems of people, businesses and communities are assessed and monitored through legal needs surveys and efforts are undertaken to assess and monitor the most common legal needs and justice problems for specific groups

Justice problems faced by people or businesses often remain invisible until they reach a formal dispute resolution mechanism. Yet, many are never brought before courts, tribunals or other formal justice institutions. Instead, they may be resolved informally, addressed through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, solved with the support of a first-line justice service provider or remain unresolved (Sandefur, 2019^[23]). To ensure that justice systems truly support people, businesses and communities in resolving their justice problems, justice system should be proactive in understanding these justice problems and the legal needs they may involve. These efforts should be regular, rigorous and lead to a systematic mapping and monitoring, including through tools such as legal needs surveys. Complementary research and other methods to gather insights may also be valuable in helping to capture perspectives and experiences that surveys may not fully reflect, such as the most common legal needs and justice problems for specific population groups (Indicator 2.a, 2.b.).

Legal needs surveys are the gold standard used in many OECD and non-OECD countries to understand how peoples' justice issues arise, how they are experienced, the pathways people take to resolve them, and the outcome achieved, including levels of satisfaction. They provide a unique view of how the justice system responds to people's needs and provides a range of sources of help for people to resolve their problems. In contrast to institutional data, they gather data directly from people, focusing on the perspectives of individuals, or in some cases households, SMEs and organisations facing justice problems, rather than on justice institutions or professionals. This distinction is important because relying only on institutional data provide a partial picture of legal needs and justice problems, those that reach formal

institutions and may overlook those that are not recognised as legal, remain unresolved, are addressed through informal mechanisms, or never result in assistance seeking (Pleasence and Balmer, 2014^[24]; Sandefur, 2016^[25]; Sandefur, 2019^[23]; Albiston and Sandefur, 2013^[26]). Furthermore, legal needs surveys are distinct from crime victimisation or offending surveys (conducted in countries like Sweden) (Brå, 2026^[27]), and often their main focus is on civil issues such as family, commercial and administrative problems although some legal needs surveys or stand-alone surveys cover criminal justice (OECD/Open Society Foundations, 2019^[28]).

Legal needs surveys thus provide a comprehensive picture of people's efforts to seek and access justice. They enable the quantification of problems across populations, mapping of patterns of problem resolving behaviour, and, when conducted regularly, allow to identify behaviour and outcomes over time. They also help identifying mismatches between people's needs and the justice services offered and, in some recent surveys provide insight into levels of legal capability (including legal understanding, awareness of services, legal confidence, etc.) and trust in the justice system, as well as the outcomes it produces for people. As such, they are increasingly viewed as an important tool for policymakers to identify gaps and priorities in justice policies (OECD/Open Society Foundations, 2019^[28]).

The first legal needs surveys were conducted in the 1930s and their use has expanded considerably in recent decades (OECD/Open Society Foundations, 2019^[28]). They are now relatively common worldwide, and among the 27 countries considered for this report, four countries (Canada, Colombia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) have conducted at least one survey in the past 20 years (see Table 3.1). In all of the four countries, legal needs survey has been conducted regularly: periodically in Canada, every two years in Colombia, every five years in the Netherlands and every three years in the United Kingdom (Government of the United Kingdom, 2024^[29]).

Box 3.5. The Netherlands' periodic legal needs survey

The Netherlands is among the first OECD countries to have institutionalised the regular conduct of legal needs surveys. Since 2003, The Research and Data Centre (WODC) of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security conducts a nationally representative legal needs survey (*Geschiedslechtsdelta*) every five years. This time-series design provides a unique empirical basis for the analysis of long-term trends in justice problem prevalence, pathways and outcomes, including for specific socio-demographic groups. The fifth and latest iteration of the survey, covering the period 2020-2024, includes several figures illustrating trends over time, with data points for 2003, 2009, 2014, 2019 and 2024.

Since the first legal needs survey in 2003, the methodology of the survey has evolved to refine the classification of problems and capture further insights. For example, the 2024 survey introduced questions to specifically assess legal capability, identify the factors that impact it, and understand how it influences the actions people take when facing justice problems; as well as questions on the use of online information.

The Netherlands also conduct ad-hoc studies to complement insights on people's legal needs and justice problems and their experience with the justice system. Recently published research further examined obstacles people encounter when addressing their justice problems, and the legal needs of specific groups such as SMEs, people in vulnerable circumstances, and justice problems and discrimination in the Caribbean Netherlands.

This recurring legal needs survey is widely recognised by stakeholders as a major source of evidence to inform justice policies. The 2024 survey was presented to the Dutch Parliament as a 'valuable contribution' that will be 'taken into account in the individual programmes aimed at strengthening access to justice'.

Source: (WODC, 2026^[30]).

General population surveys do not always adequately capture the perspectives of groups with specific needs who may be underrepresented in surveys 'samples or simply overlooked. Complementary research is therefore essential to provide in-depth insights into the experiences of specific population groups, people leaving in particular areas, or SMEs. Once a higher prevalence of problems has been identified among a specific group, or mismatches between their legal needs and the justice services provided by the system observed, qualitative studies or targeted legal needs surveys can be used to collect additional data on specific issues and gaining a more granular understanding of how to interpret existing data, so as to better inform policy.

Along this line, in addition to its general legal needs survey, Canada has conducted a series of qualitative studies on serious justice problems focusing on groups such as older adults in Ontario, immigrants in diverse regions, Chinese Canadians in selected areas, the 'métis' community, 'urban' African Canadians, people with disabilities in across several regions, etc. (Government of Canada, n.d.^[31]) Similarly, in the Netherlands, the general periodic legal needs survey has been complemented by ad-hoc studies targeting SMEs, people in vulnerable circumstances, and those leaving in the Caribbean Netherlands (WODC, 2023^[32]). In Colombia, two complementary surveys were conducted to capture private sector's perceptions and experiences of accessing justice: one targeting 30 large companies and another covering a sample of 301 large, medium, small and micro-sized enterprises (Botero, Luna Blanco and Sánchez-Mejía, 2024^[33]). Justice needs at local level are also analysed through a territorial and participatory diagnostic process led by the Local Justice Systems (*Sistemas Locales de Justicia*) a government-led, community-based co-ordination mechanism that brings together public institutions, local authorities, and civil society. In the United Kingdom, the Legal Services Board conducted complementary research on SMEs, as well as on individuals with attention to demographic characteristics, as well as variables such as income-levels and disability.

To date, there is only a limited number of legal needs surveys that have been conducted specifically on SMEs across OECD and non-OECD countries (Herrero and Henderson, 2004^[34]; Herrero and Puente, 2007^[35]). Existing evidence suggests that SMEs struggle with challenges preventing them from effectively using justice services, including limited information availability, administrative complexity, and high costs. Unlike larger firms or consumers, SMEs often lack adequate legal resources and protections, which may lead them to avoid formal legal action and rely on suboptimal and informal resolution methods. Unmet legal needs among SMEs have different consequences than those affecting individuals. Findings from the UK Legal Services Board's survey shows, for example, that legal issues most commonly result in lost income, but also lead to additional costs (e.g., insurance), the inability to complete scheduled work, lost customers or contracts, and an inability to take on new work, among five most common consequences of legal issues (LSB, 2022^[36]). This may in turn discourage investment, limits the innovation potential of SMEs and undermine overall economic stability (OECD, 2025^[37]).

Table 3.1. Identifying the most common legal needs and justice problems

Country name	Legal needs survey	Other research efforts	For specific groups
Australia	×	○○○○	●○○
Belgium	×	○○○○	●○○
Canada	✓	●●●●	●●●
Colombia	✓	●●●○	●●●
Costa Rica	×	○○○○	●●○
Denmark	×	○○○○	○○○
Dominican Republic	×	○○○○	○○○
Finland	×	●●○○	○○○
France	×	●●●○	●○○
Germany	×	●●○○	○○○
Greece	×	○○○○	●○○
Hungary	×	○○○○	●○○
Ireland	×	○○○○	●○○
Italy	×	●●●○	●○○
Latvia	×	○○○○	●○○
Lithuania	×	○○○○	●○○
Malta	×	○○○○	○○○
Netherlands	✓	●●●○	●●○
Norway	×	○○○○	○○○
Poland	×	○○○○	●○○
Slovenia	×	○○○○	○○○
Spain	×	○○○○	●●○
Sweden	×	●●●●	●●○
Switzerland	×	○○○○	○○○
Thailand	×	○○○○	●○○
Türkiye	×	○○○○	●○○
United Kingdom	✓	●●●○	●●●

Note: Assessment of 'legal needs survey' include only regular legal needs surveys conducted by government. This table illustrates countries scorings to the following questions: "Does your country conduct a periodic legal needs survey?", "Are there other efforts to assess and monitor the legal needs and justice problems of people, businesses, and communities?" and "Does the Ministry of Justice or another justice institution conduct research to identify the most common legal needs and justice problems for specific groups". Other research efforts have been evaluated on their scope, frequency, inclusion of specific groups and transparency.

Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

Among countries that do not conduct a legal needs survey, other efforts exist to assess and monitor the most common legal needs and justice problems. For instance, in France, state-led or state-affiliated efforts include a survey from the Ministry of Justice examining the reasons why people do not seek justice to resolve four categories of common conflicts (neighbours disputes, conflicts with a business, disputes between separated/divorced parents over children, and landlord-tenant disputes), and an ombudsperson survey to measure trends in citizens' difficulties in accessing their rights with attention to specific population groups (people under 30; people reporting discrimination; foreign nationals; people with disabilities or activity limitations; unemployed people; people with lower levels of education; residents of rural areas and smaller towns; people aged 70 and over; people experiencing digital exclusion; court users and people who have previously been involved in a legal case) (Government of France, 2020^[38]; 2025^[39]).

Dedicated research on population groups that encounter specific challenges exists in many countries, although they are often limited to a few groups and rarely systematic. Belgium examined the types of justice problems and experience of people living in poverty (SPF Justice/SPP Intégration sociale, 2022^[40]), Sweden's research initiatives targeted women and children victims of violence among others (Government

of Sweden, 2024^[41]), Ireland focused on justice for different groups including at-risk adults (Sage Advocacy, 2023^[42]), Poland analysed judicial needs of people with disability through a dedicated project (Government of Poland, 2022^[43]), and in Spain, several research projects conducted on topics such as racism, well-being of people with disability and discrimination against the Roma community indirectly provided insights on legal needs and justice problems of specific groups. In some countries, judiciaries have set up dedicated research bodies to conduct this targeted research. Examples include the child-friendly adjudication working group in Hungary and the Commission on Access to Justice and its several sub-commissions in Costa Rica (Courts of Hungary, n.d.^[44]), (Poder Judicial de la República de Costa Rica, 2023^[45]). In other countries, research on legal needs and justice problems of the general population have been conducted by external actors like the University of Helsinki in Finland (Obstbaum et al., 2022^[46]), the Victoria Law Foundation in Australia (Balmer et al., 2023^[47]).

Mechanisms exist to ensure that the data and evidence on legal needs and justice problems is translated into preventative action and/or structural solutions

Beyond collecting data and evidence on legal needs and justice problems, developing and implementing mechanisms to translate them into preventative measures is equally important to support service improvements and structural reforms. Notably, the information collected can be used to identify trends and shortcomings. This can ultimately support countries in making policies that “works” for people and to design services that deliver improved outcomes for all. (Indicator 2.c)

While many countries can further strengthen their approaches to conducting legal needs surveys or collecting other types of evidence on legal needs and justice problems, the design of these policies should be accompanied by measures that ensure the resulting data are translated into preventive action and structural solutions. Prevention should be understood in its broadest sense (see Chapter 2). A good understanding of the most common problems people encounter, with particular attention to the population groups most affected, can inform targeted policies aimed at averting avoidable justice problems before they occur (primary prevention). Such evidence can support a shift from reactive responses towards earlier and more holistic approaches. It can serve not only as a diagnostic tool but also as a source of ‘actionable intelligence’, enabling the justice sector to develop responses that are ‘effective, sustainable, and scalable’ (Sandefur and Burnett, 2023^[48]). Evidence on how the justice system can sometimes fall short in helping people resolve their problems, or avoid their escalation, can also guide policies to support people in the early identification of problems and solutions to prevent them from worsening (secondary prevention). Finally, analysing the consequences of justice problems in people’s lives, such as psychological problems, negative consequences on work conditions or on relationships with family, friends or colleagues can also help to mitigate these side effects once a problem has already arisen (tertiary prevention) (OECD/HiiL/WJP, forthcoming^[49]).

To fully leverage evidence to identify priority areas for preventive action, their findings must be communicated clearly and widely. The extent to which policymakers, practitioners and society at large use and act upon them depends on how their relevance and added-value are conveyed. Enhancing findings’ visibility requires drawing not only on formal reports but also on a wider range of formats such as interactive dashboards enabling disaggregation and exploration of data, open data products for further analysis, and plain-language outputs that make findings understandable and usable for non-specialist audiences (Balmer et al., 2023^[47]). Effective dissemination and transparency can help build public support for policy decisions grounded in survey evidence. In turn, this can encourage sustained efforts to assess legal needs and justice problems, leading to progressively deeper and more nuanced understandings of diverse contexts and specificities and therefore policies with better outcomes for people (OECD/Open Society Foundations, 2019^[28]).

3.3. DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PEOPLE-CENTRED LEGAL AND JUSTICE SERVICES

If justice systems are to provide equal access to justice for all, their legal and justice services need to be adapted to the great diversity among people. Providing effective services for people in rural areas requires a different approach than for people living in cities. People with higher education levels and easy access to technology have different needs and expectations than those with lower levels of education and people that experience barriers to using technology.

Services should therefore be designed and implemented in ways that put people, in all their diversity, at the centre. This requires services to be timely, affordable, to use plain language that all people can understand and to deliver fair outcomes. It also requires services to reach all sections of society, including those in remote and rural areas as well as populations that have historically been underserved by justice systems, with processes tailored to different individuals' needs and capabilities.

Designing and delivering such services will require a robust evidence base, with legal needs surveys and other data used not only to highlight the most important justice needs, but to demonstrate which strategies, services, and delivery modes are most appropriate for different population groups. Regular feedback from people and businesses about their experience of justice services, moreover, will be critical to improving service design and delivery.

Designing a continuum of services based on people's legal capabilities and effective resolution of justice problems

Legal capabilities influence people's ability to deal with problems themselves, understand, use, and benefit from advice and assistance and make informed, autonomous decisions about how best to resolve their issues. Limited legal capability can increase vulnerability to legal problems and raise the likelihood that those problems remain unresolved or escalate over time (Pascoe Pleasence, 2019^[50]). For justice services to be meaningful to all, they need to be designed around the diversity of legal capabilities, adapting to the different levels of knowledge and skills that shape how people decide whether and how to engage with the law and justice processes to resolve their problems. People-centred justice therefore requires that governments and justice institutions proactively build robust empirical knowledge about legal capability and use this evidence to evaluate access to justice from the perspective of people and communities, and to guide continuous service improvement.

Box 3.6. Indicator 3: The justice sector designs a continuum of services taking into account people's legal capabilities and effective problem resolution

- a. Justice service design (including online and digital services) is informed by an assessment of legal capabilities of the people experiencing justice problems.
- b. Justice service design is informed by evidence on effective problem resolution.
- c. Justice services are distributed geographically in such a way that people are reasonably able to reach them, including with public transportation.

Source: (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[1]).

Justice service design (including online and digital services) is informed by an assessment of legal capabilities of the people experiencing justice problems

To ensure justice services effectively deliver for people, it is important that the design of justice services is informed by an assessment of the legal capabilities of those who are experiencing justice problems. Legal capability is not just about literacy, but refers also to agency, awareness of laws, understanding of procedures and their costs, and the ability to navigate the system to seek solutions. It also relates to people's cultural convictions and preferences, their knowledge of and opinions about the law and their trust in justice institutions. Therefore, conducting regular and representative surveys or other institutionalised research on these aspects at national or representative level while covering all population groups is crucial. Data collected from the research should also be used systematically to design services (Indicator 3.a).

The Netherlands and the United Kingdom assess legal capability in a relatively robust manner. Legal capability measurements are conducted through broader legal needs survey, with some questions specifically addressing fully or partly the following dimensions: awareness of laws, knowledge of dispute resolution options and costs, understanding of procedures and people's ability to navigate the justice system and seek solutions (WODC, 2026^[30]), (Government of the United Kingdom, 2023^[51]).

Although not in a regular manner, several countries have conducted targeted studies on legal capabilities. In Latvia, a report on 'Access to the Rule of Law' evaluates people's knowledge of where to seek help, with a focus on legal aid services and mention of other processes such as mediation (Government of Latvia, 2020^[52]). It focuses on people at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Findings highlighted limited knowledge of options for seeking justice with 67.4% of people unaware of the possibility to apply to the State Legal Aid Service (JPA) to receive state-funded legal aid and 63% of people never having heard of mediation. In addition, since 2025, the 'Study of the attitude and interaction of the inhabitants of Latvia with the legal process' (Court Administration of Latvia, 2020^[53]) integrates an '*assessment of knowledge and satisfaction with state-provided services*', which reveals low levels of awareness across services: 47% reported not knowing about state-provided legal aid, 63% about state compensation for victims of violence crime, and 71.5% about the existence of helplines.¹³

In many other countries, assessment of legal capability has been conducted by external partners such as academics, NGOs or international organisations. This is the case for example of the 'Public Understanding of Law Survey' conducted by the Victoria Law Foundation in Australia, and the 'Barometer of dispute resolution: residents' attitudes to and experiences with handling disputes' conducted by the University of Antwerp, Belgium, YouGov and the NGO Conlicool. For EU Member countries, data on legal capability have been collected by the World Justice Project as part of broader justice surveys (WJP, 2024^[54]). While these initiatives are valuable and help fill evidence gaps, they should not replace government-led or funded initiatives, which often carry greater institutional legitimacy and are more likely to inform policy making across the justice sector.

The purpose of collecting data on particular needs and legal capabilities is to ensure that service design is informed by evidence and comprehensively reflects the diversity in people's abilities, so that everyone can benefit from justice services on an equal footing. This requires mechanisms or tools to translate legal capability data and broader data on legal needs into service improvement. On the one hand, this involves addressing mismatches between people's capability and the way services are delivered. On the other hand, it can help identify the skills or knowledge gaps that should be strengthened and therefore prioritised for investment in education or other empowerment initiatives (see Empowering people).

The Netherlands regularly uses data on needs and legal capabilities to inform justice services. As mentioned in Chapter I, the *Geschiedbeslechtsdelta* is a well-established tool among justice stakeholders who value its results. Complementary research focusing on specific groups, locations or services provides important insights on people's awareness and understanding of justice services, their ability to access them and resolve their justice problems.¹⁴ Many other organisations contribute to a solid evidence

base on legal needs and service gaps. Some reports have tangible impacts among justice stakeholders that adapt their practices accordingly. For instance, Kifid, the alternative dispute resolution organisation for the financial services sector, has followed up on a recommendation from the Dutch Social and Economic Council (SER) report “Balance and sustainability of alternative dispute resolution for consumer cases” to improve accessibility for the elderly, people with low literacy skills, and non-Dutch speakers (SER, 2023^[55]). The Judiciary also conducts qualitative research to come up with innovative working methods that are tailored to the needs of those seeking justice. Evaluations on how these innovative practices are perceived are published online.

Other countries report using data to inform the design of justice services on an ad-hoc or pilot-level use. Approaches and methodologies vary widely across countries (see Box 3.7). Many initiatives focus on redesigning services for specific categories of users like in Italy where the voluntary support administration (amministrazione di sostegno volontaria) was established for vulnerable and disabled people to be assisted by a person of their choice (Government of Italy, 2024^[56]). Similarly, in Türkiye, data and information collected through a workshop on accessibility of justice allowed to identify the ‘necessity of making websites accessible’ and the need to enhance access to justice for people with disabilities. These findings resulted in adjustments in various websites and the creation video brochures to make them more accessible to people with hearing impairments (Government of Türkiye, 2022^[57]). These efforts sometimes involve collaboration between national and local levels like in Colombia where Local Justice Systems use local evidence on justice problems and barriers to shape services through collaboration between the state and communities (Government of Colombia, 2026^[58]; Government of Italy, 2024^[59]). These examples demonstrate the value of combining quantitative data with users’ experiences and behavioural insights. They also highlight the need to embed such approaches in routine service planning, broaden their application beyond individual projects and assess whether resulting changes improve accessibility, service quality and outcomes. While several countries reported plans, pilots or reforms underway to integrate data into service design, these considerations are important to ensure that such efforts translate into continuous service improvements.

Box 3.7. Using evidence on legal capability to redesign justice services

In British Columbia (**Canada**), the Justice Department’s redesign team conducted five surveys to collect 147 responses from the public, support workers, legal information providers, paralegals, advocates, lawyers, judges, and staff of court registries, Justice Access Centres and Family Justice Centres. The surveys and informal feedback revealed that the previous forms presented users with unnecessary challenges including very long and overwhelming legal concepts, and formatting and design difficult to navigate. Another example of incorporating legal capability considerations into service design is the website of the independent non-profit organisation People’s Law School. Its design reflects how people typically approach and solve justice problems. It is meant to offer content and tools that matches human cognitive patterns, takes into account psychological reality of justice problems and provides practical tools to support problem-solving behaviour.

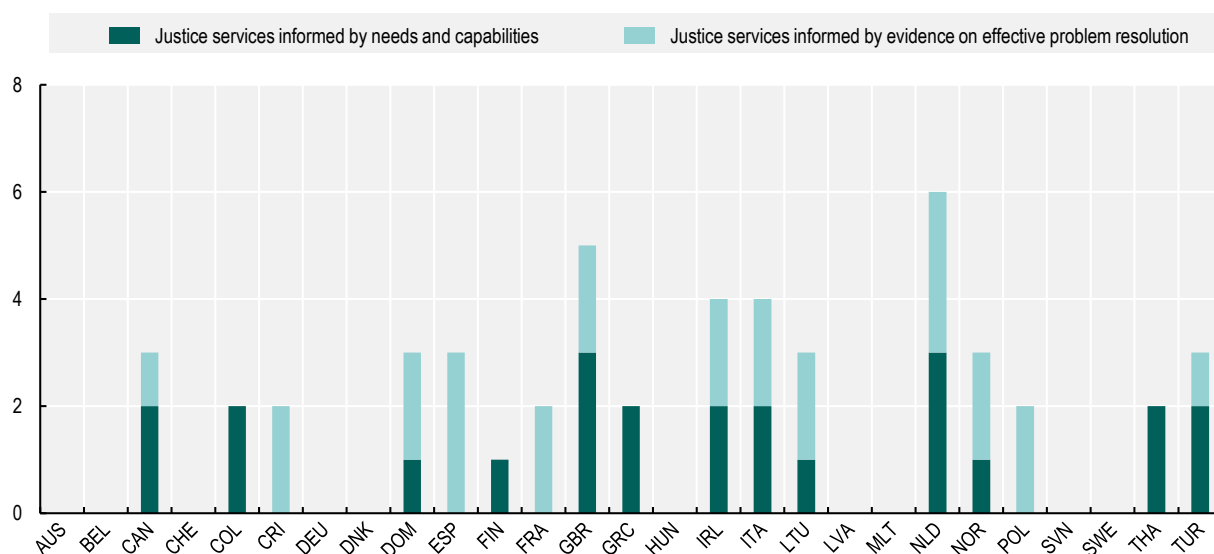
In **Greece**, the ‘Just Closer’ project on child-friendly justice involved participatory research on experiences of children with the justice system. The objective was to uncover the pain points in the justice service, such as why children feel alienated, lost, or feel that the system is focused on punishment rather than rehabilitation. A team of trained “Youth Leaders” and advisors conducted interviews and focus groups with adolescents who were actively involved in criminal proceedings in Greece. Findings from the interviews informed a practical guidance document for professionals working in juvenile criminal justice. The Guide contains recommendations on how to create clear information points and child-friendly rights materials; mandatory specialised training for professionals; child-specific police procedures, integrated case-management and interagency co-operation, etc.

Ireland uses inputs from consultations to inform the design of its justice services. In addition, the Irish Courts Service has been proactive in its efforts to use user research, accessibility audits and behavioural analytics to ensure that its website caters to different levels of legal literacy and digital skills. The Coroner Service reform process gathered experiences of bereaved family and friends through a questionnaire. These insights were supplemented by inputs from stakeholders involved in supporting the service, collected through 115 questionnaire responses, 42 written submissions and 24 bilateral meetings. The findings informed a range of service-improvements measures such as better communication with bereaved families, improved web-based information, explainers in text/video, proactive outreach at key stages, family liaison supports, bereavement support, consistency in coronial practices, improved inquest venues, and less adversarial processes.

In **Thailand**, the Justice by Design Project used an eight-week workshop to identify user needs and improve services based on a 'design thinking' and 'empathetic' approach. The initiative sought to better understand users' experiences and pain points, leading to the development of prototypes for more accessible online court services and accessible websites. The workshop brought together a diverse group of 42 participants, including judges, lawyers, court officials, citizens and students, who worked in teams to identify specific challenges within the judicial system and propose innovative solutions. The winning proposal was a set of recommendations to improve website accessibility, which were piloted to the Office of the Judiciary (Court of Justice) website. These included adjustments to font size, contrast and greyscale to enhance usability and readability for people with low vision.

Source: (Government of Greece, n.d.^[60]), (Government of the Netherlands, 2024^[61]), (Government of Ireland, 2024^[62]), (UNDP Thailand, 2023^[63]).

Figure 3.3. The use of data to inform justice services



Note: This graph illustrates countries' scorings to the questions: 'To what extent is the design of the justice services provided by the key justice institutions and service providers, informed by data of the particular needs and legal capabilities of people experiencing legal needs and justice problems?' and 'Is the design of justice services informed by evidence on effective problem resolution?'.

Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

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Justice service design is informed by evidence on effective problem resolution

While data and evidence on people's needs and legal capabilities provide valuable insights into how to adapt justice services to respond to the differences among users, achieving better outcomes requires identifying, sharing and implementing what works to prevent and resolve specific justice problems. These should also be taken into consideration to inform the design of justice services and integrated across multiple justice institutions and service providers in order to redesign services (Indicator 3.b).

Evidence of effective problem solving can be drawn from various fields, including legal studies, behavioural and other social science research, conflict resolution research, or psychological research into emotions such as stress and grief. Failing to incorporate insights from these fields, as well as lessons from other sectors and jurisdictions, increases the risk that services will continue to be shaped primarily by the perspectives and needs of justice institutions, rather than by a people-centred approach which invests in what works and jettisons ineffective approaches.

Systematically incorporating behavioural evidence throughout the policy cycle, from problem definition and policy design to implementation and evaluation, can help ensure that policies are grounded in a realistic understanding of how people make decisions, seek help and resolve problems in practice, rather than assuming perfectly rational behaviour. In this regard, the OECD's Observatory of Public Sector Innovation practical guide *LOGIC* provides a useful tool for embedding behavioural thinking into policy development and implementation (OECD OPSI, 2024^[64]).

In most countries, there is scope to strengthen the use of evidence on effective problem resolution in the design of justice services. This reflects limitations in available evidence on what approach 'works' best in resolving justice problems. Research and development initiatives dedicated to collecting evidence on, designing, innovating and implementing at scale "what works" in terms of outcomes for people, including best current professional practice, could be strengthened in most countries. Such efforts should apply across all types of justice services and could contribute to the development of evidence-based guidelines and other mechanisms to support the systematic implementation of evidence-based approaches.

Although there is room to improve how evidence collected is systematically translated into learning and improvement across the justice system, the Netherlands is among the leading countries in this area. The country reports various initiatives conducted by several justice stakeholders in this regard. In the recent years, the country has conducted a wide range of pilot projects to improve its services, including the legal aid desk pilot projects. An alternative dispute resolution organisation, the SKGZ, has also developed a 'responsive working' approach which is based on scientifically proven methods from conflict resolution practice and scientific insights into procedural justice. Spain has also taken significant steps to strengthen the use of evidence on effective problem resolution in the framework of ongoing reforms on alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. This included an assessment of the effectiveness and impact of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms with an analysis of difficulties faced by users and proposals to enhance the tool's usability.¹⁵

In other cases, evidence exists but their usage for informing policy-design remains limited to specific areas of justice or initiatives. In Ireland, the work of the country's Courts Service and Legal Aid Board is informed by evidence on effective problem resolution, including socio-legal research, user consultations and feedback, international good practice, and case data. In Costa Rica, the prison system has used empirical evidence from international studies in criminology, psychology, social sciences, and law to design a risk management model to reduce violence in prisons. In Italy, the Gender and Domestic Violence Observatory functions as a working group operating in constant dialogue with the Superior Council of the Judiciary and the Superior School of the Judiciary. It monitors violence against women through the analysis of judicial and statistical data, identifies critical issues in judicial activity, collects evidence on effective organisational practices and proposes technical and regulatory improvements for better preventing and combating domestic violence (Government of the Netherlands, 2024^[65]). In Poland, pilot projects focused on better

preventing domestic violence by improving co-ordinating at local level, including with justice stakeholders (IWS, 2024^[66]). In the United Kingdom, the progressive introduction of compulsory mediation for small claims has been informed by successful results in terms of number of mediations conducted, agreements reached and improvements in court efficiency and timeliness. Similarly, in the Dominican Republic, evidence on the effectiveness of alternative dispute resolution for contributing to faster and more satisfactory outcomes led to recent progress in integrating non-adversarial methods such as mediation, conciliation, and arbitration into its judicial processes. Moreover, the country is gradually incorporating behavioural and psychological sciences into judicial practices.

Justice services are distributed geographically in such a way that people are reasonably able to reach them, including with public transport

Recent years have seen a trend towards increasing the efficiency of justice systems by concentrating their presence in larger towns and cities and moving services online (Byrom, 2024^[67]; Branco, 2019^[68]; Helberger, 2025^[69]). As well as leaving people in rural areas more distant from justice services, this also poses challenges to those who have difficulty using online services, or prefer other channels. Moreover, there is evidence that when courts move, adjacent legal and justice services also leave the more remote areas and towns. In England and Wales, for example, cuts to publicly funded legal advice and representation have created what the Law Society refers to as “advice deserts”, where people are unable to access the justice services they need due to those services’ disappearance or relocation to more populated areas (Byrom, 2024^[67]). This can have serious consequences for people living in rural areas. Beyond accessibility issues, research shows that people living in rural area rely on local institutions not only for formal services but also for trust, familiarity and informal guidance. Rural courts are embedded in local social relations, and justice stakeholders share an understanding of the unique needs and challenges of rural settings that facilitate communication with the community and helps make justice more navigable and responsive for people (Statz, 2022^[70]).

Accordingly, an important consideration in the design of justice services is ensuring that they are available to all those who need them. The geographical distribution of these services should be made in such a way that they are physically accessible within the entire territory of a country, including with public transportation. This requires the collection of data on accessibility and the implementation of adequate measures to address identified gaps (Indicator 3.c).

Governments and justice ministries can use various methods to assess whether justice services are geographically accessible, including by:

- Contrasting key service locations with relevant population sizes in different geographic regions
- Measuring the average distance or time that people need to travel to their nearest appropriate justice service
- Assessing service location and accessibility by public transport, including to areas of target populations

Most countries report using at least one method to assess whether justice services are geographically distributed in a way that enables access. However, much of the evidence provided relates to efforts to deliver justice services online and are captured under Indicator 5 (see. A governance infrastructure that enables people-centred justice). While these measures can help counterbalancing geographic distance and improving accessibility, they should not replace efforts to ensure justice services must remain physically accessible within a reasonable distance and well connected by public transports so that all individuals can effectively reach them.

Some countries analyse justice data alongside demographic and spatial information to identify areas where people cannot reasonably reach justice services. This enables them to adapt how and where justice services are delivered, for example by optimising court locations, establishing local justice hubs, or

deploying mobile courts. In Poland, the Statistical Guide to the Justice System (ISWS) compiles data on case volumes, court workloads and demographics, allowing the Ministry of Justice to compare caseloads with population factors across regions. The country also reported that court infrastructure modernisation projects analyse public transport availability and accessibility, including transport links to court buildings, particularly for older people, people with disabilities and residents of rural areas. Other considerations include the distance and travel time required for residents to reach the nearest appropriate judicial institutions. These factors are also assessed when deciding whether to establish or abolish some judicial services, which was the case for example in 2024 when a land and mortgage register division was transferred from the District Court in Będzin to the District Court in Czeladź.

Spatial and demographic evidence can inform planning across justice services, including decisions about infrastructure, legal aid coverage and the location of courts and service points. Costa Rica, for example, reported analysing geographical location of prisons in relation to population density, demand for prison places, and the location of prisoners according to their place of origin or proximity to family members. According to the country, the results are used to inform the construction of new units and the reorganisation of regional services to optimise territorial coverage. The Dominican Republic uses population and geographic data from the National Statistics Office (ONE) to analyse demographic distribution and inform infrastructure planning. Diagnostic mapping exercises have also been conducted to evaluate the availability and accessibility of legal aid services for victims of crime, including geographic coverage and institutional capacity. According to the country, these assessments have informed the expansion of virtual courtrooms, the creation of new judicial districts, and the development of integrated service centres for vulnerable populations. In the Netherlands, the Legal Aid Desk has developed a new accommodation concept based on the principle of being ‘close to those seeking justice’, with ‘the size of our (potential) target group in a region determining the locations of service points’ (Het Juridisch Loket, 2024^[71]). The strategy also mentions that service location is selected with consideration to accessibility by public transport. Türkiye also reports considering public transport available when deciding on service location.

Where distance or limited institutional presence constrains access, locally integrated service hubs and mobile delivery models can bring justice services closer to the communities that need them. In Colombia, the ‘*Casas de Justicia*’ (Justice Houses) have been established in areas where access to justice is most constrained to ensure territorial coverage of justice services across the country. Justice Houses are typically located in low-income urban areas, rural regions and zones characterised by social conflict or limited institutional presence, where geographic and institutional distance to justice services is greater. Each ‘Justice House’ brings together in one location more than 17 national justice institutions, municipal services and community-level actors. By concentrating free-of-charge services in a single, locally accessible location, the programme reduces the need for travel and facilitates access to justice. Complementary initiatives include mobile outreach (“Justice in your Neighborhood”), which brings justice services directly to the most vulnerable and marginalised communities. Similarly, in Canada, remote communities are identified using Statistics Canada’s Index of Remoteness, which classifies each populated community according to its level of remoteness relative to population centres of at least 1 000 people (Burczycka, 2022^[72]). Additionally, in some territories, courts travel to small and isolated areas, bringing together a judge, clerk, court reporter, prosecutor, and at least one defence attorney. Hearings are held in local facilities, and interpreters are engaged where necessary to facilitate access, reducing the need for individuals to travel long distances.

In some countries this exercise is embedded into judicial administration legislation or in laws governing specific justice professions. Thailand’s Mediation Act¹⁶ allows communities to establish mediation centre upon request by at least five individuals, enabling services to be located in places convenient for local communities. In Türkiye, the Law on the Establishment, Duties and Jurisdiction of First-Instance Judicial Courts and Regional Courts of Justice¹⁷ requires geographic conditions and workload to be considered when establishing civil and criminal courts. In the Netherlands, the Judicial Organisation Act (Government of the Netherlands, 2011^[73]) and The Law on the Judicial Division (Wet op de rechterlijke indeling)

(Government of the Netherlands, 2023^[74]) determine the location and competence of courts, which the country reports are designed to ensure accessibility for the public, the proportional distribution of justice and the possibilities for efficient business operation. Lithuania reports using a specific methodology for determining the location and number of notaries required in a municipality, also considering the geographical, economic, and social characteristics of the municipality.¹⁸ The Lithuanian Chamber of Notaries may appoint a notary from a neighbouring municipality within a 60km radius to provide services to residents of municipalities where no local notary is available.

A couple of countries report using research and analytical studies to better understand how the location of justice services affects access to justice. For example, Italy referred to the study ‘Economic and Financial Issues: The effects of the reform of the judicial system on the functioning of civil justice’ (2025) (Mocetti, Pesenti and Roma, 2025^[75]), which found that the 2013-2014 reform, involving the closure and merger of smaller courts, increased the costs of access to justice and discouraged the initiation of new proceedings. In the Netherlands, a study undertaken by Divosa identified several ‘white spots’, referring to regions with limited availability of justice services. According to the country, this led to the development of a nation-wide social legal map intended to ‘make the services easy to find’ (Divosa, 2025^[76]).

Delivering a continuum of justice services and consistently improving services based on people's experiences

Responding to the full range of legal needs and justice problems that people encounter requires a justice sector that offers a continuum of legal and justice-related services that are of high quality, available, and accessible. These include formal and informal justice services such as judicial services, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, ombuds services, and other community-based and local justice services. Designing these services with close attention to the most common problems people face is essential to ensure they are well-tailored, responsive to real needs, and capable of delivering concrete improvements in outcomes for people.

Box 3.8. Indicator 4: The justice sector delivers a continuum of affordable and effective services, continuously improving them based on people's experiences

- a. Justice services address the legal needs and justice problems of people, businesses and communities, and in particular consider the most common justice problems.
- b. Justice services ask for feedback about people's experiences with the service, as well as their assessment of the fairness of the process and the outcome.

Source: (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[1]).

Justice services address the legal needs and justice problems of people, businesses and communities, and in particular consider the most common justice problems

Justice systems are expected to deliver a continuum of appropriate, proportionate, affordable, effective, and responsive services. To achieve this, justice services should be designed to systematically address the most common justice problems identified in legal needs surveys (such as family, employment or land disputes). A good practice in this regard includes the use of specialised dispute resolution mechanisms such as courts, tribunals, ADRs, administrative complaints mechanisms and community justice for specific types of disputes. In countries with strong community-based justice traditions, a significant share of justice problems is resolved through community and administrative mechanisms. The prevalence of different

types of justice problems should also be taken into consideration to ensure they are scaled to meet actual demand (Indicator 4.a).

While most countries provide a broad range of justice services intended to address diverse justice needs, only a limited number conduct legal needs surveys that would provide evidence on whether these services are aligned with the most common justice problems people face. The United Kingdom is one of such examples. Through the *Legal Problems and Resolutions* survey and the *Individual Legal Needs* survey (LSB, 2024^[77]) it collects data on the common problems experienced by people. According to the country, this data is used to tailor justice services and pathways to specific problem types. For example, employment disputes can be handled by tribunals with a conciliation gateway, money claims through different procedural tracks, including telephone mediation for small claims, and family disputes through a Mediation Information and Assessment Meeting (MIAM) gateway. Similarly, Colombia reports addressing the main family and domestic violence justice problems through specific administrative authorities, the Family Police Stations (Comisarias Familia), which adopt a territorial, differential, and gender-based approach, and a national oversight organisation, the National Institute of Family and Family Services (IVC GIT).

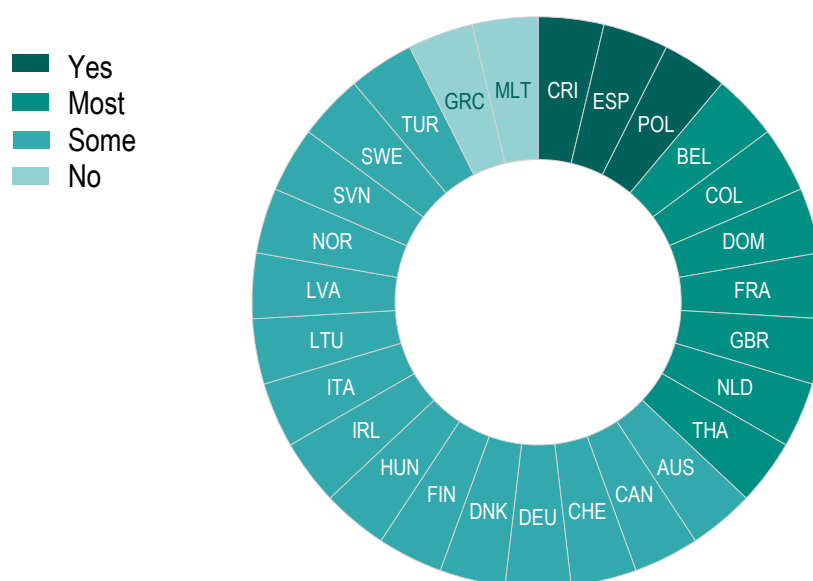
Across countries, uneven delivery of justice services emerged as the most commonly reported challenge. People in rural areas or low-income groups, for example, often have limited access to justice services. As the use of online services expands, investment in digital infrastructure should enable integrated, people-centred service delivery across channels, ensuring that people can access justice through the channel that best fits their needs and circumstances (see A governance infrastructure that enables people-centred justice). All countries, including those that already conduct legal needs surveys, would benefit from more concretely linking existing services with needs. Implementing a robust and continuous feedback loop for learning and improvement in the design of justice services would also be valuable.

Justice services ask for feedback about people's experiences with the service, as well as their assessment of the fairness of the process and the outcome

Ministries of justice and justice service providers need insights into how people experience their justice journeys in order to be able to improve them. Collecting regular user feedback across the justice system is therefore essential, and can include feedback about people's experience of with justice services, and about their perceptions of the fairness of processes and outcomes. Such mechanism enables service providers and policy makers to identify and strengthen weak points of justice services thereby ensuring they become more people-centred. Importantly, when feedback mechanisms lead to continuous improvement of services, they give users a sense of agency by actively involving them in shaping a more responsive justice system (Indicator 4.b).

People-centred justice requires that people experience both the process and outcome of a justice journey as fair, regardless of whether they win or lose the case. As discussed in Chapter 2, effective resolution and fair processes are distinct but interrelated justice outcomes. People may regard a problem as resolved even where the process was costly or unfair. Conversely, a fair process may not result in a lasting resolution. Assessing both dimensions is therefore essential. People should feel that the problem has been resolved and that, satisfied with the solution, they can continue with their lives. It is also important to people that they are heard during processes, treated with dignity, able to participate meaningfully and able to understand the process and reasons for decisions. These experiences can influence whether people consider their problem resolved, accept the outcome and are able to move forward.

Figure 3.4. Collecting feedback within justice services



Note: This graph illustrates countries' scorings to the question: 'Do justice services collect feedback from people about their experiences?'.
Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/jge2ym>

Three countries, Costa Rica, Spain and Poland collect feedback systematically across all or nearly all justice services, with regular, institutionalised mechanisms designed to inform improvements. Seven countries collect feedback across most major services, but not system-wide, while in 15 countries feedback is collected but fragmented or limited to certain projects, institutions, or pilots (see Figure 3.4).

Feedback on user experiences can be collected through satisfaction surveys administered by key justice institutions, often legal aid services and courts. Many countries report offering people the option to raise complaints about services online. However, such options should not diminish the importance of establishing proactive feedback mechanisms that are regular, institutionalised and designed to inform improvements. In Costa Rica, several satisfaction surveys assess user's perception of justice services at both justice and governmental level (see Box 3.9). These include an annual survey on service quality and satisfaction of the judiciary conducted by the Judiciary's Service Oversight Office (*Poder Judicial's Contraloría de Servicios*), and regular survey on restorative justice specifically (*Poder Judicial de Costa Rica, 2023^[78]*). The Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic also conduct a national survey on public services' perception which includes a module on justice that addresses perception of length of proceedings, trust in judges, perception that the services are too bureaucratic and knowledge of online proceedings.

Box 3.9. Satisfaction surveys on judicial services in Costa Rica

The Judiciary's Service Oversight Office (*Poder Judicial's Contraloría de Servicios*) conducts annual surveys of people's satisfaction with judicial services. Some dimensions covered by the survey, with data from 2023, include:

- Waiting time before being received (60% rated good or very good; 21% rated regular) with 23% of people reporting a waiting duration of 5-15 minutes.
- Staff willingness to assist: 42% very good; 29% good.
- Ease of contacting the institution and maintaining communication: 61% good or very good; 20% regular.
- Ease of finding information: 73% good or very good.
- Perception of how the procedure was completed: 43% indicate that procedure was completed correctly and without errors.
- Satisfaction in the interaction with judicial staff: including perception of the judicial staff capacity to support (50% stated that they demonstrated very good knowledge and mastery of their roles in providing the service), whether judicial staff used clear, simple language without technical terms or difficult words (55% rated it as very good); whether judicial staff showed kindness and respect during service (59% rated it as very good); and whether judicial staff showed interest in the user's problem and in resolving it (49% rated it as very good).
- Satisfaction with physical infrastructures: including distribution of spaces, privacy, and access to infrastructure (89% of people evaluate access to infrastructure as very good or good).
- Overall satisfaction with the service: 16% report being very satisfied and 57% satisfied.
- Satisfaction with the length of proceedings, reasons why people believe processes are lengthy (most people responded high demand in justice services) and length that people feel acceptable for the judiciary to resolve a case depending on area of law (in all cases the majority of people responded "less than a year").

The survey gathers user profile data that allows for disaggregated analyses including sex, service access channel, belonging to specific population groups (such as older persons, migrants, and persons with disabilities), place of residence (main urban area or outside), type of procedure (e.g., submission of documents, requests, official letters, appeals, legal motions, attendance at hearings, information requests, lawsuits, or criminal record certificates) and area of law. It also collects information on why people accessed the service (50% submit a document/request/official letter/appeal/legal motion), the channel they used (54% in-person, 39% by e-mail) and the reason why people come in-person. Half of people believe the in-person service is more efficient. Other reasons cited are that they think they will receive better service, or that their need can only be carried out in person.

Source: (Costa Rica's Judiciary Service Oversight Office (Contraloría de Servicios del Poder Judicial de Costa Rica), 2023^[79]).

In addition, measuring user experience was one of the key elements of the 2024 project '*Metodología para la Evaluación de Servicios del Sistema Judicial Costarricense*' that aimed at developing a methodology for evaluating justice services. It included four dimensions in relation to people's experiences: response capacity (timeliness, access), technical quality, tangibility (facilities), interaction (treatment, communication). The methodology mentions online surveys, QR code surveys, and email feedback forms among the tools to collect these experiences (Poder Judicial de Costa Rica, 2024^[80]).

In many countries, feedback is collected across most major services although system-wide efforts could be reinforced. The use of satisfaction surveys on government services, including justice, as well as judicial services specifically is widespread. Thailand uses both instruments while in Belgium people's opinion, preferences and satisfaction on judicial services and the judicial staff is collected as part of the "Baromètre de la justice" conducted by the Superior Council of the Judiciary (Government of Thailand, 2022^[81]), (Court of Justice of Thailand, 2020^[82]), (Government of Belgium, 2024^[83]).

These efforts are often complemented by additional feedback mechanisms, some of which are implemented by non-judicial stakeholders. For instance, in Colombia, satisfaction surveys are conducted not only by the Superior Council of the Judiciary and the Public Prosecutor's Office, but also by the Ombudsperson. In the United Kingdom, feedback is reportedly collected by the Ministry of Justice, HM's Court & Tribunal System, the advice sector, law firms, courts and tribunals. These are gathered through direct feedback (i.e. issues shared with staff), analysis of online tool use, feedback forms, calls, etc. (Government of the United Kingdom, 2024^[84]). In the Netherlands feedback is collected by notaries, lawyers, legal aid insurance, socio-legal counsellors, legal aid office, legal aid clinics, and mediators. The knowledge centre of the Dutch Legal Aid Board has implemented a feedback loop for legal aid (Legal Aid Board (Raad voor Rechtsbijstand), 2021^[85]). ADR bodies conduct periodic evaluations of their services that include feedback from users. The national legal needs survey (geschilbeslechtsingsdelta) also asks questions about satisfaction and fairness.

The dimensions of user experience captured by these surveys vary considerably across countries and across survey instruments (see Box 3.10).

Box 3.10. Collecting comprehensive feedback from people using justice services

In **Poland**, feedback is collected from people using free legal aid, free civil advice, free mediation and legal education. The questionnaire used to gather people's experiences asks whether the information was understandable, whether they know what steps to take next after receiving the advice or mediation, whether the location of the advice point was convenient, whether the advice point was clearly signposted, whether they were seen at the scheduled time and how the person learned about the service. Some courts also conduct 'customer satisfaction assessment' surveys through questionnaires available online and at a court's Customer Service Office (*Biuro Obsługi Interesantów*). Questions typically cover: the helpfulness, patience and politeness of the administrative staff; the clarity of the information provided and whether the staff used accessible, non-jargon language; the ease of obtaining necessary forms and legal templates; the readability and logic of the court building's internal signage and directions.

In **Spain**, feedback is collected through several institutionalised mechanisms across the justice sector. The Citizen Attention Unit of the General Council of the Judiciary collects and processes complaints and enquiries and publishes annual reports analysing trends over time. These reports include information on the number and type of submissions received, the bodies concerned, the grounds raised and issues relating to the Charter of Rights. User feedback is also gathered through regular satisfaction surveys of citizen service points. They assess access to the office, environment conditions, waiting time until being served, treatment received, quality and clarity of verbal information, overall satisfaction and confirmation of expectations. Feedback specific to the digital transformation of justice services are also collected annually through the Digital Transformation of Justice Forum (FTDJ).

In **France**, the government-wide institutionalised feedback system, 'Public Services+' collects user experience data on public services including those under the Ministry of Justice. Feedback collected, when available, cover multiple dimensions including overall satisfaction, quality of reception (courtesy and respect), ease of contacting the service, simplicity of administrative procedures and timeliness, and

satisfaction with online services. All the results are made available online by localisation and type of service including several justice institutions (judicial courts, access to justice and victim support service, police etc.) and support service improvement.

Source: (Government of Poland, 2025^[86]), (Sąd Rejonowy dla Warszawy-Mokotowa w Warszawie, n.d.^[87]), (General Council of the Judiciary of Spain, n.d.^[88]), (Government of Spain, 2024^[89]), (Government of Spain, 2024^[90]), (Government of France, n.d.^[91]).

Other countries make efforts to collect feedback, but these remain fragmented or limited to certain services, areas or projects, and it is often unclear whether findings are systematically used to design improvements. In federal countries like Australia and Canada, some efforts are undertaken but these do not cover all levels of government. Australia requires key federal courts to collect feedback from stakeholders along with legal assistance services receiving federal funding, while Canada shared specific initiatives for feedback collection in civil tribunal process in British Columbia, and for those going through an appeal process at the Social Security Tribunal (Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, 2024^[92]), (Government of Canada, 2026^[93]), (British Columbia Civil Resolution Tribunal, 2025^[94]).

Similarly, in Switzerland and Italy, initiatives have been largely localised. In Switzerland, the Canton of Solothurn regularly conducts large-scale service quality surveys with comparable waves in 2008, 2013, 2017, and 2022. It covers cantonal courts, chambers, local courts, and multiple jurisdictions (civil, criminal, administrative, insurance). It asks about the procedural experience, about the timeliness, the courtesy and respect, the clarity of hearing and decisions, the preparation and conduct of the hearings and the overall satisfaction (Canton of Solothurn, Switzerland, 2022^[95]). In Italy, customer satisfaction surveys were conducted at the local level in the Civil Court of Rome, the Courts of Turin and Catania, and on local police district services in Genoa.

In other cases, efforts are limited to specific services or dimensions of justice services. Several countries like Germany, Ireland and Hungary collect feedback on selected tribunals, appeals, digital tools or helpdesk services (Government of Germany, 2023^[96]), (Government of Germany, 2023^[97]), (Courts of Hungary, n.d.^[98]). Lithuania and Norway provide feedback mechanisms for particular services, respectively legal aid and prisons, and restorative mediation services (Government of Lithuania, 2023^[99]). Overall, these examples point to a need for more regular and representative feedback across justice pathways, combined with processes for translating findings into service changes and monitoring whether these changes improve users' experiences.

According to evidence collected through the people-centred justice questionnaire, countries often lack established learning and improvement mechanisms to translate feedback into service improvement. Only a small number of countries report that the analysis of collected feedback is used to refine approaches, reinforcing accessibility or ensuring services remain responsive to people's needs. For instance, Slovenia reports using survey findings to identify judicial priorities, while Spain draws on complaints, enquiries and public opinion surveys to identify recurring or systemic concerns (Government of Slovenia, 2023^[100]). In Australia, a report on the Federal Circuit and family Court (2023-2024) (FCFCOA, 2024^[101]) expressly acknowledges the Chief Justice and courts' management staff intention to consider stakeholders insights to inform processes and approaches to family violence in the family law jurisdiction. Similarly, in the Netherlands, 'the Legal Aid in the Netherlands' report (2021) highlights that Rechtswijzer is continuously '*developed and improved through feedback from users and service providers*' (Legal Aid Board (Raad voor Rechtsbijstand), 2021^[85]).

3.4. A GOVERNANCE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT ENABLES PEOPLE-CENTRED JUSTICE

If people-centred justice systems are to meet the needs of all individuals, including those who are more vulnerable to legal needs and justice problems and lack resources to resolve them, a coherent approach is required that delivers seamless, sustainable, and resilient justice pathways. This requires systematic co-ordination across government, with clear institutional responsibilities assigned at national, subnational and organisational levels for setting foundational governance infrastructure of people-centred justice systems. It also requires collaboration mechanisms that foster inter-institutional co-ordination across public services, recognising that legal needs and justice problems often intersect with broader social and economic dimensions.

Co-ordination with non-governmental actors is also important for justice system governance. Engaging and supporting these bodies while respecting their independence and autonomy is critical to providing effective people-centred justice services. Their involvement is also important for fostering innovation in service delivery.

Digital transformation and innovation to support people-centred justice

Justice systems often experience challenges in providing seamless, accessible and people-centred justice pathways that effectively respond to people's legal needs and justice problems. Digital transformation, supported by robust data governance and innovation, holds significant potential to strengthen access, resilience, efficiency, and effectiveness of justice systems. When grounded in a clear national strategy and accompanied by appropriate legal and policy frameworks, a digital-by-design approach can help rethink how justice services are designed and delivered, putting people at the centre. Crucially, this transformation must preserve access for those experiencing barriers to using technology while fostering innovation across the justice sector.

Box 3.11. Indicator 5: Digital transformation and innovation in the justice sector support the effective delivery of justice services

- a. There is a national or sectoral strategy guiding the digital transformation of justice.
- b. The justice system embeds a digital by design approach to maximise access to justice.
- c. In their digital transformation efforts, the justice system preserves access for those experiencing barriers to using technology.
- d. Innovation is fostered across the justice sector to enhance the delivery of people-centred justice services and pathways.

Source: (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[1]).

There is a national or sectoral strategy guiding the digital transformation of the justice sector that embeds digital by design approach to maximise access to justice

A comprehensive strategy for digital transformation of the justice sector is essential to ensure that digitalisation efforts deliver public value. The most effective strategies are those embedded within broader government agendas and public sector reform initiatives, while also addressing sector-specific needs and priorities. This approach ensures policy coherence across government, prevents digital transformation of justice from becoming isolated sectoral or technological projects, and anchors efforts to long-term commitment and investments needed. A strategy that considers digital transformation to support access

to justice should define how the government intends to position data governance as the foundation for digital transformation, establish clear leadership and accountability across justice institutions, align digitalisation with people-centred justice objectives (access, fairness, efficiency, trust), and balance agenda coherence with institutional autonomy while creating sufficient co-ordination mechanisms to avoid fragmentation. (Indicator 5.a)

Embedding a ‘digital by design’ approach is essential to transform how justice systems conceptualise their operations and redesign workflows, rather than simply automating existing processes. Digital by design means rethinking how cases flow through the system, how information is generated and shared, and how citizens and professionals interact with justice services. Rather than digitising paper-based procedures, a digital by design approach establishes common data standards and structured information flows from initial case registration through resolution, enabling courts to track progression, identify bottlenecks, and support appropriate automated processes. This approach must be foundational to strategy development, not retrofitted after legacy systems are locked in, and must explicitly preserve access for those experiencing barriers to technology use through omni-channel service delivery. (Indicator 5.b)

Strategic commitment to digital transformation in justice is nearly universal among surveyed countries (see Table 3.2). Almost all countries report having a central or sectoral strategy guiding the digital transformation of their justice sectors, indicating widespread political and administrative recognition that digitalisation is essential to strengthening justice systems. Furthermore, in the vast majority of cases, these strategies include specific objectives or goals explicitly aimed at improving access to justice through digital transformation. In most cases, these strategies aim to modernise justice systems by standardising and digitalising judicial processes, with the creation of tools such as judicial portals, electronic case files, digital communications and virtual hearings. The measures are designed to improve efficiency, transparency, and access to justice by enabling users to initiate, manage and track cases online. Many strategies also seek to strengthen governance and support interoperability.

Table 3.2. Improving access to justice through digital transformation

Country name	National or sectoral strategy for justice sector's digital transformation	Specific objectives or goals to improve access to justice through digital transformation	“Digital by design”
Australia	✗	✗	✗
Belgium	✓	✓	✗
Canada	✓	✓	✓
Colombia	✓	✓	✓
Costa Rica	✓	✓	✓
Denmark	✓	✓	✗
Dominican Republic	✓	✓	✓
Finland	✓	✓	✗
France	✓	✓	✓
Germany	✓	✓	✗
Greece	✓	✗	✗
Hungary	✗	✗	✗
Ireland	✓	✓	✗
Italy	✓	✓	✓
Latvia	✓	✓	✗
Lithuania	✓	✓	✗
Malta	✓	✓	✓
Netherlands	✗	✗	✗
Norway	✓	✗	✗

Country name	National or sectoral strategy for justice sector's digital transformation	Specific objectives or goals to improve access to justice through digital transformation	"Digital by design"
Poland	✓	✓	✓
Slovenia	✓	✓	✓
Spain	✓	✓	✓
Sweden	✓	✓	✓
Switzerland	✓	✓	✗
Thailand	✓	✓	✓
Türkiye	✓	✓	✗
United Kingdom	✓	✓	✓

Note: This table illustrates countries scorings to the following questions: "Does your country have a national or sectoral strategy guiding the digital transformation of the justice sector?", "Does the strategy include specific objectives or goals to improve access to justice through digital transformation?" and "Is digital by design embedded in your country's strategy to digitalise its justice sector?".

Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

Some countries have developed justice-specific digital transformation strategies like the Ministries of Justice of Italy (Strategy for the Digital Transition of Justice 2022 – 2026), the United Kingdom (Justice Digital Strategy 2025, covering 2022-2025), Malta (Digital Justice Strategy 2022-2027) (Government of Malta, 2022^[102]), Germany, Sweden (Strategic Plan for Co-ordination within the Digitalisation of the Justice System 2023-2027) and Denmark (Corporate Strategy for Data and Digitalisation complemented by the Judiciary's Strategy for the Digitalisation in the Danish Courts 2024-2027). Malta's Digital Justice Strategy 2022-2027 is a good example of strategy that adopts a people-centred approach with its first pillar "*People: placing people at the center of the strategy to create a user-centered service*". It explicitly includes access to justice as a strategic goal, noting that "*using digital tools to bring justice services to the communities and homes of the citizens is one way of overcoming physical boundaries of access to justice*".

In other countries, the digital transformation of justice is primarily embedded within broader justice sector reforms or digital transformation agenda. Spain, for example, integrates digital transformation into its *Justicia 2030* reform agenda, which identifies improvement in organisation and processes through digital transformation as one of its priorities and explicitly links it to access to justice. Slovenia's *Digital Public Services Strategy* (2023) includes the justice sector within its wider objective to make public services available online and accessible to all users. Norway's *National Digitalisation Strategy towards 2030* (Regjeringen.no, n.d.^[103]) aims to create a more efficient and user-oriented public sector and expressly mentions justice as its cross-sector priorities. Greece integrates justice into the *Digital Transformation Bible 2020-2025* (Government of Greece, 2021^[104]) and the *Digital Transformation Strategy 2021-2027* (Government of Greece, n.d.^[105]) both of which recognise the importance of technology in improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of justice services. Latvia also covers justice dimensions into its *Digital Transformation Guidelines 2021-2027* (Government of Latvia, 2021^[106]). In Poland, the digital transformation of the justice sector is embedded in the Programme for the Integrated Computerisation of the State (PZIP) (2019-2024), a government-wide strategy aimed at developing public administration and tailoring services to people's needs using modern digital technologies. The programme includes dedicated actions for the Ministry of Justice, including strengthening the quality and scope of communication with citizens and justice stakeholders, digitalising criminal investigation files, and developing national justice-related information systems (Government of Poland, n.d.^[107]).

Most countries, however, rely on a combination of national and sectoral strategies. Colombia, for instance has a *National Policy for Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence (AI)* that applies to the public sector and a long-term programme focused on the justice system's digital transformation (*CONPES 4024*) as a key tool to improve access to justice, especially by making justice services faster, easier to reach, less costly, and more transparent for citizens. *CONPES 4024* identifies four main dimensions that digital

transformation of justice can help improve: delays and congestion in courts, high costs (time, travel, procedures), geographical distance (especially in rural areas) and of information and transparency (which discourages people from using formal justice mechanisms).

Justice-specific data strategies can provide a coherent framework for strengthening data governance and capabilities, enabling responsible data sharing and translating evidence into better policy, services and outcomes. In Ireland, the Department of Justice Statement of Strategy 2024 – 2026 integrates digital transformation and data as enablers to support the delivery of justice objectives and is complemented by the Courts Service ICT, Digital and Data Strategy 2024 – 2027 that provides a concrete operational roadmap for the digital transformation of court services. Türkiye has a whole-of-government *Twelfth Development Plan (2024-2025)* (Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, 2023^[108]) which includes a digital transformation agenda for the justice system and the Ministry of Justice has a Strategic Plan 2024-2028 (Government of the Republic of Türkiye, 2024^[109]) which also presents digital transformation as a means of enhancing access to justice. Thailand has a public sector digitalisation strategy which includes an objective on digital transformation of the justice sector (the *Digital Government Development Plan of Thailand 2023-2027*), along with digital development plans for the Court of Justice, the Administrative Court, the Constitutional Court and specific actions for the digitalisation of the judiciary within the *Development Plan for the Supreme Court*. Costa Rica and Finland have digital transformation strategies for the public sector that do not expressly refer to justice but are complemented by justice strategies that integrate digital transformation aspects to improve access to justice: Finland's Ministry of Justice's strategy (Government of Finland, n.d.^[110]) and Costa Rica's Plan Estratégico Institucional del Poder Judicial 2019–2024 that places digital transformation as a core pillar of judicial reform with objectives, actions, and indicators related to the modernisation of judicial case management systems, digital service delivery, interoperability, artificial intelligence, and IT governance. In Dominican Republic, law 399-22 (Congress of the Dominican Republic, 2022^[111]) regulates the use of digital means for judicial processes and administrative procedures within the judiciary. The law regulates the creation of key instruments: the Judicial Portal (for online services), the Electronic Judicial File, Digital Communications and Notifications, and Virtual Hearings. It establishes that the provisions will be implemented gradually, based on the Judiciary's budgetary capacity and the country's connectivity conditions, and it delegates regulatory power to the Plenary of the Supreme Court of Justice for its operation.

The more challenging aspect concerns how justice sectors envisage digital transformation. Data reveal important gaps in the extent to which digital technologies and data are embedded within broader, systemic transformation efforts. While most countries report having a strategy for the digital transformation of justice and identify access to justice among its objectives, only around one-third adopt a digital-by-design approach, integrating digital technologies and data to transform processes and service delivery. This gap becomes apparent when examining what countries describe as their digitalisation priorities: the emphasis on developing judicial portals, electronic case management systems, and virtual interfaces for user interaction reflects a digitisation agenda, converting analogue processes and services into digital form, rather than a transformation agenda that rethinks justice delivery around structured data, user needs, and new ways of working. While these investments deliver real benefits in accessibility and convenience, they can entrench existing silos, reproduce traditional process inefficiencies in digital form, and limit opportunities for the innovation that systematic digital transformation would enable (OECD, 2021^[112]).

This divergence between having a digital transformation strategy and implementing a digital-by-design approach suggests that many justice systems have identified the *what* and the *why* of digital transformation, but have yet to operationalise the *how*.

In Dominican Republic, for example, the Law on 'Enabling and Regulating the Use of Digital Means for Judicial Processes and Administrative Procedures'¹⁹ establishes the principle of '*opción*' that makes the use of digital means an alternative. It also entrusts the National Judicial School with promoting open and plural digital access, suggesting that digital tools are part of a broader transformation strategy, not simply a procedural substitution. Similarly, Costa Rica's Plan Estratégico Institucional del Poder Judicial 2019–

2024 explicitly lists “digital by design” as a pillar for government digital development, explaining that processes should be redesigned by taking advantage of digital technologies, with a view to simplifying procedures and creating new channels for communication and citizen participation.

Digital transformation efforts in the justice sector preserve access for those experiencing barriers to using technology

Barriers to access may be physical, cognitive, geographical or economic, and rather than treating accessibility as a constraint on digital services, justice systems can embed accessibility features and supported access pathways into the design of digital services from the outset (Indicator 5.c).

Many countries have introduced accessible design features and guidance tools to facilitate the use of digital services. For example, the Danish courts provide users of the *minskiftesag.dk* probate portal (Danmarks Domstole, n.d.^[113]) technical assistance through telephone or an online contact form (Danmarks Domstole, n.d.^[113]) and offer guidance materials with clear instructions on how to use the portal and how to request an exemption from mandatory digital use. Grounds for exemption include disability, homelessness, having cognitive difficulties, mental disorders or a lack of digital competences, and other circumstances that may impede access (Danmarks Domstole, n.d.^[114]).

Ireland's Legal Aid Board operates a call-back service for family mediation, enabling users to access services through telephone support rather than requiring digital-first interaction, ensuring tailored guidance and flexible engagement with the Family Mediation Service (Legal Aid Board, 2024^[115]). In Denmark (Danmarks Domstole, n.d.^[116]) and Lithuania (E-service Portal of Lithuanian Courts, 2024^[117]; State Labour Inspectorate of Lithuania, n.d.^[118]), explanatory videos support people in navigating online procedures such as filing appeals and initiating cases, demonstrating how digital tools can be designed to enhance rather than complicate access.

Beyond digital interface design, justice systems strengthen accessibility through integrated human-centred support. In Ireland, Citizens Information Centres and Independent Law Centres provide integrated assistance through in-person and telephone support as part of the broader justice service ecosystem (Citizens Information Board, n.d.^[119]). In Denmark, Legal Aid Offices across the country provide in-person support to help people, particularly those with lower digital skills, access legal information, receive guidance and navigate justice processes effectively. Similarly, in Germany, eligible low-income individuals can apply for a legal aid certificate (*Beratungshilfeschein*) both online or in 'application offices' in local district courts (*Antragstelle*), providing multiple pathways to access supported services (*hamburg.de*, n.d.^[120]).

Canada's approach to accessible justice delivery is instructive. The Action Committee on Modernizing Court Operations recognises that 'access to justice can be improved by building in the flexibility to do things either virtually, in person, or both, to better meet the varied needs of court users' (Government of Canada, n.d.^[121]). In the province of British Columbia, a wide network of legal clinics and community-based services, such as 18 Indigenous Justice Centres (BC First Nations Justice Council, 2024^[122]) or 8 Parents Legal Centres (Legal Aid BC, n.d.^[123]), further support access through multiple channels. Efforts are also visible in other Canadian jurisdictions. For instance, in the province of Ontario, Legal Aid Ontario (Legal Aid Ontario, n.d.^[124]) provides general information and referrals via telephone, and the Ontario Legal Information Centre line run by Ontario's Francophone Legal Services Organisation (AJEFO) offers free consultation with lawyers in both English and French, by phone or in-person (AJEFO, n.d.^[125]).

France has developed a set of measures, combining physical reception services with people-centred approaches to digital interactions. In-person reception such as *Service d'Accueil Unique du Justiciable* (SAUJ) in courts and Justice Points (*Point-Justice*) (Government of France, n.d.^[126]) located across the territory, enable people to receive information, guidance and support on their rights and obligations. Dedicated websites enable users to identify the nearest access point. A monitoring of key digital services

(*Vos démarches essentielles*) by the Ministry's Design, User Experience and Digital Transformation (DUT) department helps ensure their usability and accessibility over time. Key indicators for evaluating service quality include the existence of a digital version of a process, user's level of satisfaction via the '*I give my opinion*' questionnaire, evaluation of the digital accessibility of services for persons with disability, level of simplification of the service based on the extent to which forms are pre-filled by the Administration, and clarity of information and instructions provided by the administration. Complementary indicators include, among others, the proportion of users that carried out a procedure autonomously and the quality of help received from the administration (DINUM, n.d.^[127]).

Innovation is fostered across the justice sector to enhance the delivery of people-centred justice services and pathways

Beyond digital transformation, access to justice for people can be supported by broader innovation. This refers to the introduction of new or improved product or process (or combination) that is useful and significantly different from what existed before. This might concern products made available to users of processes implemented in the functioning of the justice system (OECD/Eurostat, 2018^[128]).

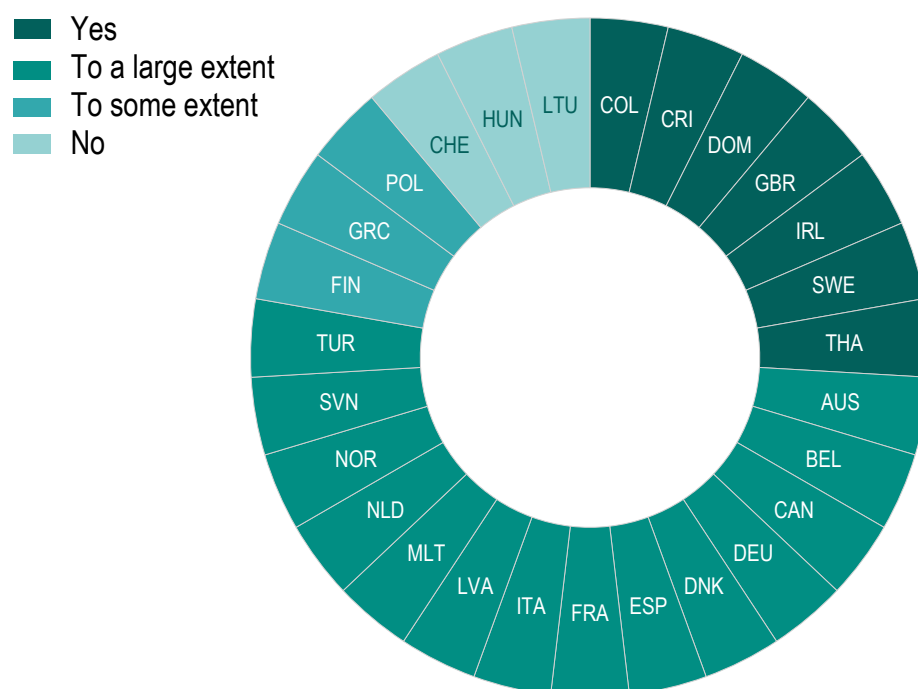
Innovation can help enhance the simplicity, effectiveness, efficiency, and scalability of service delivery, but it needs to be actively encouraged across the justice sector if it is to make an impact. Sustaining innovation requires more than isolated initiatives or one-off projects. Governments must embed innovation within the foundational architecture of the justice system itself, through dedicated funding mechanisms that extend beyond electoral cycles, institutional structures that support continuous learning and adaptation, interoperable data systems that allow information to flow across institutional boundaries, and sustained investment in the skills and capabilities of justice sector personnel. Without these systemic foundations, even promising innovations risk remaining bounded pilots rather than becoming embedded practices that transform how justice is delivered.

An important element to promote innovation is adopting and implementing formal innovation strategies, dedicated funding and institutional structures. These should covers apply to multiple justice pathways, including formal and informal pathways (Indicator 5.d). This should include establishing formal frameworks that authorise justice sector actors, from courts to legal aid providers to dispute resolution bodies, to test and adapt new approaches in structured, bounded environments where learning from what does not work is treated as valuable rather than as failure. By building experimentation as a distributed, standard practice rather than a specialist activity confined to innovation labs, justice systems can enable frontline practitioners to identify what works in their specific contexts, share learning across institutional boundaries, and progressively scale approaches that demonstrate promise. Formal legislative or regulatory permission to conduct real-world testing, combined with cross-justice-sector communities of practice, can help move experimentation from isolated projects toward a continuous institutional capability (OECD, 2026^[129]).

Innovation should be actively encouraged across the justice sector if it is to make an impact on how people experience justice. A core measure of people-centred justice is whether the distance between what institutions offer and what people actually need has genuinely narrowed. This requires justice systems to organise themselves not around their own internal processes and structures, but around how people actually experience legal problems, navigate procedures, and seek justice. This means using people's experiences of interacting with courts and justice services as a continuous source of intelligence for improvement; ensuring that legal information and procedures are presented in plain, accessible language rather than technical jargon; proactively reaching out to people who may not find services themselves; and making visible to citizens how their feedback and experiences have shaped changes in service delivery. When combined with more responsive, accessible, and anticipatory justice services, closing this gap strengthens public trust and ensures that justice systems are genuinely grounded in the needs and circumstances of the people they serve (OECD, 2026^[129]).

In several countries, innovation is actively promoted sector wide through innovation strategies, the establishment of innovation structures and ad-hoc projects and initiatives (see Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5. Promoting innovation within the justice sector



Note: This graph illustrates countries' scorings to the question: 'Is innovation promoted across the justice sector to enhance simplicity, effectiveness, efficiency, and scalability of people-centred justice pathways?'.

Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

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For example, in Ireland, the *Justice Sector Innovation Strategy 2023* promotes innovation across institutional boundaries to improve collaboration between justice sector organisations and ultimately deliver better services for people (Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, 2025). The strategy notably establishes formal structures to support innovation capacities across the justice sector. In the United Kingdom, innovation is embedded into the Ministry of Justice's *Evaluation and Prototyping Strategy* which highlights the use of 'better evidence' and 'early prototyping' for better decision making and outcomes 'within the resources available'. The strategy, that applies to the justice system as a whole, aims at identifying innovative approaches to improve the way the justice system delivers in the future, particularly by identifying new ideas for incremental and fundamental changes to the justice system that can be developed and tested (Government of the United Kingdom, 2023^[130]). In Belgium, the Ministry of Justice's *Plan Stratégique 2022-2024* includes 'cross functional R&D co-ordination' across the justice public service as a key objective. In Costa Rica the *Plan Estratégico Institucional del Poder Judicial*, includes an institutional innovation framework aimed at improving efficiency, effectiveness and modernisation of justice services. Within this strategic document, innovation is defined as a systematic process to promote continuous improvement in judicial action. The plan is operationalised through a *Portafolio Institucional de Proyectos Estratégicos* (PPE) which aims to facilitate the scaling of reforms and innovation across the judiciary.

To steer innovation, several countries have created dedicated innovation structures and initiatives. The Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ), a public organisation governed by its own Board of Directors, with oversight by the Minister of Justice, established the Office of Justice Innovation to specifically drive and support innovative solutions within the justice system. It acts as a connector and facilitator for cross-sector collaboration and as knowledge hub, bringing together government, civil society, academia, and the private sector to address complex justice challenges such as violence against women, youth at risk of crime, and civic engagement. The unit promotes people-centred justice and supports the development, scaling, and integration of innovative approaches, including the use of data, technology, human-centred design, and strategic foresight, into Thailand's justice system (Thailand Institute of Justice, 2021^[131]). In Colombia, the Ministry of Justice, through the 'Innovation Lab on Access to Justice', launched a call for proposal of innovative ideas to address access to justice challenges for specific groups such as women and rural communities. A list of 30 local innovation has been pre-selected for implementation and published online (Ministerio de Justicia y del Derecho, n.d.^[132]). In addition, the Judiciary launched the first Judicial Branch Innovation Challenge, enabling judicial staff across the country, regardless of their role or position, to propose digital solutions to optimise the delivery of judicial services. Proposed ideas are evaluated, prioritised and supported to help mature and implement them. In the United Kingdom, the Ministry of Justice's '*Areas of Research Interest*' sets out the Department's priority evidence and research needs to improve the justice system. It is designed to enhance collaboration and partnership between government and academic experts and research networks. It covers a broad range of areas across the justice system, including criminal justice and probation services, upholding the rule of law, delivering accessible and timely civil, family and administrative justice, along with cross-cutting themes such as emerging technologies, pathways and systems mapping, mental health and neurodiversity in the justice system (Government of the United Kingdom, 2025^[133]). In Ireland, similar initiatives support innovation in the justice sector with the Innovation Ambassadors training programme, the annual Justice Sector Innovation Conference, and the participation in the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards. In Belgium, the 2021-2024 Superior Council of Justice projects agenda mentioned the creation of a Center for Judicial Innovation, although no public evidence suggests that the centre has been established.

Whether through formal innovation frameworks or standalone initiatives, countries implement a diverse array of innovation within their justice sectors. In many cases, innovation target court operations and build on ongoing digital transformation efforts. Others take a broader scope, encompassing community justice. Examples of innovation reported by countries include Ireland's Courts Service Family Law online information hub; the 360° Virtual Court Tours designed to help people better navigate the family justice system; the nationwide expansion of remote hearing facilities; and the establishment of Cuan, the statutory agency addressing domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV) (Department of Justice, 2023^[134]; Civil Service Awards, 2026^[135]). In the Netherlands, numerous initiatives have been launched across the justice system in the past years. The concept of 'Socially Effective Justice' has inspired several pilots focused on improving accessibility, resolving underlying issues in disputes and strengthening problem-solving capacity. The *Community Justice Project*, for instance, addresses interconnected problems faced by residents in selected neighbourhoods.

To fully leverage the value of innovative initiatives like pilots, key elements of an innovation infrastructure are crucial, such as sound selection process for promising innovations, selection criteria (including cost benefit analysis), funding research and development for the design phase, a lab-environment for development and testing, an independent certification process for broad implementation within countries current rules of procedure and standards.

A people-centred justice data governance ecosystem

Digital transformation and data go hand in hand in improving the governance of public services. Digital transformation provides the infrastructure needed to collect, manage and analyse data safely and effectively. In the justice sector, data can help better understand people's needs, support evidence-based decision making, and improve service delivery. At the same time, it requires strong safeguards to ensure data quality and safety.

Box 3.12. Indicator 6: The justice sector maintains a people-centred justice data system and ensures proper data governance

- a. There is a justice data strategy that provides sound and coherent governance arrangements for justice data and evidence.
- b. There is a core set of people-centred data variables identified, collected and reported across the justice sector.
- c. Data quality standards and data collection and management protocols for people-centred justice data are established and implemented across the justice sector.

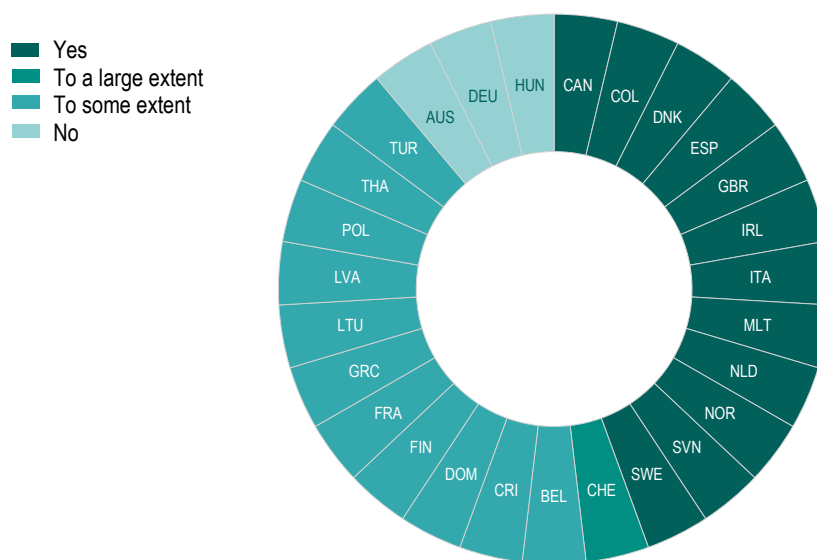
Source: (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[1]).

There is a justice data strategy that provides sound and coherent governance arrangements for justice data and evidence

A justice data strategy thus serves as the enabling foundation for moving from a fragmented, institution-specific approach to data toward a truly integrated and evidence-based justice system. A coherent, formally approved data strategy provides the foundational governance structure necessary to transform scattered, fragmented data practices into a co-ordinated, system-wide approach to collecting, managing, and using data. A justice data strategy serves multiple critical functions: it establishes clear strategic direction and vision for how data will be leveraged to support people-centred justice goals; it defines the institutional architecture and co-ordination mechanisms needed to break down silos across multiple justice institutions; it clarifies roles, responsibilities, and accountability for data stewardship; and it articulates the standards, protocols, and controls that ensure data quality, security, and appropriate use (Byrom, Piccinin-Barbieri and Wells, 2024^[136]). To maximise the use of data and evidence in informing justice policies and practices, these strategies should be formally approved and implemented across multiple justice institutions, both formal and informal (Indicator 6.a).

Almost half of the countries (12 out of 27) have a formally approved, implemented and functioning justice data strategy with clear governance arrangements, roles, and responsibilities, and established mechanisms for data quality, sharing and use, with approaches varying considerably among countries. This reflects a relatively shared recognition of the importance of strategic governance for justice data (see Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6. Justice data strategies



Note: This graph illustrates countries' scorings to the question: 'Is there a justice data strategy?'

Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

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The United Kingdom, for instance, is a good example of how implementing a justice data strategy and robust interoperability programmes can help connect justice and wider government administrative data, enabling a better understanding of users' pathways and outcomes, addressing evidence gaps, and informing policy and service improvements (see Box 3.13).

Box 3.13. The United Kingdom: leveraging justice data governance to strengthen interoperability and evidence-based decision making

In the United Kingdom, the *Ministry of Justice's Data Strategy – One year* operates across the justice sector and aims to enhance the availability of high-level quality data to better understand how services perform, ensure evidence-based decision making, and improve 'justice outcomes through data-driven insight and innovation'. This is reflected in a range of initiatives, including the database *Justice in numbers* which improves access to data and statistics on the justice system through hard-copy pocketbooks and online formats, and the *Data First* programme, which links administrative datasets from across the justice system to gain new insights into users, pathways, and outcomes.

Similarly, the *Better Outcomes through Linked Data (BOLD)* programme aims to improve interoperability across various institutions (including the Department of Health and Social Care, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and the Department of Justice) in order to address evidence gaps and improve policymaking and service design. It particularly focuses on four thematics: substance misuse, reoffending, homelessness and victims pathways. Among its outputs is the Case Information Dashboard which enable probation staff to access information from police, prison and probation services through a single and accessible platform, reducing duplicate of data entry and improving information sharing.

Linking justice and benefits data has also enabled the identification of children with a parent in prison, informing restrictions of parental responsibility of child sex abuse and the development of early support systems. Similarly, authority data have been linked with several cross-government data sets to improve understanding of the prevalence and outcomes of homelessness, showing that a 1% reduction could save governments up to GBP 30 million annually. The programme's victims team has also examined data held by rape support services to assess victim-survivor's journeys, identify service needs, and better understand factors associated with disengagement from support services. To ensure that its activities respond to people's needs and have a positive impact, the programme has developed 'use cases' that outline key research questions and data sets for each of its four key area.

Source: (Government of the United Kingdom, n.d.^[137]), (Government of the United Kingdom, 2020^[138]), (Government of the United Kingdom, 2022^[139]).

In other countries, justice data governance is mainly embedded within broader public-sector data strategies that apply across government, including justice institutions. In Colombia, the *Plan Nacional de Infraestructura de Datos* (Government of Colombia, 2021^[140]) frames data infrastructure as a 'cross-cutting asset' that supports the functioning of diverse public services and policy domains. It establishes clear governance arrangements, responsibilities and concrete mechanisms aimed at improving data quality, data sharing and interoperability. In the Netherlands, the *NL DIGITAL: Intergovernmental Data Strategy Netherlands* applies to all sectors of the Dutch public administration, including the Ministry of Justice (Government of the Netherlands, 2021^[141]). Ireland's *Public Service Data Strategy* (2019-2023) develops a whole-of-government approach to the management, sharing, and use of data (Government of Ireland, 2018^[142]). It aims to improve governance, security and data protection, while addressing long-standing fragmentation in public services data practices. In Italy, the *Three-Year Plan for ICT in Public Administration (2024 – 2026)*²⁰ presents data governance as strategic to high-quality services and support for evidence-based decision-making (Government of Italy, 2024^[143]). It recognises that the vast amounts of data produced by the public administration can generate value only if they are high-quality, interoperable and reusable, reflected also in the national rules and technical guidelines, such as the *AGID Open Data Guidelines 2023* and National Data Catalog (NDC). The strategy applies to ministries and justice sector institutions as public administration bodies and is institutionally anchored to the Ministry of Justice through the General Directorate for Statistics. An innovative data-oriented approach based on meta-analysis of justice data, called the 'DOG Method', further strengthens the strategy within the justice sector, supporting evidence-based planning and decision-making.

In other cases, countries rely on a combination of both national and sectoral strategies. In Canada, the Justice Data Modernisation Initiative (JDMI) complements the federal Disaggregated Data Action Plan. The JDMI is jointly led by Justice Canada's Research and Statistics Division and Statistics Canada and aims to improve the collection and use of disaggregated justice data. The JDMI also develops common indicators and standards for justice data across federal, provincial, and territorial partners. As part of its implementation, the JDMI improves how criminal justice data is collected, shared, and analysed, thereby addressing data gaps, notably regarding the overrepresentation of Indigenous, Black and other racialised people (Government of Canada, 2022^[144]).

Another trend observed among OECD countries is the integration of justice data governance into governmental or sectoral digital transformation strategies. For example, in Slovenia, the *Digital Slovenia 2030 (2023)* sets the cross-sector data access governance framework, including trustworthy data, standardisation, interoperability, data spaces and re-use (Government of Slovenia, 2023^[145]). This is also the case in Norway, Denmark and Malta, although they are complemented by other strategic plans. Norway's data strategy for justice is framed by the public sector-wide '*One Digital Public Sector Strategy (2019-2025)*', the white paper '*Data as a Resource*' (2020-2021), the '*National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence (2020)*', and the '*Annual Digitalisation Memorandum*' (2022) (Government of Norway,

2019^[146]), (Government of Norway, 2021^[147]), (Government of Norway, 2020^[148]), (Government of Norway, 2022^[149]). Denmark's *Corporate Strategy for Data and Digitalisation 2020-2030* and the *Strategy for Digitalisation of Danish Courts* include explicit responsibilities, roles, and mechanism for data quality, sharing and use. In Malta's *Digital Justice Strategy 2022-2027* and *Public Administration Data Strategy 2023-2027* both integrate data governance elements, including management and use of data, along with institutional and operational governance structure (Government of Malta, 2022^[102]), (Government of Malta, 2023^[150]).

A number of countries report recently launched initiatives or ongoing efforts to strengthen their justice data governance framework, illustrating a growing recognition of the importance of data governance and, thus, are worth mentioning.²¹ In the Netherlands, in addition to the existing public sector data strategy, the Ministry of Justice and Security has recently adopted a multi-year agenda 2025-2030 to enable a 'responsible, interoperable and value-creating use of data and AI. In Spain, the *Manifesto for a Public Data Space in Justice* was developed under shared governance by the Ministry of the Presidency, Justice and Relations with the Parliament, the General Council of the Judiciary, the General Prosecutor's Office and all autonomous communities with powers over the Justice Administration. The Manifesto's main contribution is treating judicial data as a public good, guaranteeing both its production and open access, and laying the groundwork for evidence-based, data-driven public management of the justice sector through indicators aimed at continuous service improvement (Government of Spain, 2022^[13]). In Switzerland, the Swiss Data Ecosystem Strategy (Swiss Federal Chancellery, n.d.^[151]) currently underway, intends to promote 'the multiple use of data by stakeholders in business, government, academia and the general public within a trusted framework', creating the foundation for 'interoperable and trustworthy data spaces'.

There is a core set of people-centred data variables identified, collected and reported across the justice sector

While existing justice data and frameworks provide valuable insights into institutional performance, they often fall short of capturing people's perspectives of justice and whether their problems are effectively resolved. Developing and implementing more integrated, people-centred measurement frameworks and moving away from 'court-focused lens' (Alexander and Sudeall, 2023^[152]), can help bridge the gap between available institution-centred data and meaningful insights on how justice systems work for people. This can also help policymakers identify areas for improvement and assess the achievement of policy objectives and societal outcomes. Ministries of Justice, or other relevant institutions, should therefore identify a core set of people-centred data variables to be collected, analysed, used, and reported across the justice sector. These should be accompanied by clear standardised guidelines that applies across justice institutions (Indicator 6.c).

Despite increasing recognition of the importance of people-centred justice, none of the countries has established a comprehensive and clearly defined set of people-centred justice variables to be collected, analysed, used, and reported across the justice sector. Interestingly, many countries report having identified such variables. However, in all cases the variables collected refer to system-centred data and do not reflect a people-centred approach. These are mainly institutional and operational judicial statistics, including court performance indicators, such as clearance rates, average duration of a case, and workload by court type; justice personnel data, such as number of judges and files per prosecutor; or civil justice data such as number of lawsuits and files and types of cases. While these indicators can provide valuable information on the functioning of justice institutions, they do not by themselves provide insights into people's legal needs, experiences, pathways and outcomes. In a smaller number of cases, countries demonstrate a political and policy intent to improve justice-sector data, measurement, and evidence-based decision-making from the perspective of users. Nonetheless, these commitments have not yet translated into operational data-governance frameworks or measurement system built around clearly defined people-centred justice variables.

Data quality standards and data collection and management protocols for people-centred justice data are established and implemented across the justice sector

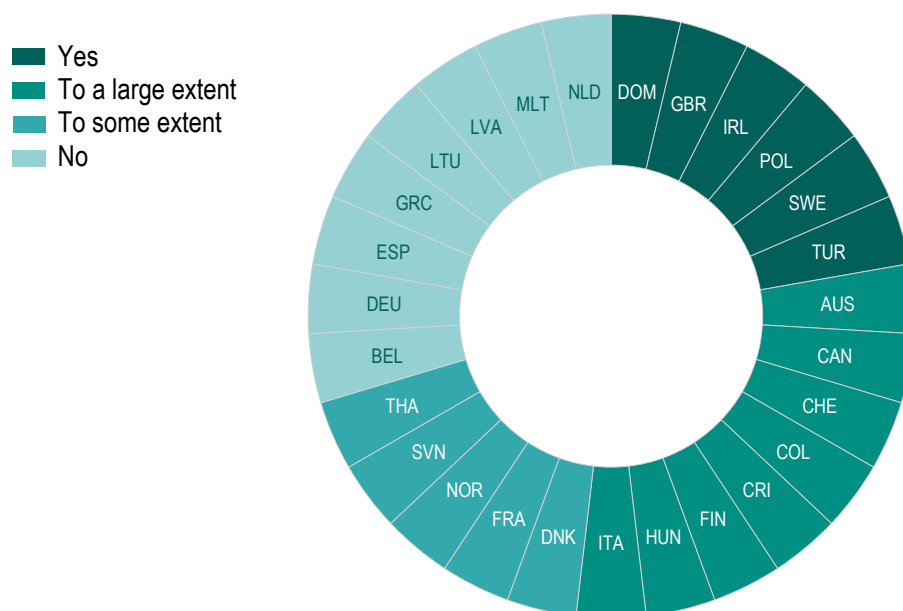
Data quality standards and data collection and management protocols are fundamental to establishing a data-driven and evidence-based justice system. These standards ensure that justice sector leaders, policymakers, and practitioners have access to reliable, accurate, and timely information necessary to design effective interventions, monitor performance, and make informed decisions about service delivery and policy. Without harmonised standards across the justice sector, data fragmentation prevents comprehensive analysis, enables duplication of effort and undermines the ability to understand system-wide trends and identify opportunities for improvement.

An important dimension for the use of data in the justice sector is the establishment of strong data quality standards, and data collection and management protocols. Ministry of Justice or other relevant institutions should play a leading role in promoting data that is reliable, accurate, complete, consistent, timely, and collected according to agreed definitions and procedures. These standards must be clear and formal, with explicit criteria addressing accuracy, completeness, consistency, timeliness, and privacy protection. Data should also be recorded, classified, exchanged, and managed in a harmonised way across institutions. This requires establishing metadata standards, data dictionaries, controlled vocabularies, exchange formats, quality frameworks, validation rules, and technical documentation for data sharing systems. (Indicator 6.d).

Critically, data quality standards and collection and management protocols must be implemented across multiple justice institutions to be effective. This includes courts, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms, legal aid providers, administrative justice bodies, and community justice initiatives. Leadership institutions should establish governance arrangements defining clear roles and responsibilities for data stewardship, develop mechanisms for co-ordination and capacity-building, and create accountability frameworks to ensure sector-wide compliance with agreed standards. Without this consistent, multi-institutional implementation, data fragmentation will persist and the full potential of a data-driven justice system cannot be realised.

Six out of the 27 countries have established clear, formal data quality standards and data collection protocols implemented across multiple justice institutions, including courts, ADR, legal aid, and community justice. In eight countries, data quality standards and data collection protocols exist but, although applied in several areas, do not cover the entire justice sector (see Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7. Establishing and implementing data quality standards and management protocols across the justice sector



Note: This graph illustrates countries' scorings to the question: 'Are data quality standards and data collection protocols for justice data established and implemented by the Ministry of Justice or other relevant institutions across the justice sector?'. Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

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A common trend across several countries is the use of national statistical frameworks that extend across the public sector also applies to the justice sector as a whole, thereby reinforcing data governance and interoperability in the justice sector (see Box 3.14). These arrangements provide an important foundation for consistent, comparable and reusable justice data. Their policy value depends on effective implementation across institutions, supported by clear responsibilities, common definitions, quality assurance and safeguards for privacy and security. In some cases, they may also be combined with justice-specific standards like in the United Kingdom.

Box 3.14. Applying cross-government standards to justice data

Poland reports having established formal standards and protocols, notably through the application of the European Statistical System (ESS) standards and the European Statistics Code of Practice. These explicitly define and regulate core data quality dimensions, including recognised formal quality criteria for statistical outputs such as accuracy and reliability, timeliness and punctuality, as well as coherence and comparability. A clear methodology for compiling statistical reports includes requirements for accuracy and correctness applied to courts and administrative units. The National Interoperability Framework (KRI) standards further support data exchange and collaboration between different public institutions, together with government regulations on data exchange protocols and standards from a technical interoperability and security perspective. These standards and practices apply to all entities which perform public tasks, including justice institutions such as courts, prosecutors' offices and prisons.

In **Türkiye**, the Official Statistics Programme 2022-2026 (Resmi İstatistik Programı – RIP) sets out a comprehensive framework of official statistical principles that applies to all institutions producing official statistics, including those responsible for justice statistics, such as the Constitutional Court (AYUM), Court of Cassation, Court of Jurisdictional Disputes, High Arbitration Board, Enforcement Offices Union of Turkish Notaries, and the Union of Turkish Bar Associations (TBB). The principles include accuracy and reliability, consistency and comparability, timeliness and punctuality, as well as accessibility and transparency. It also requires institutions to implement quality controls throughout the statistical production process and document methodologies, to monitor data quality indicators and comply with national and international standards. Oversight mechanisms, such as the Data Quality Control Board and quality evaluation processes, support implementation across institutions.

In the **Dominican Republic**, the National Framework for Government Interoperability and Governance of Public Administration Data provides the basis for the secure management, exchange, and use of information within public services. Its implementation has been strengthened through Resolution 073-2025, which established, among others, an inter-institutional committee responsible for defining and implementing ‘the interoperability domains’ across public administration entities. The Single Interoperability Platform and Interoperability Catalogue further support secure and effective information exchange and collaboration with external stakeholders and across sectors, as reflected in the Standard for Interoperability between Dominican Government Agencies (2024).

In **Sweden**, the Official Statistics Act (2001:99) and Statistics Sweden’s Regulations on Quality in Official Statistics (2016) define key quality criteria, including relevance, accuracy, timeliness, punctuality, accessibility and clarity, comparability, and coherence to assure the quality of statistics. Their implementation is supported by annual Assessments of the Quality of Official Statistics, which provide a systematic review of statistics quality and support the identification and implementation of improvement measures.

The **United Kingdom** has developed both nation-wide and justice-sector specific data standards. In the UK the Statistical System is made of several entities that plays a role in the collection and regulation of data: the Office for National Statistics, the independent body responsible for collecting and publishing statistics; the UK Statistics Authority, which oversees the whole statistical system and safeguards the production of official statistics; the Office for Statistics Regulation, which ensure that statistics are produced and disseminated in the public good; and the Government Statistical Service, a community for all civil servants working in the collection, production, and communication of official statistics. The Code of Practice for Statistics sets standards that producers of official statistics should commit to, ensuring that published government statistics have ‘public value, are high quality, and are produced by people and organisations that are trustworthy’.

Source: (Office for Statistics Regulation, n.d.^[153]), (Government of Poland, 2006^[154]), (Government of Poland, 2017^[155]), (Türkiye Statistics Institute, 2026^[156]), (Government of the Dominican Republic, 2023^[157]), (Government of the Dominican Republic, 2025^[158]), (Statistics Sweden (SCB), 2018^[159]), (Statistics Sweden (SCB), 2023^[160]), (Office for Statistics Regulation, n.d.^[153]), (UK Statistics Authority, n.d.^[161]).

Countries use a combination of government-wide statistical frameworks and justice-specific arrangements to improve the quality, consistency and usability of justice data. Colombia applies national standards for statistics, interoperability and open data, alongside institution-specific protocols, although common operational standards across the justice sector remain limited. Australia similarly combines public-sector statistical requirements with dedicated standards for legal assistance data. Hungary has institutionalised data collection and quality requirements for court statistics, while Switzerland applies federal statistical rules that also encompass justice data. Finland is developing a common foundation for data quality, lifecycle management and interoperability across justice institutions through its long-term data architecture programme. In Italy, co-operation between the national statistical institute and the Ministry of Justice has supported common methodologies, data warehouses and publication systems for judicial statistics.

Together, these examples show progress towards more reliable and comparable data but also underline the need to move from general or institution-specific requirements towards coherent sector-wide standards covering data collection, exchange, and quality assurance.

Box 3.15. Strengthening standards for justice data quality and data collection protocols

Colombia has a layered system supporting data quality standards and data collection protocols. The National Administrative Department of Statistics (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística – DANE), through the National Statistics System (Sistema Estadística Nacional), establishes cross-cutting standards for official statistics, including quality requirements, metadata standards, documentation rules, verification, and certification. The Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies (Ministerio de Tecnologías de Información y las Comunicaciones - MinTIC) establishes cross-government rules relating to digital interoperability, open data publication, and web transparency. The Ministry of Justice and Law, through the Justice Statistics System and related information management functions, plays a co-ordinating role in consolidating, modelling, and exchanging information, although evidence of sector wide binding operational data standards is not in place. Other justice institutions have also developed their own regulations, standards and protocols governing the collection, processing, and analysis of information and data. These include the judiciary, through the Statistical Information System of the Judicial Branch (El Sistema de Información Estadística de la Rama Judicial – SIERJU) and the police, through the National Police's Criminal, Misdemeanor and Operational Statistical Information System (Sistema de Información Estadístico Delincuencial, Contravencional y Operativo de la Policía Nacional – SIEDCO).

In **Canada**, the Department of Justice works closely with Statistics Canada —the national statistics agency—and other federal, provincial, and territorial Deputy Ministers of Justice and Public Safety to set common standards for accuracy, consistency, timeliness, and privacy of justice data across multiple sectors. This collaboration, known as the National Justice Statistics Initiative (NJSI), is responsible for setting data collection standards such as definitions, classifications and privacy safeguards, and ensure consistent gathering and analysis across jurisdictions. As the operational arm of the NJSI, Statistics Canada's Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (CCJCSS) partners with provincial/territorial governments to set up formal data collection protocols in key areas of the justice systems. Key national data standards have been developed for police and crime data, criminal and civil court data, corrections data as well as legal aid data. All data collections under the NJSI are governed by the Statistics Act, which mandates robust privacy safeguards.

In **Australia**, national data quality standards for data collection are established by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and apply across the public sector, including justice. However, standards do not cover the entire justice sector, such as ADR and community justice. In the legal assistance sector, the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department maintains a National Legal Assistance Services Data Standards Manual (DSM) that provides best-practice guidance to legal assistance service providers to support the collection of consistent and comparable data.

In **Hungary**, the National Office for the Judiciary, a member of Hungary's Official Statistical Service, carries out official statistical collections under the National Statistical Collection Programme (OSAP). Within this framework, formal and institutionalised data collection and quality standards apply across the courts and judicial statistics, but not all justice services.

Finland has some data quality criteria that applies to the public administration, including justice institutions. They are meant to facilitate the sharing of data with, for example, guidance for metadata consistency. Some of these stem from of a Ministry of Finance project conducted in 2020-2022, which also addressed the operating model for information sharing. Statistics Finland reports that common

quality criteria apply to all official statistics including justice and crime data and follow an approved quality assurance framework compatible with the European Statistics Code of Practice. In terms of data governance, a multi-stakeholder co-operation group was established to supporting actors in ‘drawing up data strategies’, although its primary purpose is limited to knowledge management. The group involves several justice institutions including courts, legal aid services and the Ministry of Justice. In addition, within the judiciary, some data-related efforts are included in ongoing digitisation programmes. Notably, the legal register centre (Oikeusrekisterikeskus), the ICT centre for the administration of justice, is currently implementing a Data Architecture Development Program (2023-2029) whose mission is “to ensure a common basis for data quality across the entire judiciary.” Its charter explicitly seeks “good data quality foundations and high-quality data lifecycle management” and aims to improve data reliability, quality and interoperability within courts, prosecutors, enforcement and related agencies.

In **Italy**, the National Institute of Statistics (Istat) co-operates with the Ministry of Justice on the collection and dissemination of judicial statistics. This has led to the development of common methodologies for the classification and collection of data (including through the establishment of dedicated working groups), and the development Justice Data Warehouses to facilitate the statistical collection of data including by standardising criteria for extracting information from operational systems, defining the level of data completeness and quality, data traceability, data archiving etc. This supports the regular production, comparability, and reliability of judicial statistics. A database dedicated to the online publication of judicial statistics, the ‘Territorial Information System on Justice (SITG), further supports the dissemination of statistical data on the judicial system and relevant parties, covering both procedural and administrative aspects. In addition, the Ministry of Justice of Italy has adopted technical rules governing the civil and criminal online proceedings, which define how procedural data and digital filings are structured, transmitted, and managed within judicial information systems.

Finally, **Switzerland** has established procedural rules for designing, implementing and delivering statistical data, including through the 2025 revision of the 1993 Swiss Ordonnance sur la statistique fédérale – OStatF. Although these remains largely focused on survey data, they do include statistical data on justice.

Source: (Government of Colombia, 2019^[162]), (Government of Colombia, 2019^[163]), (Superior Council of the Judiciary of Colombia, 2016^[164]), (National Police of Colombia, 2021^[165]), (Government of Australia, 2021^[166]), (Government of Australia, 2021^[167]), (Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO), n.d.^[168]), (Statistics Finland, n.d.^[169]), (Government of Finland, 2022^[170]), (Legal Register Centre of Finland, n.d.^[171]), (Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) and Ministry of Justice, n.d.^[172]), (Government of Italy, 2025^[173]), (Government of Italy, 2024^[174]), (Government of Switzerland, 2025^[175]).

3.5. EMPOWERING PEOPLE

The fourth pillar of a people-centred justice system is about empowering people to make the transformation of the justice system happen. This involves providing all stakeholders, in and outside of the justice system, with equal and fair opportunities to be informed, consulted, and engaged in the design and delivery of justice services. This requires the establishment of mechanisms that ensure effective and meaningful participation from a wide variety of stakeholders. Consistent engagement should be conducted in the language, format, location, and through the channels best tailored to the intended audience. Empowerment also depends on ensuring that people have the education, information and support needed to understand their rights, make informed decisions and participate in the planning and reform processes of the justice system and the law. One-off or ad hoc efforts are often insufficient; there is a need for long-term, co-designed engagement, incorporating regular feedback from participative processes. Close collaboration is also needed with non-governmental organisations that support specific groups, facilitate their engagement and help deliver information and services where they are needed the most.

Beyond the general public, fostering a culture of empowerment within the justice sector is essential to ensure the justice sector workforce possess the competences needed to effectively support people in preventing and resolving their problems. Internal policies should promote professionalism, skills development and continuous learning to support a people-centred justice transformation. Representativity of the justice workforce are also critical and can further contribute to the design of responsive policies, when professionals are provided with meaningful opportunities for participation in reform processes.

People are empowered to make people-centred justice transformation happen

Justice services are often not sufficiently tailored to people's needs and preferences, and many people view the justice system as distant and complex. In this context, engaging with stakeholders is essential to ensure the design of justice services is tailored to different users. Services designed without sufficient understanding of the needs, circumstances, difficulties, preferences and other factors impacting people justice pathways, are unlikely to be effective or efficient. It also involves empowering people throughout the process of problem resolution, including providing them with information and tools to take action, helping them understand the options they have and helping counter-balance power differences between parties to a dispute, which are common in employment problems, tenant-landlord disputes, and others.

Box 3.16. Indicator 7: People are empowered to make people-centred justice transformation happen

- a. Justice actors engage with people, businesses and communities and specific groups impacted by justice systems, including through legal aid providers and civil society organisations, to inform justice policies and practices.
- b. People (both in and outside of justice system) and stakeholders have opportunities to be informed, consulted and engaged in the design and delivery of justice services.
- c. There are effective mechanisms in place to foster empowerment and legal literacy of people, including to manage their own legal matters and justice problems.

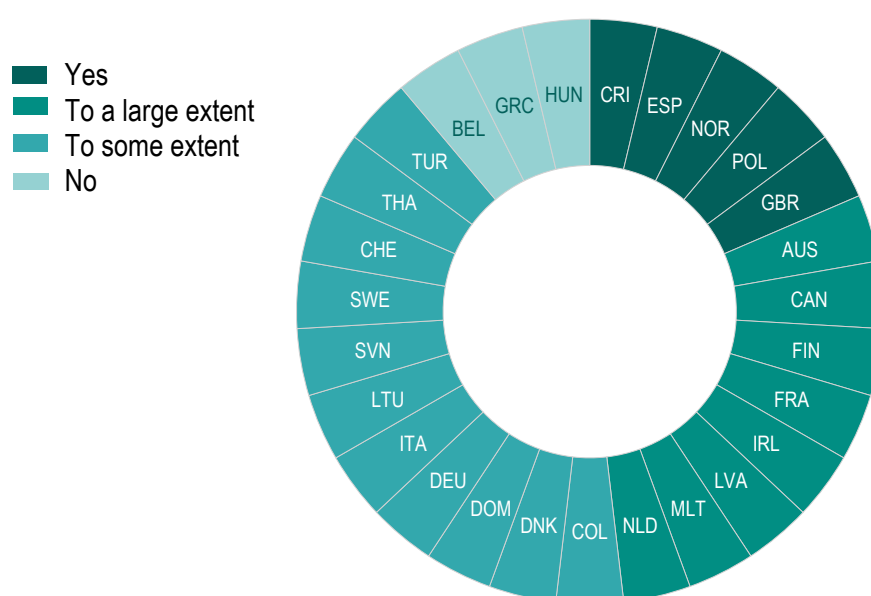
Source: (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[1]).

People (both in and outside of justice system) and stakeholders have opportunities to be informed, consulted and engaged in the design and delivery of justice services

An essential dimension of people-centred justice systems is the engagement with people, businesses, and communities in order to inform policies and practices. People, both inside and outside the justice system, should have the opportunity to be informed, consulted and engaged in the design and delivery of justice services. Engagement can take several forms, from institutionalised mechanisms, such as co-design processes, citizen panels and multi-stakeholder forums, to more informal channels. Justice stakeholders such as legal aid providers and civil society organisations can be important intermediaries in this process. They can translate experiences of people they support in resolving their justice problems, to suggested improvements to service delivery, to measures that can prevent justice problems from occurring in the first place and to structural improvements in for example access to public services. Equally important is the involvement of justice professionals themselves, whose firsthand experience and insights are critical to ensuring responsive and helpful interactions. The perspectives gathered through these processes should ultimately be translated into the design and delivery of services (Indicator 7.1.a, 7.1.b).

Five countries report that they have institutionalised mechanisms providing opportunities for people (both in and outside of the justice system) and stakeholders to be informed, consulted, and/or engaged in the design and/or delivery of justice services, and that this engagement influences the design and delivery of services. Seven countries report that there are regular opportunities for such consultation, but that they are not systematic or fully engage all groups in society, while 11 report that engagement is ad hoc, with limited impact on service design or delivery (see Figure 3.8). Mechanisms across OECD countries generally involve public consultation platforms on government websites, particularly for legislation and, in some cases, for strategies. Although these may reach a certain audience, they are often complemented by more proactive forms of engagement, including with people that are not familiar with law or policymaking.

Figure 3.8. Providing opportunities for information, consultation and engagement in the design and delivery of justice services



Note: This graph illustrates countries' scorings to the question: 'Do people (both in and outside of the justice system) and stakeholders have opportunities to be informed, consulted and/or engaged in the design and/or delivery of justice services?'.

Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/obvj16>

Countries have developed a range of co-creation and participative processes, such as working groups, advisory councils, commissions, and representative bodies that are consulted on a regular basis, along with ad-hoc initiatives such as polls or punctual workshops. While some of these mechanisms are primarily designed to inform legislation and regulation, others are more specifically geared towards improving service design and experience. In Costa Rica, Norway, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom engagement in the design and delivery of justice services is organised through structured and institutionalised frameworks that combine general consultation platforms with other mechanisms for engagement and efforts to integrate insights from specific groups (see Box 3.17). These examples illustrate a move from ad hoc consultation towards more regular and institutionalised participation. Their effectiveness ultimately depends on whether engagement begins early, reaches affected groups and provides transparent evidence of how contributions shape decisions and services.

Box 3.17. Institutionalising participation in justice policymaking

In **Costa Rica**, public engagement within the judiciary is framed by the Citizen Participation Policy, that set up various mechanisms for public consultation and participation, including the involvement of internal justice actors. These mechanisms include citizen consultations prior to decision-making (policy, budget, strategic planning), ‘commissions of service users’ composed of representatives from civil society, public institutions and non-governmental organisation, roundtables between civil society and justice stakeholders and citizens forums. As planned by the Citizen Participation Policy, stakeholders are currently working toward the establishment of a Civil Society Advisory Council (Consejo Consultivo de la Sociedad Civil) to formally represent citizens before the Judicial Branch. This to build on body is intended to build on existing mechanisms, such as the Access to Justice Commission (Comisión de Acceso a la Justicia) and its specialised sub-commissions, and collaboration with the judiciary will be structured around a formalised working methodology and priority agenda.

In **Norway**, consultations on draft laws and regulations are published on the government website prior to adoption and circulated to a wide range of stakeholders including public institutions, NGOs and advocacy groups, academic experts, industry representatives etc. Inputs collected are published online and integrated into legislative processes, administrative rule-making and strategic planning. Engagement with specific groups is further ensured through the ‘Sámi Parliament’, a representative body for the indigenous Sámi people, which must be consulted on matters affecting them. A 5-year research project to enhance children participation in policymaking affecting them is currently being implemented by the National Courts Administration in collaboration with the University of Bergen.

In **Poland**, the Ministry of Justice conducts regular public consultations on draft laws, co-operation programmes and strategies. Four commissions attached to the Ministry of Justice provide a framework to facilitate public participation on the codification of civil, criminal and family law and on the codification of the judicial system and the public prosecutor’s office. In addition, several advisory groups allow for substantive co-operation with non-governmental actors on topics such as legal aid, citizen counselling and legal education, protection of minors and rehabilitation support for children and youth, and prison related aspects.

In the **United Kingdom**, reforms are also subject to consultation, such as the Civil Legal Aid reform that involved a series of written and in-person consultations. Engagement with groups with specific needs including victims, offenders, substance misusers, and those experiencing homelessness is also carried out for specific projects such as the BOLD Programme, through focus groups with the ultimate goal of contributing to policy design and service improvements. Within the justice sector, a forum of stakeholders, the Legal Support Strategy Delivery Group, has been established to facilitate collaboration between the Ministry of Justice and the legal support sector.

Source: (Government of Norway, 2023^[176]), (The National Court Administration of Norway, 2023^[177]), (Government of Poland, n.d.^[178]), (Government of Poland, n.d.^[179]), (Government of the United Kingdom, 2023^[180]), (Government of the United Kingdom, n.d.^[181]).

In other countries, engagement is primarily conducted through public consultations on legislative proposals and reform initiatives, with opportunities to build on existing practices to further embed engagement across the justice system, and to reinforce efforts to cover different groups and use multiple methods. The Netherlands combines online consultation with targeted engagement on major reforms and publishes how contributions are addressed. Ireland has drawn on lived experience in developing family justice strategies, while Finland combines permanent civil society dialogue with engagement involving service users and people with direct experience of the justice system. Malta uses consultations and advisory bodies to inform specific reforms and policies affecting persons with disabilities. France demonstrated the potential of large-

scale engagement, reaching around 50 000 citizens, professionals and partners through multiple channels. In Australia, consultation with First Nations communities has informed national priorities, justice reinvestment and legal assistance planning. Similarly, Canada pays specific attention to engage with indigenous communities. These examples show a range of approaches, from broad public consultation to sustained or targeted engagement (see Box 3.18). They also highlight the importance of embedding participation throughout the policy cycle and demonstrating how contributions influence decisions, implementation and service improvement.

Box 3.18. Engaging people and stakeholders in justice reform

In the **Netherlands**, public consultation on draft legislations and policies are conducted through the Internetconsultatie.nl website, and decisions on whether to incorporate them or not are made publicly available. Major strategic reforms such as the National Plan on Strengthening Access to Justice (2024) or the legal aid reform have been developed following informal consultation processes with stakeholders from the sector. One specific example is the development process for the recommendations from the “The broken promise of the rule of law” report, that involved flash polls, internet consultations, an open forum and 12 location discussions across the country.

In **Ireland**, engagement is closely linked to specific strategies and service improvements. Consultations were conducted for the development of the Family Justice Strategy and the Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) Strategy that integrate lived experiences into the design of the strategy, with support from the National Women’s Council and the National Observatory on Violence against Women and Girls.

In **Finland**, the Civil Society Advisory Board, which operates under the Ministry of Justice, serves as a cross-sector, strategic advisory body on policies linked with civil society. The official responsibility report (2023) from the Criminal Sanctions Agency further demonstrates targeted and practice-oriented engagement that supports the design and delivery of justice services through project partnerships and the participation of ‘people with lived experience’. Finally, a survey was conducted among users of online services of the National Legal Aid Agency by the Legal Register Centre. Findings from the survey were meant to make the service ‘more user-friendly’.

In **Malta**, public consultations have been conducted for specific reforms, such as the Family Courts and Mediation Reform, alongside multi-stakeholder forums that facilitate dialogue on national actions plans between government and various actors. The ENGAGE Board, a civil society committee operating within the Ministry for Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector (MIV), was established to consult people with disabilities and their representatives for reviewing legislation, policy documents and other pressing matters relating to the disability sector.

In **France**, extensive consultations were conducted to develop the Ministry of Justice’s report “General Assembly of Justice” (États généraux de la Justice) with the participation of around 50 000 citizens, justice system actors and partners. Contributions were gathered through online consultations, workshops, and thematic working groups and informed recommendations for improving the justice system.

In **Australia**, engagement is particularly developed in relation to the First Nations people. Extensive consultations were conducted for developing the Commonwealth Annual Report 2024 that focused on improved outcomes for First Nations and set up policy priorities for the year to come, as well as for the design of the National Justice Reinvestment Program, that included 44 in-person and online workshops facilitated by the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research including in remote areas. More recently, the NAJP supports stakeholder engagement in justice reform through collaborative service planning arrangements that bring together governments, legal assistance providers, peak

bodies and other stakeholders. Through national, jurisdictional and local planning processes, stakeholders contribute evidence, identify emerging legal needs, and help shape policies and service delivery aimed at improving access to justice and outcomes for communities.

Justice **Canada** conducts regular consultations on legislation, policies, programmes, and services, institutionalised through dedicated portals that provide guidance on public participation, as well as centralised platforms, such as the government ‘Consulting with Canadians’ platform, which also track current and past consultation initiatives (currently 872). Engagement with indigenous communities is also ensured and follows a nation-to-nation approach. Their perspective was taken into account, for example, for the development of the Indigenous Justice Strategy. Similarly, the Indigenous Courtwork Program was developed through a co-design process including the establishment of a tripartite working group consisting of government officials, indigenous representatives and other partners.

Source: (State Commission on the Rule of Law (Staatscommissie Rechtsstaat), 2024^[182]), (Prison and Probation Service of Finland (Rikosseuraamuslaitos), 2023^[183]), (Government of Ireland, 2022^[184]), (Government of Ireland, 2022^[185]), (Government of Malta, 2026^[186]), (Government of Malta, n.d.^[187]), (Government of France, 2023^[188]), (Government of Australia, 2024^[189]), (Government of Australia, n.d.^[190]), (Government of Canada, 2025^[191]), (Government of Canada, 2026^[192]).

In several countries, engagement with people, communities, civil society actors and stakeholders from the justice system remains limited, with no clear mechanisms through which they can contribute to shaping justice responses. Opportunities for participation are not embedded in institutional arrangements and are often limited to isolated initiatives. Moreover, while consultation is important, if contributions do not impact practice, they risk further undermining public trust in justice institutions. In most countries, survey responses did not provide sufficient information to indicate how engagement feeds into service design or delivery, nor whether those consulted are informed about the results of the consultations. This absence of structured engagement mechanisms limits the ability of justice systems to capture user perspectives, particularly those of vulnerable groups, and constraints the extent to which services adapt to evolving needs.

There are effective mechanisms in place to foster empowerment and legal literacy of people, including to manage their own legal matters and justice problems

Public consultations can only be meaningful if people have the minimum knowledge and capability to understand how to contribute their experiences and insights effectively, and to advocate for their rights and preferences in relation to justice services. This may require fostering empowerment so that people can engage meaningfully in the development of services, ensuring that their participation helps realign the current mismatch between justice needs and service delivery. Beyond this, legal literacy is also essential to foster the capacity of people, SMEs, and communities to prevent justice problems and manage their own legal matters, thereby alleviating some administrative burden on the justice system. Accordingly, the establishment of effective mechanisms to foster empowerment and legal literacy, including helping people to manage their own legal matters and justice problem, is crucial. These should be supported and institutionalised by appropriate laws, policies, or funded programmes and cover different population groups (Indicator 7.1.c).

Of the 27 countries, five reported that they had comprehensive, institutionalised mechanisms across the justice system to foster empowerment and legal literacy. These mechanisms cover different groups, including vulnerable populations, and use multiple methods, from education campaigns to online portals to community justice support. A further 11 countries reported that mechanisms to foster empowerment and legal literacy were substantial but not universal – for example, they have strong legal aid literacy programmes but no efforts to target school curricula. Six reported that these initiatives were limited or fragmented, while five had no such initiatives (see Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9. Fostering people's empowerment and legal literacy



Note: This graph illustrates countries' scorings to the question: 'Are there mechanisms in place to foster empowerment and legal literacy of people, including to manage their own legal matters and justice problems?'.

Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/v6yu2o>

Countries have put in place a range of mechanisms to foster empowerment and legal literacy. Some, including Australia, Canada, Finland, Poland, Slovenia and Türkiye have embedded these efforts across the justice system through accessible information tools, education programmes and dedicated institutional structures, targeting both the general public and specific groups. In Canada, a national umbrella organisation supports co-operation among public legal education providers across the country, who develop and disseminate practical tools and programmes to help people understand and exercise their legal rights, including targeted resources for young people and groups in vulnerable situations. Australia supports the delivery of community of legal empowerment activities by legal assistance service providers across the country, including community legal education, legal information resources and stakeholder engagement. Finland combines accessible public information with citizenship education and targeted financial literacy initiatives aimed at preventing problems such as debt. Türkiye embeds legal literacy in national policy, school curricula and adult education delivered through local centres and other community institutions. In Poland, legislation establishes legal education as a public responsibility, supported by a national resource base and targeted initiatives. Together, these approaches demonstrate the value of moving beyond isolated awareness activities towards sustained, co-ordinated systems that combine formal education, practical resources and trusted local delivery, while adapting content and channels to the needs of different groups (see Box 3.19).

Box 3.19. Fostering Empowerment and Legal Literacy through Public Legal Education

In **Canada**, the Public Legal Education Association of Canada (PLEAC), a national non-profit organisation supported by the Department of Justice, serves as an umbrella body for Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI) organisations, facilitating collaboration and strengthening initiatives across the country. PLEI organisations across Canada, many of which are supported by the Department of Justice, provides accessible, plain-language information on legal rights, responsibilities, available remedies, and justice processes, helping individuals understand and address justice problems independently, particularly those in vulnerable situations, such as newcomers, low-income individuals, people with disabilities, and older persons. Resources are delivered through multiple channels, including online platforms, publications, webinars, workshops, helplines, and community outreach, such as ‘Justice Theatre’ performances in schools by the People’s Law School in the province of British Columbia. Legal literacy among youth is promoted through targeted initiatives, including work undertaken by the Ontario Justice Education Network (OJEN), which offers law-related programmes, over 200 bilingual classroom resources, and facilitates activities like mock trials, courthouse visits, and justice sector speaker events. Another example of these efforts, the Prince Edward Island Community Legal Information (CLI), a registered non-for-profit charity, offers Do-It-Yourself Kits on topics such as parenting plan, separation agreements, powers of attorney and uncontested divorce. Finally, the Department of Justice provides accessible, plain-language legal information and practical tools to help people manage family matters independently.

In **Finland**, the Finlex database that provides access to legislation and case law includes glossaries to help people better understand legal and courts terminology. In addition, platforms such as Suomi.fi and InfoFinland offer practical information on everyday legal and administrative matters, including rights, obligations, and procedures. Legal literacy is also integrated into the education system through the inclusion of citizenship courses and learning on democratic participation in school curricula. Additional initiatives include projects and publications on democratic rights as well as legal obligations for educational institutions and youth bodies to promote student involvement and legal rights awareness. Targeted efforts, such as the national strategy for financial literacy developed by the National Legal Services Authority in collaboration with the Bank of Finland and a network of financial literacy actors, further support individuals in addressing and preventing justice problems, particularly in areas such as debt.

In **Australia**, legal empowerment activities, including community legal education, legal information resources and stakeholder engagement, are supported through the National Legal Assistance Partnership 2023–2024, and more recently the NAJP. Community legal education is undertaken across the legal assistance sector, including by legal aid commissions, community legal centres, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, and Family Violence Prevention Legal Services. These services provide a range of legal information and education initiatives, including online resources, publications, webinars, workshops and community outreach activities designed to improve legal capability and help people identify, prevent and address legal problems. Many providers also deliver targeted initiatives for priority cohorts, including First Nations peoples, young people, people experiencing family and domestic violence, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

In **Türkiye**, legal literacy (Hukuk Okuryazarlığı) is part of policy commitment on awareness-raising and training in the Twelfth Development Plan (2024–2028). The Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, has integrated legal education into school curricula. The ‘Law and Justice’ lesson is taught to secondary school students since 2013 and the ‘basic legal knowledge’ course provides high school students with practical information on everyday justice problems, including online fraud. Topics related to human rights, democracy and justice are incorporated into the curriculum for ‘small children’.

Legal literacy initiatives also target adults and specific population groups. The Family Education Program (AEP) Legal Literacy Modules, led by the Ministry of Family and Social Services included legal literacy modules covering civil rights, family law, consumer rights, and the legal protection of women and children. These are delivered free of charge by government experts at local Social Services Centres (SHM) and Public Education Centres (Halk Eğitimi Merkezleri). In addition, various channels provide legal literacy support, including the Youth Centres (Gençlik Merkezleri), higher education public dormitories (KYK dormitories), lifelong Learning Centres, and legal clinics established in several universities.

In **Poland**, legal education is established by the Act on Free Legal Aid, Free Civic Counselling and Legal Education (2015) as a public task of state authorities. Legal education focuses on access to free legal aid, rights and duties of citizens, functioning of national and international legal protection bodies, mediation and dispute resolution and citizen's participation in public consultations and law-making processes. The website of the Ministry of Justice provides a database for legal education with over 51 materials, such as lesson scenarios, publications and educational articles, infographics, videos, worksheets, case studies, comics and online lessons and simulations. These materials target a broad audience including teachers, trainers, students and the general public. Poland also has targeted initiatives for specific groups. For example, a pilot programme launched in 2025 aims to strengthen legal awareness among older persons, with a particular focus on crime prevention and justice problems related to inheritance, donation, and life annuity agreements, among others.

Source: (Ontario Justice Education Network (OJEN), n.d.^[193]), (Community Legal Information (CLI), Canada, 2026^[194]), (Community Legal Information, Canada, 2026^[195]), (Community Legal Information, Canada, 2026^[196]), (Community Legal Information, 2026^[197]), (Community Legal Information, Canada, 2026^[198]), (Government of Canada, 2024^[199]), (Government of Finland, n.d.^[200]), (Government of Finland, n.d.^[201]), (Government of Finland, 2025^[202]), (National Legal Services Authority of Finland (Oikeuspalveluvirasto), n.d.^[203]), (Government of Australia, 2024^[204]) (Community Legal Centres of Australia (CLCs), 2022^[205]), (Community Legal Centres of Australia (CLCs), 2022^[206]), (Legal Aid New South Wales, 2024^[207]), (Legal Services Commission of South Australia, n.d.^[208]), (Victoria Legal Aid, 2024^[209]), (Government of Türkiye, 2019^[210]), (Government of Türkiye, n.d.^[211]), (Government of Türkiye, 2026^[212]) (İstanbul Bilgi University Faculty of Law, Türkiye, n.d.^[213]), (MEF University Faculty of Law, Türkiye, n.d.^[214]), (Yozgat Bozok University Faculty of Law, Türkiye, n.d.^[215]), (Government of Poland, n.d.^[216]), (Government of Poland, n.d.^[217]).

Others, including Costa Rica, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden, Dominican Republic, and the United Kingdom have developed substantial initiatives using education, community outreach and practical guidance to strengthen people's ability to understand their rights and respond to justice problems, although there remains scope to make these efforts more systematic and proactive, and to better reach both the general population and vulnerable groups (see Box 3.20). Collectively, these approaches show that legal empowerment extends beyond making information available: it involves developing people's knowledge and confidence through sustained education, locally accessible support and materials adapted to different needs and capabilities.

Box 3.20. Building legal capability through education and community outreach

In **Costa Rica**, the National Service of Judicial Facilitators, composed of volunteers who are supported by judges, empower the community by providing informative talks and guidance on how to use and access the justice system and, thus, address justice problems. In addition, the Judicial School offers two training programmes to the general public, on restorative justice for juveniles and indigenous communities. The Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic (DHR) also designs and implements education, outreach, and awareness strategies to inform people of their rights, how to exercise them, and how to engage with public institutions.

In **France**, legal empowerment efforts are institutionalised through the Department Councils for Access to Justice (conseils départementaux de l'accès au droit), which are legally mandated to support people in understanding and completing their justice procedures. As such, they co-ordinate access to justice policy which includes a nationwide network of almost 3 000 'Justice Points', a national legal information line, and a range of communication tools, including brochures, websites, podcasts and public events, targeting both the general public and specific groups, including people in vulnerable situations. Legal literacy is further strengthened through the Passeport EducDroit programme, which integrates three training sessions into school curricula on the following topics: 'What is the purpose of law?', 'What are my rights and obligations?' and 'How does the justice system work in France?'. An annual event, 'The Night of Law', creates a space for discussions between experts of law and the general public through shows, conferences, film debates, plays and round tables.

In the **Netherlands**, legal literacy is supported through a wide range of platforms that provide relevant information to the general public, including Legal Aid Office, Rechtwijzer, the Authority for Consumer and Markets (ACM) and the Council of the Judiciary. The Ministry of Justice's website also includes a list of legal aid services, including mediators, notaries, bailiffs, lawyers, and a Q&A section. These are often complemented by tutorials, videos and animations explaining procedures, complaints, and feedback options in simple formats. Legal literacy is also reinforced through mandatory citizenship education in primary, secondary, and special schools, as well as targeted outreach activities, including free guest lessons on Children's Rights and Courts offered by the Children's and Young People's Legal Advice Centre. Local information physical points in libraries and community centres provide access to information and advice on legal services and processes to people with limited access to the internet.

In **Germany**, legal literacy (rechtskunde) is integrated into the school system to help young people understand their rights and responsibilities. The Minister of Justice and Consumer protection has also developed an online game, Discover the Basic Law in your everyday life!, which promotes awareness of fundamental rights and articles from basic law through interactive learning. Germany has also developed targeted legal empowerment initiatives for specific population groups such as the Refugee Law Clinics which empowers asylum seekers to navigate immigration and residency laws. Initiatives also exist at regional and local levels. For example, Bavaria has strengthened constitutional and civic education through the 'Constitution Quarter-Hour' (verfassungsviertelstunde), which familiarises students with fundamental rights. In Berlin, the interdepartmental project 'Rule of law and Democracy' engages young people through youth-relevant case studies on issues such as robbery, cyberbullying, and hate speech, often culminating in simulated proceedings in courthouses. In Saxony, judges and prosecutors conduct court visits, and classroom support.

In the **United Kingdom**, the Housing Disrepair Online Signposting Tool developed by the Ministry of Justice provides step-by-step guidance on how to handle common justice problems related to housing, and platforms such as AdviceNow offer multichannel advice and information through phone, online chat, and education campaigns. Broader policy initiatives include the Ministry of Justice's action plan the 'Legal Support: The way ahead - An action plan to deliver better support to people experiencing legal

problems' which promotes early intervention by helping individuals understand their rights, navigate legal processes, and access appropriate resources, empowering them to resolve their problems independently and at an early stage. In addition, among the requirements for National Curriculum in school, one of the explicit aims is to "develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the role of law and the justice system in our society and how laws are shaped and enforced".

In **Thailand**, strengthening public's understanding of the law, fundamental rights and justice processes for all citizens is a key objective of the 4th Master Plan for National Justice Administration (2023–2026). Thailand promotes legal empowerment through mandatory basic legal literacy within school curriculums, general legal education programmes funded by the Office of the Justice Fund and community outreach programmes to educate people about rights, obligations, problems, solutions and justice services. Other justice stakeholders also support this goal with for instance, the legal knowledge dissemination project of the Lawyers Council which targets the public in several districts of Bangkok. Thailand also promotes competence and professionalism of the justice workforce with initiatives such as the Online Administrative Court Learning Center which provides online courses, learning materials and seminars on administrative law for both government officials and citizens.

In **Slovenia**, the platform nasodiscu.si provides accessible, user-friendly information to support people in understanding how to seek justice for a wide range of justice problems such as inheritance, divorce, misdemeanours etc. These include videos and animations in different languages, physical brochures, and simplified materials adapted for children. Courts further enhance the empowerment and legal literacy of people through activities, particularly for students, including the Open Days at Court to explain the functioning of courts and the judiciary, and school visits to explain procedures in a simple and understandable way. In **Dominican Republic**, legal capability and empowerment are encouraged through the Ombudsman's (Defensor del Pueblo) 2021-2027 Institutional Strategic Plan, which identifies citizen education as a strategic objective and aims to empower people to understand, exercise and defend their rights. Through its Citizenship Training (Formación Ciudadana), the Ombudsman provides a range of educational tools for different groups, including animations for children, workshops on constitutional rights, and training on human rights and democratic security for citizens and officials. In addition, the Community Roundtables (Mesas Comunitarias) connect community leaders with the Ombudsman to promote, educate on and defend human rights locally as well as channels citizens' complaints through official mechanism. The University Ombudsman trains university students on their rights and duties and promotes civic engagement, while the School Ombudsman programme trains primary and secondary student representatives in human rights, conflict resolution, and rights violations.

Source: (Ombudsman of Costa Rica, n.d.^[218]), (Ombudsman of Costa Rica, n.d.^[219]), (The Night of Law (la nuit du droit), n.d.^[220]), (Dutch Legal Helpdesk (Het Juridisch Loket), n.d.^[221]), (Dutch Legal Aid Board (Raad voor Rechtsbijstand), n.d.^[222]), (Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM), n.d.^[223]), (Government of the Netherlands, n.d.^[224]), (Children's and Youth Legal Advice Centre (Kinderen Jongerenrechtswinkel), n.d.^[225]), (Refugee Law Clinics Germany, n.d.^[226]), (Government of Bavaria (Germany), 2025^[227]), (Government of the United Kingdom, 2023^[228]), (AdviceNow (United Kingdom), n.d.^[229]), (Government of the United Kingdom, 2019^[230]), (Government of the United Kingdom, 2013^[231]), (Government of Sweden, 2026^[232]), (Government of Thailand, n.d.^[233]), (Administrative Court of Thailand, n.d.^[234]), (Judiciary of Slovenia, n.d.^[235]), (Judiciary of Slovenia, 2023^[236]), (Ombudsman of the Dominican Republic, 2019^[237]), (Ombudsman of the Dominican Republic, 2026^[238]), (Ombudsman of the Dominican Republic, 2026^[239]).

In some countries, mechanisms to foster legal literacy and empowerment remain limited or fragmented, often relying on small-scale initiatives or ad hoc projects with restricted coverage. In these contexts, people, particularly vulnerable groups, may face greater challenges in understanding their rights, navigating legal processes, and resolving justice problems independently. Strengthening comprehensive mechanisms for legal empowerment can enhance the capacity of justice systems to prevent disputes, support self-resolution and improve access to justice, reducing, thus, reliance on courts and formal services for issues that could be addressed earlier or through alternative means.

Justice sector communications are targeted for the intended audience, and are provided in plain language, avoiding complexity

It has long been recognised that the complexity of legal language and processes has impeded access to justice for most people. Legal jargon, technical terminology, and unfamiliar legal concepts can generate difficulties for people to understand their rights, identify available options, and navigate justice processes. These challenges may be particularly pronounced for certain groups, including older persons, who report a preference for clear, plain-language information and accessible forms of communication when seeking legal information and assistance (Basu and Joe, 2010^[240]; Edwards and Fontana, 2004^[241]). While efforts have been made to simplify legal information, many countries still do not mandate plain language that can be understood by all population groups. People-centred justice relies on clear communications that allow people to navigate justice processes smoothly. Making language more accessible is therefore a critical task for the justice systems (Indicator 8).

Box 3.21. Indicator 8: Justice sector communications are targeted for the intended audience, and are provided in plain language, avoiding complexity

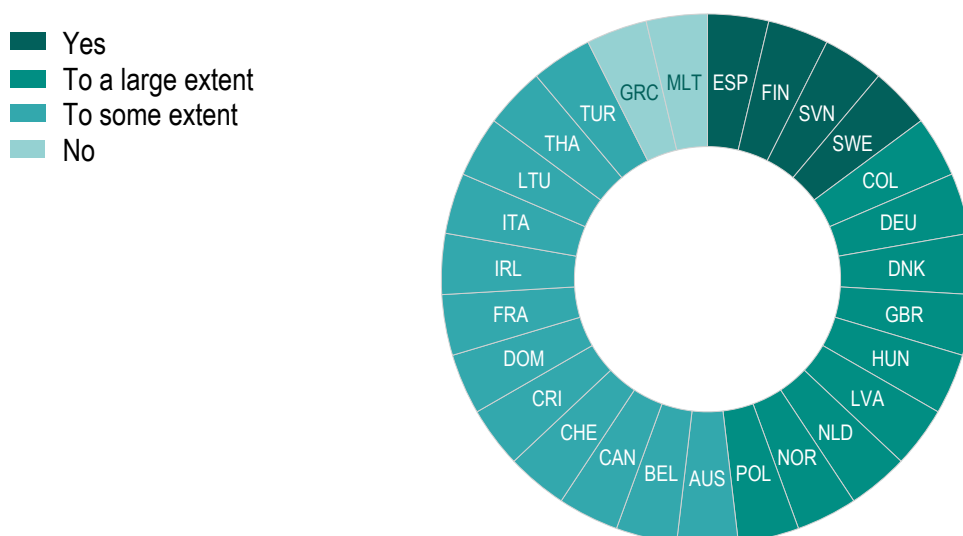
- a. There is a government or justice sector policy that requires efforts to reduce complexity and use plain language in justice sector communications.
- b. There are online and offline efforts to enable people to access relevant legal information, navigate forms and procedures, and find appropriate justice services.
- c. People are aware of services that can address their legal needs and justice problems.

Source: (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[1]).

There is a government or justice sector policy that requires efforts to reduce complexity and use plain language in justice sector communications

To encourage the use of clear communication within justice services, governments or justice sectors can adopt laws or policies that require reducing complexity and use plain, jargon-free language in communications. Such policies help ensure that communications are tailored to audiences' needs, including those of non-native speakers and people with low literacy levels. Their impact is even greater when they are mandated across the sector and supported by clear implementation tools such as guidelines and audits (Indicator 8.a.).

Figure 3.10. Using plain or accessible language across the justice sector



Note: This graph illustrates countries' scorings to the question: 'Does your government require efforts to use plain or accessible language across the justice sector?'.

Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/qigcj1>

A number of countries have adopted laws requiring the use of clear and accessible language across the public sector. For example, Finland's *Administrative Procedure Act* (Government of Finland, 2003^[242]), Slovenia's *Act on the Public Use of Slovenian* (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, n.d.^[243]), and the *Language Acts* of Norway (Lovdata, 2021^[244]) and Sweden (Government Offices of Sweden, 2009^[245]) mandate that public authorities communicate in a clear, simple, and understandable manner. In some cases, these legal provisions take a more narrowed approach, focusing on specific aspects of the public sector's communication and interactions. For example, Denmark's *Web Accessibility Act* (*Webtilgængelighedsloven*) (Retsinformation, 2018^[246]) requires public bodies to publish clear and comprehensive accessibility statements for websites. In Germany, the *Federal Disability Equality Act* (BGG) (Gesetze im Internet, 2002^[247]), includes provisions aimed at improving accessibility for persons with disabilities. It requires communication to be provided in simple and understandable language for people with intellectual or psychological needs, and to ensure notices, general administrative decisions, public-law contracts and forms are accessible. The BGG's provisions apply to digital justice services, requiring federal public bodies to ensure their websites and mobile applications are accessible. This is further reinforced by the *Barrier-Free Information Technology Ordinance* (BITV), which sets out requirements for content to be perceivable, understandable, and robust, and requires public-sector homepages to provide explanations in German Sign Language and Easy Language.

In other cases, requirements for clear and plain communication are incorporated into procedural legislation or justice administration acts. For example, Spain's organic law 5/2024 on the *Right to Defence* establishes a right to clear language in acts, resolutions, and procedural communications. In addition, the *Civil* understand and be understood in any action they carry out. In Colombia, the statutory law on the administration of justice expressly requires ensuring clarity in judicial resolutions and communication addressed to people (Government of Colombia, 2024^[248]).

These binding legal frameworks are sometimes supported by implementation policies and tools, including portals with user-friendly resources and guidelines for justice professionals. In Denmark, the *Guideline on the Quality of Legislation Act* and the *Courts' Language Policy* (Danmarks Domstole, 2023^[249]) promote clear and accessible communication in both written and oral formats (Na sodišču, n.d.^[250]). In Norway, the

Central Government Communication Policy (2009^[251]) encourages ‘well-written and clear language that is understandable to everyone’. Additional guidance is provided through the *Court Administration’s Recommendations for Judicial Writing* (2015^[252]) which define what constitutes ‘good language’, explains how to rewrite technical jargon and legal phrases, and includes practical advice on word choice, including the use of rare, complex, or lengthy terms. Sweden has also developed guidance tools for professionals, listing complex and outdated legal terms and suggesting clearer alternatives. In some countries, specific institutions support the promotion and implementation of plain language within the justice system such as the Commission for the Clarity and Modernisation of Legal Language in Spain (Justicia 2030, n.d.^[253]) and the Swedish Institute for Language and Folklore which operates across the broader public administration.

Attention to the specific communication needs of certain groups is sometimes expressly recognised. For instance, in Finland, the *Sámi Language Act* (Finlex, 2003^[254]) includes provisions on the use of Sámi in courts and sets obligations for public authorities to use Sámi in public communications, such as official announcements, publications, forms, and instructions. In Slovenia, the *Handbook for ensuring accessibility and equal opportunities for all persons in judicial and other proceedings* (NSIOS, 2025^[255]) provides guidance on communicating with different groups including people with disability and promotes the use of plain language, easy-to-read formats and adapted communication methods. In addition, Slovenia’s Judicial Portal (Na sodišču, n.d.^[256]) offers multilingual explanatory animations including versions in sign language. Communication child-friendly communication materials also exist such as brochures, simplified versions of key legal texts, and a comic version of the constitution.

In other countries, efforts to promote plain language builds exclusively on non-binding guidance and practical tools. In the United Kingdom, the *Functional Standards Writing Style Guide* (2024) promotes the use of concise and precise language across government. The Office of National Statistics requires its published content to be in plain language (ONS, n.d.^[257]). In the Netherlands, the Principles of Government Communication (Government of the Netherlands, 2017^[258]) emphasises that information should be accessible, understandable, timely, targeted, and tailored to different audiences. The Knowledge Centre for Policy and Regulations offers practical guidance on clear language in legislation and regulations, recognising the importance of making laws understandable for people and businesses (Government of the Netherlands, n.d.^[259]). Implementation is further supported by tools such as the Language Compass, a writing aid for government officials, as well as resources and training available through the User Central Toolkit (*Toolkit van Gebruiker Centraal*) and the Accessibility Reading Level Tool (*Accessibility Leesniveau Tool*), both of which supports the justice sector in producing clear, comprehensive and accessible information for people navigating the system.

In some countries, efforts to promote legal literacy and empowerment remain less developed or are implemented through more fragmented approaches, often relying on ad hoc initiatives with limited reach. In these contexts, people, particularly those in vulnerable situations, may face greater challenges in understanding their rights, navigating legal processes, and resolving justice problems independently. Developing more comprehensive approaches to the use of clear, plain, and accessible language in justice sector communication and legislation drafting can enhance the capacity of justice systems to support early and self-resolution of justice problems and improve access to justice. This, in turn, can contribute to reducing reliance on formal justice institutions for matters that could be addressed more effectively at early stages or through alternative mechanisms.

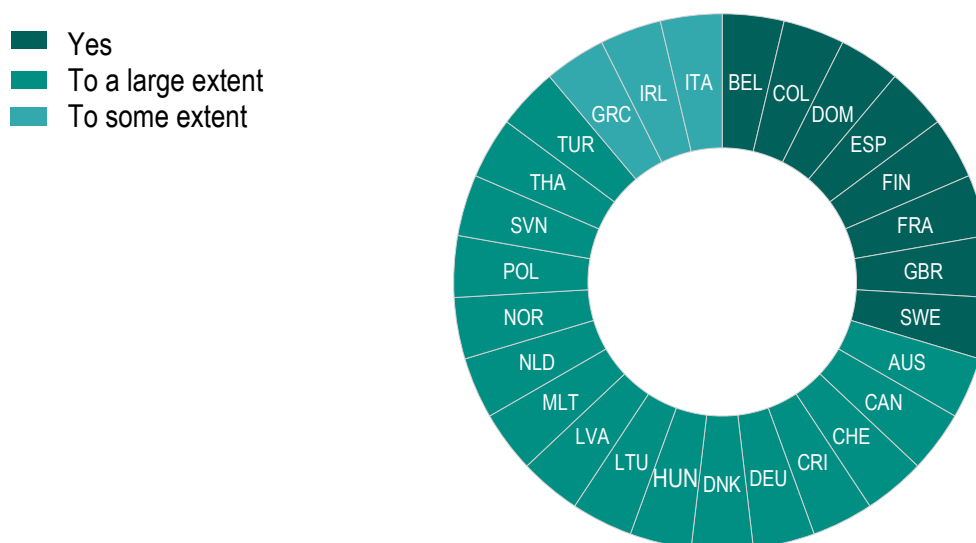
There are online and offline efforts to enable people to access relevant legal information, navigate forms and procedures and find appropriate justice services, and people are aware of services that can address their legal needs and justice problems

Ensuring that people can easily access relevant legal information and navigate forms and procedures requires sustained efforts to help them connect with appropriate justice services that can address their legal needs and justice problems, both online and offline. This calls for structured system-wide efforts,

including targeted support for people with limited connectivity or literacy. Data on the proportion of the population who is aware of and can access legal and justice services may help justice institutions design effective policies to bridge gaps (Indicator 8.b, 8.c).

In a number of countries, structured, comprehensive system-wide efforts are in place to enable people, communities and businesses to effectively access information, navigate procedures and identify appropriate services through an omni channel approach. Government portals, websites, applications have an important role in facilitating interactions with justice services and enhancing understanding through accessible means. At the same time, complementary channels, such as in-person services, telephone support and other forms of direct assistance ensure accessibility for individuals with low connectivity or limited literacy. The role of these channels, as well as the specific measures and initiatives countries have put in place to ensure that digital transformation preserves effective access to justice for individuals experiencing barriers to technology, is further examined in Section 3.4 on A governance infrastructure that enables people-centred justice.

Figure 3.11. Providing appropriate justice services through digital and non-digital channels



Note: This graph illustrates countries' scorings to the question: 'Are there efforts to enable people to access relevant legal information, navigate forms and procedures, and/or find appropriate justice services through digital and non-digital channels?'.
Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/r9p53j>

Country practices illustrate different ways of delivering justice services through digital, telephone and in-person channels. These examples highlight the value of organising channels around clear entry points and coherent pathways, enabling users with different needs and capabilities to move more easily from information to appropriate assistance and resolution (see Box 3.22).

Box 3.22. Connecting justice services through omnichannel pathways

Colombia offers a range of channels through which people can access services. In-person services, such as the Houses of Justice and the mobile days of justice and citizen coexistence also support effective provision of legal information. In addition to offering in-person support, one of the good practices from the country is the Executive Branch Justice Service Platform, JUSTIFACIL, which allows users to submit complaints or make claims through a single entry point, receive guidance through an

AI-based assistant (Justino), track cases, and identify relevant support services based on their needs. In-person services, such as the Houses of Justice and the mobile days of justice and citizen coexistence also support effective provision of legal information.

In **Belgium**, the FPS Justice website provides thematic information, including mediation, judicial procedures, and family matters, alongside practical online services, such as managing protection measures or fines, searching for courts and case laws, and identifying certified translators. These are supported by platforms including Just-on-Web, MyGov.be, Courts & Tribunals websites, Legal Aid, Mediation Commission and the Federal Ombudsman, all of which provide additional information and access points to services. At regional level, initiatives such as the Citizens' Information Portal of the German Speaking Community provides information on public services, including digital transformation efforts and hotlines to request assistance.

France has developed a largely comprehensive and system-wide efforts for the delivery of justice services. The Justice.fr platform provides information on rights and procedures related to a wide range of areas such as family, criminal, health and work issues. It enables users to carry out certain procedures online, such as filing a civil suit or applying for legal aid. The national digital gateway, RDV Service Public allows people to book appointments with legal professionals, conciliators, associations, and public services in a co-ordinated manner. To complement the RDV Service Public, a single number for access to justice access points has been created to connect people to the closest physical justice point (Point Justice) or to provide contact details of the relevant jurisdiction if a lawsuit is already registered.

Spain has developed comprehensive set of tools to facilitate access to justice, complemented by in-person offices. The Justice Folder (Carpeta Justicia) provides a personal online space allowing people, businesses and legal professionals to access justice services 24/7. Through this platform, users can consult information, such as power of attorney, electronic court files and judicial notifications, as well as carry out actions including requesting appointments, accessing electronic judicial headquarters, and retrieving notarial documents. Additional tools exist such as Electronic Notifications Services (Notificaciones Electrónicas), the digital Judicial Deposits and Consignments Account system, and online appointment service. The Electronic Signature Holder (Portafirmas Electrónico) has further enhanced procedural efficiency, enabling more than 108 million electronic signatures since 2020 and improving users' interaction with justice services.

In **Finland**, the National Legal Services Authority, operating under the Ministry of Justice, provides public legal aid, public guardianship and financial and debt counselling services through multiple channels. People can obtain legal information and find relevant services telephone, chatbot, online chat, email, and a network of 23 in-person offices. The Personal Legal Aid Service page enables people to apply for legal aid and access related services online, while the Citizen's Information Bank on Legal Matters provides information on key legal matters and directs users to relevant judicial organisations and services. Finally, one-stop service points have been established for specific groups, such as the Suomi-piste service points, which brings together services from multiple government authorities in a single location and supporting easier navigation.

Source: (Government of Colombia, n.d.^[260]), (Government of Belgium, n.d.^[261]), (Government of Belgium, 2024^[262]), (Government of Belgium, 2026^[263]), (Courts and Tribunals of Belgium, 2026^[264]), (Avocats.be, n.d.^[265]), (Federal Mediation Commission, 2026^[266]), (Ombudsman of Belgium, n.d.^[267]), (German-speaking Community of Belgium, 2026^[268]), (Government of France, n.d.^[269]), (Government of Spain, n.d.^[270]), (Government of Finland, n.d.^[271]), (Government of Finland, n.d.^[272]), (Government of Finland, n.d.^[273]), (Government of Finland, n.d.^[274]).

Many other countries have made similar efforts, although these could be more comprehensive and channels better integrated. Country examples show a gradual shift from providing static (legal) information towards services that help people understand their options, identify solutions, navigate procedures and take action (see Box 3.23). Canada, Germany and Latvia combine centralised information with digital tools for identifying services, completing applications, filing documents or following proceedings, while Switzerland provides comparable support through cantonal platforms. Malta and Thailand illustrate how justice information can be connected to broader, life-event-based government services. Poland complements online and paper guidance with in-person assistance and referrals, and Australia combines self-help resources with targeted support and measures to improve digital access in remote communities. Together, these approaches demonstrate the potential for clearer information, integrated digital pathways and assisted channels to make justice services more accessible and easier to use. Nevertheless, provision often remains fragmented across institutions and levels of government, and further efforts are needed to connect channels, provide personalised assistance and ensure that all people can reach the service most appropriate to their needs. Together, these approaches demonstrate the potential for clearer information, integrated digital pathways and assisted channels to make justice services more accessible and easier to use.

Box 3.23. Helping people find information and navigate justice services

In **Canada**, a combination of websites and physical offices provide legal information, although coverage remains uneven across provinces. Ontario stands out for the breadth and diversity of its justice service channels. The website Steps in Justice: Your Guide to Law in Ontario, developed by the Community Legal Education Ontario, brings together key justice actors to provide step-by-step information on a wide range of topics such as family issues, employment, housing, and criminal charges. It also offers 'guided pathways' that generate legal forms for a number of justice issues. The Ontario Courts Public Portal and the Justice Services Online Portal allow users to file documents electronically for civil, small claims, and family proceedings, simplifying procedures and improving accessibility.

Similarly, in **Switzerland**, legal information is made available through a range of government and justice institution websites, including cantonal portals. The Judicial Branch of Geneva offers a structured access to forms classified by theme and in alphabetical order, covering areas such as legal assistance, parental authority, mediation, and civil procedures. It also provides complementary resources, including case law, court sessions agenda, list of lawyers, and online services, enabling people to better engage with the justice system. Additional support is provided through cantonal platforms. For example, the official website of the Republic and Canton of Geneva (ge.ch) provides access to a wide range of administrative services, including permits, taxes, registrations, and online forms, supporting people in navigating procedures across sectors. The Administrative Jurisdiction of the Canton of Berne provides step-by-step information on how to challenge administrative decisions, including eligibility, procedures and contact details of relevant authorities. Similarly, the Canton de Vaud provides clear instructions on filing appeal, including requirements, time limits and representation.

In **Germany**, websites and portals have been widely developed to support improving access to legal information and facilitating navigation of other services, although in-person support or channel integration seems limited. The New Legal Information System (NeuRIS) developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection (BMJV), provides centralised access to current laws, court decisions, and administrative regulations, addressing the fragmentation and complexity of legal information and facilitating people's understanding of the legal framework. The Justice Portal (Justizportal) brings together a wide range of justice services such as the Court and Authority Finder which enables people to identify and locate the appropriate courts, a legal aid 'Pre-Check' tool that helps determine eligibility for state-funded legal aid (Beratungshilfe) and a step-by-step application

assistant that helps fill out application forms, supporting people in better navigating the justice system. In addition, 'My Justice Mailbox' provides a secure digital channel for people to communicate with courts and public authorities.

In **Latvia**, the official digital justice portal, e-lieta, provides direct links to official websites of key justice institutions, including Supreme Court, Prison Administration, and Legislation portals. It also offers services through the personal portal 'My e-stuff' (Manas e-lietas) where users can consult files, submit documents electronically, and monitor court proceedings. The Court Administration's YouTube channel further facilitates navigation and legal literacy through plain language explanations of procedures. Moreover, the LV Portal centralises reliable state information and publishes explanatory content on legal procedures and rights. It also includes a dedicated section on courts to 'know the judiciary' and a consultation platform enabling people to ask questions about the Latvian legal framework and its application. Latvia reports that all these platforms incorporate accessibility features to support people with special needs.

In **Malta**, efforts to enable people to access information and other justice services and navigate procedures are supported through a network of justice-specific and government-wide platforms and websites. The Servizz.gov provides information on procedures linked to specific life events such as 'becoming unemployed' or 'becoming a carer'. Key justice institutions such as Legal Aid Malta, the Judiciary, and the Court Services Agency have their own websites through which they provide practical guidance through FAQs, contact information, and links to further services, such as online consultations and e-courts. Additional resources, such as dedicated websites on Legal Professions and 'Things to know about Justice in Malta', further support people in understanding available services and identifying appropriate support.

In **Poland**, the Ministry of Justice has developed a catalogue of 110 service cards meant to support people in understanding which justice services a district, regional or appeal court can perform. They cover cases commonly brought before the court including matters relating to civil, criminal, family, commercial, labour, and social security law. They also provide detailed information about how to initiate proceedings, what documents to submit, when to submit them, how much to pay in fees, and what templates and forms to use. The materials are available both online and in paper format. In-person support is also available through court customer service offices (Biura Obsługi Interesantów - BOI) which provide information, documents, and guidance. In addition, advice services play an important role in guiding people to navigate the justice system with advisers assessing individual situation, explaining rights and obligations, developing step-by-step action plans, and providing referrals to relevant services. A victim support helpline further helps individuals in identifying appropriate justice and protection services and facilitates referrals to free legal aid points, specialised domestic violence support centres, crisis-intervention centres, social-assistance services and medical services (Ministry of Justice of Poland, 2021^[275]).

In **Australia**, the Justice Connect website offers over 150 self-help resources on common justice problems, including bankruptcy, employment, sexual harassment and disasters, as well as services allowing users to apply for free legal assistance or seek legal advice. Through a search engine, people select the type of problem and state they live in to access relevant resources. In addition, the Family Violence Law Help website provides targeted information for people seeking to understand domestic and family violence, relevant legal frameworks and available support services, including referrals to hotlines and in-person assistance. Broader initiatives to enhance access to information through digital means include the Commonwealth Digital Connectivity Project which has expanded internet access in 22 remote First Nations communities, enabling people to access services.

An interesting initiative of **Thailand** is the Tang Rath Application 'Your Shortcut to Government Services: Simple, All-in-One, for Every Stage of Life.' This mobile application provides seamless access to over 472 government services including: checking credit bureau reports, electricity bills, and water

bills, social security benefits and newborn subsidies, traffic tickets and verifying licenses or broadcasting certificates issued by the NBTC, managing savings with the National Savings Fund (NSF) for retirement planning.

Source: (Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO), 2026^[276]), (Government of Ontario, Canada, n.d.^[277]), (Judiciary of the Canton of Geneva, n.d.^[278]), (Republic and Canton of Geneva, n.d.^[279]), (Administrative Court of the Canton of Bern, n.d.^[280]), (Government of Vaud, n.d.^[281]), (Government of Germany, n.d.^[282]), (Government of Germany, 2026^[283]), (Government of Germany, n.d.^[284]), (Government of Latvia, n.d.^[285]), (Government of Latvia, n.d.^[286]), (Government of Latvia, n.d.^[287]), (Government of Latvia, n.d.^[288]), (Government of Latvia, n.d.^[289]), (Government of Malta, 2026^[290]), (Legal Aid Malta, n.d.^[291]), (Judiciary Malta, 2026^[292]), (Court Services Agency of Malta, n.d.^[293]), (Government of Malta, n.d.^[294]), (Government of Poland, 2026^[295]), (Government of Poland, n.d.^[296]), (Justice Connect, Australia, n.d.^[297]), (Government of Poland, n.d.^[298]), (Government of Poland, n.d.^[299]), (Justice Connect, Australia, n.d.^[297]), (National Legal Aid of Australia, n.d.^[300]), (National Legal Aid of Australia, 2026^[301]).

Two of the 27 countries report that their Ministry of Justice collects data on the proportion of the population that is aware of the legal and justice services that are available and accessible to them. In the United Kingdom, the Legal Problem and Resolution Survey 2023 indicates that between 81% and 100% of the population is aware of available justice services. The World's Project's General Population Poll 2022 finds that awareness level in the Dominican Republic range between 61% and 80%.

Moreover, evidence from the Netherlands Legal Needs Survey, for example, shows that individuals are less likely to rely on government websites compared to other online sources, potentially reflecting the influence of commercial incentives or algorithmic manipulations. In this context of increasing use of internet and AI to obtain information related to justice problems, governments face an increasing challenge to ensure that reliable and accurate information remains accessible, up to date and trusted. In this regard, practices from the health sector may offer a useful model, with some countries developing websites with certified public information about health problems and effective remedies based on evidence-based professional guidelines. A similar approach could help strengthen the availability and visibility of trusted legal information for people facing justice problems.

3.6. PARTICIPATORY AND EVIDENCE-BASED PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A people-centred justice system includes commitment to participatory and evidence-based planning, monitoring and evaluation. It focuses on enhancing the role of evidence for operational, policy and decision-making purposes. This involves improving the availability, quality and disaggregation of data, including on the needs and experiences of different groups, and using that data and evidence to guide planning, budgeting and investment decisions. People-centred planning and budgeting processes draw on evidence about the availability and effectiveness of justice services and use data on legal needs and justice problems to set priorities and direct resources. Increasing the transparency of justice system budgets can reinforce this approach by showing, across the sector and for individual institutions and services, how resources relate to the services provided and the justice outcomes achieved. Making this information public supports transparency and accountability and enables governments and stakeholders to assess whether spending is effectively contributing to enhances access to justice.

Effective governance of the justice system depends on monitoring, evaluation and accountability mechanisms for its institutions and services. Regularly conducting robust reviews at both system-wide and service levels provide a basis for assessing performance, identifying operational and structural weaknesses, and determining where laws, policies, processes or services require reform. This also involves identifying gaps in data and knowledge about what effectively resolves people's problems and providing support for people-centred justice research, data generation and collaboration.

Justice sector planning and budgeting is people-centred, data-driven and evidence-based

Justice sector planning and budgeting have often been organised around individual institutions and administrative portfolios, with a primary focus on bodies under the direct responsibility of ministries of justice. This approach can overlook services delivered elsewhere in government or by non-state actors that contribute to resolving everyday justice problems, including legal aid, alternative dispute resolution and community-based services. It can also result in resources to follow historical allocations and institutional caseloads rather than evidence about the problems people experience, including legal needs that never reach a formal institution. As a result, resources may not be directed to where they can make the greatest difference, or they may not be adjusted in response to emerging, intensifying or newly visible areas of legal needs and justice problems. It may also be difficult to connect spending with the services provided and the outcomes achieved, while front-line services may remain under-resourced or poorly reflected in official figures. Making justice sector planning and budgeting people-centred, data-driven and evidence-based is therefore essential to align resources with the needs and problems experienced by people and businesses.

Box 3.24. Indicator 9: Justice sector planning and budgeting is people-centred, data-driven and evidence-based

- a. The justice sector planning and budgeting process is based on data and evidence about the availability and effectiveness of justice services.
- b. Priorities in justice sector planning and budgeting are driven by data about legal needs and justice problems.
- c. Justice budgets, for the sector and per institution or service, provide the information needed to understand the connection between resources, services provided, and justice outcomes achieved, and this information is made public.

Source: (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[1]).

The justice sector planning and budgeting process is based on data and evidence about the availability and effectiveness of justice services

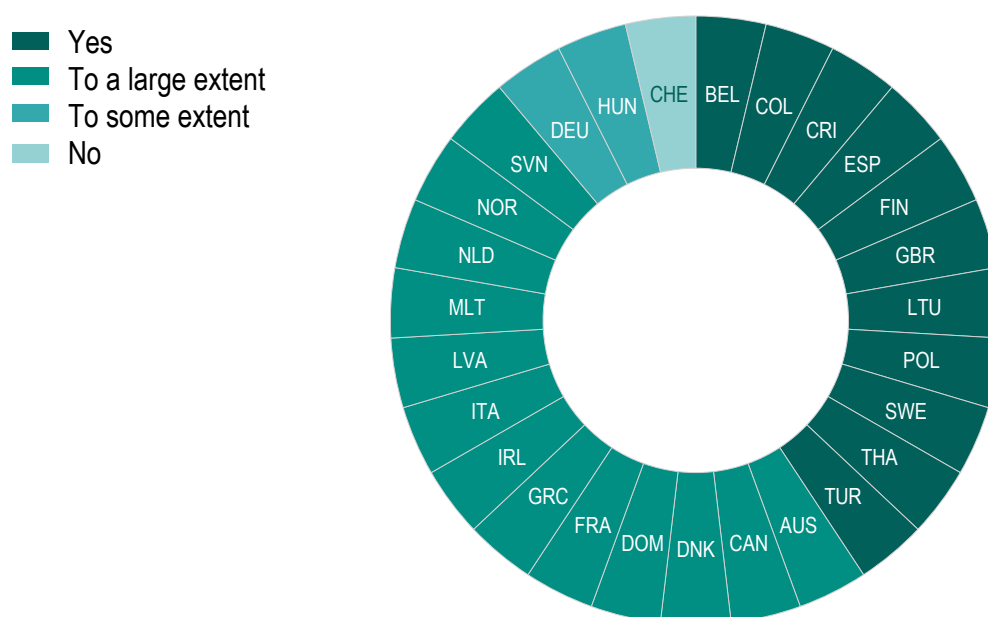
Effective people-centred planning and budgeting require a formal and recurring process that considers the justice sector as a whole, rather than as a collection of separate exercises undertaken by individual institutions. Depending on the national context, the process may bring together the ministry of justice, the judiciary, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, legal aid providers, community-based justice services and other relevant state and non-state actors. Their participation enables the joint assessment of the availability and effectiveness of justice services and the identification of shared priorities. Judicial authorities, for instance, are consulted in determining the allocation of resources in 67% of OECD countries (OECD, 2026^[302]). Consistent with the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems, the process should draw on accessible, high-quality and, where relevant, disaggregated data and evidence to inform planning, investment and reform (OECD, 2023^[2]). Institutionalising the process through a shared strategic plan, roadmap or co-ordinated action framework can provide continuity and translate agreed priorities into clear objectives, responsibilities, implementation arrangements and mechanisms for review. Robust data and evaluation evidence on both the availability and effectiveness of justice services are integral to this process. Evidence on availability captures the coverage and accessibility of services, while evidence on effectiveness examines the outcomes achieved and people's

experiences of using them. Integrating this evidence into regular planning and budgeting cycles allows it to guide the allocation and prioritisation of resources, rather than remaining confined to individual projects, pilots or institutions (Indicator 9.a).

Of the 27 countries, almost all operate some form of justice-sector planning (see Figure 3.12). Planning is formalised through a range of legislative and institutional instruments, which are frequently combined within a single country. These include sector-wide national justice strategies like in Spain²² and Colombia²³, long-term institutional strategic plans in Costa Rica²⁴, Dominican Republic²⁵ and Lithuania²⁶, and inter-institutional co-ordination arrangements (e.g. Costa Rica's co-ordination public body *Comisión Nacional para el Mejoramiento de la Administración de Justicia (CONAMAJ)*, Ireland's *Judicial Planning Working Group and Community Safety Partnerships*). Ministry or judiciary activity plans, whether multi-year strategies or annual operational documents, are the most common form of planning²⁷. In several countries, these instruments are also embedded in statutory performance frameworks anchored in law or the budget, notably in Türkiye, France, Finland, Slovenia, Lithuania, Costa Rica and Canada²⁸. These arrangements differ in their scope and governance, but provide a basis for setting priorities, assigning responsibilities and co-ordinating implementation across justice institutions.

In a large group of countries, the planning process produces formal strategies or co-ordinated frameworks but does not involve the participation and shared ownership of all relevant state and non-state justice actors. At one end of the spectrum are broad, well-institutionalised government- or ministry-led plans that cover substantial parts of the justice sector but do not consistently involve the judiciary or relevant non-state actors in a recurring shared process. This is the case, to varying degrees, in Türkiye, Poland, France, Ireland, Norway, Greece and the United Kingdom. Elsewhere, participation and co-ordination extend across several actors but remain confined to a particular part of the sector, such as the judicial branch in the Dominican Republic, the courts in Denmark, or the federal justice administration in Canada. A further group of countries has well-established planning and budgeting processes within individual institutions but lacks a single framework through which those processes are brought together. In Hungary, the Netherlands, Latvia and Slovenia, for instance, priorities are developed through statutory budget arrangements and separate institutional planning cycles rather than consolidated within a shared sector-wide strategy. These arrangements provide important foundations for institutional management and accountability but stop short of a process through which justice actors jointly agree priorities, responsibilities and implementation arrangements. In a smaller number of countries, planning remains more ad hoc or institution-specific. Federal structures can also limit the scope for a single national process, as responsibilities are distributed across levels of government, notably in Germany, Switzerland, Canada, and Australia.

Figure 3.12. Extent of justice sector-wide planning



Note: This graph illustrates countries' scorings to the question: 'Is there a justice sector-wide planning process?'.
 Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/dcmymui>

Across countries, effective sector-wide planning rests on three closely related elements: breadth, participation and implementation. Breadth requires the planning process to cover all the institutions and services through which people seek justice. Participation requires relevant state and non-state actors to have meaningful roles in setting priorities and overseeing implementation, rather than being consulted only after decisions have been made. Implementation requires agreed priorities to be linked to responsibilities, financing, delivery arrangements and mechanisms for reviewing progress. These elements can be combined through different institutional arrangements. Unified national strategies can establish a common direction and shared responsibilities, while co-ordinated planning cycles and performance agreements can connect strategic priorities to financing and delivery. Participatory planning processes and recurring co-ordination mechanisms can also support shared ownership across institutions and services. Country experiences illustrate different institutional approaches to strengthening these dimensions of sector-wide planning through shared governance, participation, long-term strategic foresight, and the integration of planning with budgeting and performance management (see Box 3.25).

Country experience points to several routes for connecting long-term justice priorities with implementation, resources and accountability (see Box 3.25). Spain's *Justicia 2030* and Colombia's *Plan Decenal del Sistema de Justicia* provide the clearest examples of system-wide frameworks: both bring together multiple institutions and levels of government, extend beyond courts to legal aid, dispute resolution and community-based services, and translate shared priorities into implementation and monitoring arrangements. The Dominican Republic's *Plan Justicia del Futuro 2034* demonstrates the value of large-scale participation and scenario-based planning, although responsibility for the strategy remains principally with the Judicial Power. Costa Rica illustrates how successive institutional planning cycles can build continuity, incorporate lessons from implementation and connect objectives with projects, budgets and results. Lithuania similarly distributes planning across national, ministerial and judicial frameworks rather than consolidating it in a single sector-wide strategy. Finland follows a further model, embedding longer-term priorities in recurring performance agreements, budgeting and monitoring across justice agencies. Taken together, these examples suggest that effective justice planning does not depend on a single institutional form. Its influence

rests on broad coverage, clear responsibilities, meaningful participation and strong connections between strategic priorities, financing, operational delivery and performance review. Unified frameworks may strengthen collective ownership, while recurring institutional mechanisms can provide continuity and ensure that strategy remains connected to routine decisions about resources and results.

Box 3.25. Justice-system planning and budgeting

Spain's Justicia 2030 provides an example of a unified planning framework that combines broad sectoral coverage with shared governance and defined implementation arrangements. Although led by the Ministry of Justice, the strategy explicitly brings together the autonomous-community governments that hold justice competencies, the judiciary, the prosecution service, other ministries, and civil society organisations as co-responsible actors rather than consultees. The strategy defines the justice ecosystem broadly, encompassing judges, prosecutors, legal professionals and other justice operators alongside institutions and public authorities. Its substantive scope extends beyond institutional modernisation to accessibility, services to citizens, legal aid, alternative dispute resolution through the Medios Adecuados de Solución de Controversias, and data-based justice. It is operationalised through three objectives, nine programmes and twenty-seven projects, with subprojects serving as units of execution, measurement and financing. An initial action plan was supported by a defined financial plan, while accountability arrangements include annual reporting, six-monthly appearances before Parliament and a regularly updated public website. Together, these features move the strategy beyond consultation towards a structured process for financing, jointly implementing and reviewing agreed priorities.

Colombia's Plan Decenal del Sistema de Justicia 2017–2027 similarly approaches justice as an interconnected system rather than as a collection of separate institutions. Developed pursuant to Article 108 of Law 1753 of 2015 and aligned with the National Development Plan, it establishes a ten-year roadmap with strategic and operational levels of planning, supported by defined objectives, actions, indicators and follow-up mechanisms. Its scope encompasses the courts, prosecution services, legal aid, alternative dispute resolution, and community and territorial justice, while also addressing legal pluralism, rural justice and the articulation of ordinary justice with traditional and community-based forms of dispute resolution. Co-ordination among justice actors is treated as an objective of the planning process itself, which extends beyond formal institutions to territorial authorities and community justice actors. The Plan was jointly formulated and endorsed by the principal justice institutions through territorial participation spaces, a forum of entities linked to the justice system and an advisory council. These mechanisms brought together judges, prosecutors, mediators, traditional authorities, Casas de Justicia, and civil-society organisations. Regional and territorial consultations gave particular attention to vulnerable and ethnic groups, helping to incorporate diverse forms of justice and experiences of legal need into the planning process. Implementation is intended to proceed through the sectoral plans, territorial strategies, and development plans of participating institutions. Inter-institutional arrangements, governance pacts, technical committees and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation provide a basis for co-ordinating these processes. The Plan therefore connects a shared, system-wide direction with co-ordinated implementation across national, institutional and territorial planning processes.

The Dominican Republic's Plan Justicia del Futuro 2034 illustrates how long-term institutional planning can be strengthened through large-scale participation and collective construction. Although formally a strategy of the Judicial Power, its development involved more than 3 000 participants across 18 workshops and 210 working tables nationwide, including judges, judicial personnel, civil-society representatives, the private sector, academia and citizens. The wider process also engaged actors from across the justice system, including the Public Prosecution Service, Public Defence, the Bar Association

and legal-education institutions. The plan uses scenario-based planning to anticipate different future conditions and is organised around the objectives of more timely, accessible and transparent justice. Its governance model combines strategic direction, collective deliberation, citizen oversight and periodic evaluation, supported by multisectoral participation and evidence-based monitoring. This approach is notable for its participatory and forward-looking planning approach, even though it is not a single sector-wide strategy jointly owned by all justice institutions.

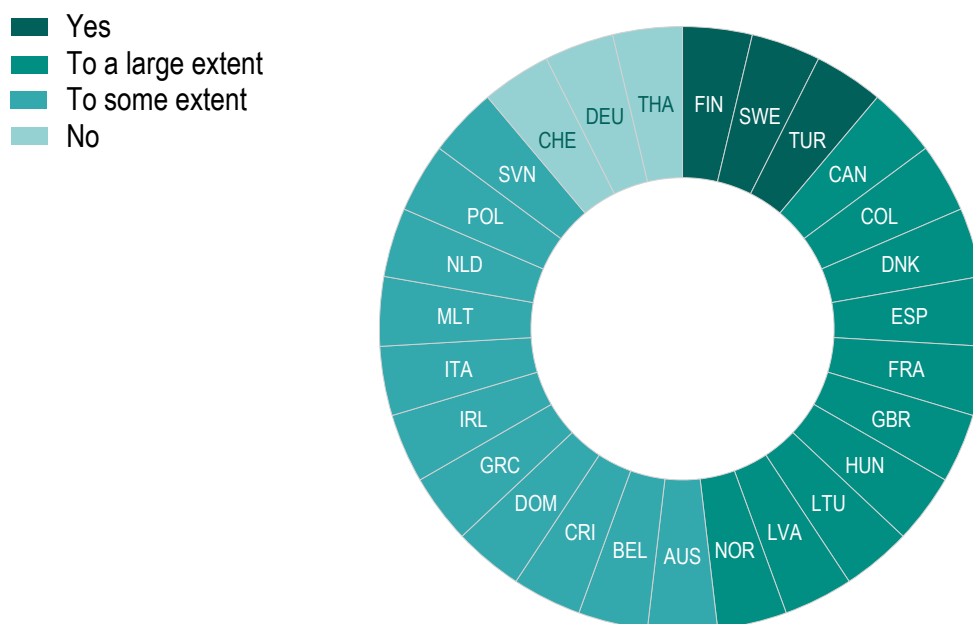
Costa Rica illustrates a different model based on institutional continuity and mature planning arrangements within its principal justice institutions. The Judicial Power has maintained successive five-year strategic planning cycles since 2000. Its model connects the institutional strategy with annual operational planning, a portfolio of strategic projects, results-oriented budgeting, risk management and evaluation. The preparation of each new cycle draws on surveys, diagnostic work and workshops assessing progress under the preceding plan, allowing lessons from implementation to inform subsequent priorities. The Ministry of Justice and Peace operates a separate Plan Estratégico Institucional, developed through a results-based management approach. Its implementation plan translates objectives into expected results, indicators, products, targets, responsible units, and budget estimates, linking institutional priorities directly to delivery and resource allocation. Costa Rica illustrates the value of sustained institutional planning that is progressively refined across cycles and explicitly connected to operational delivery, results and resources. Unlike the unified frameworks found in Spain and Colombia, however, these arrangements remain organised through separate institutional plans rather than a single, jointly developed strategy for the justice sector as a whole. This model resembles arrangements in Lithuania, where planning is similarly distributed across national, ministerial and judicial frameworks rather than consolidated within a single jointly owned sector strategy.

Finland illustrates a complementary model in which strategic planning can be embedded in recurring budgeting, performance management and monitoring processes. Rather than relying on a standalone strategy, the Ministry of Justice planning framework connects longer-term priorities and multi-year performance targets to annual budget proposals and expenditure frameworks through performance agreements (*tulosopimus*) concluded with courts, prosecution services, and other justice agencies. These agreements establish objectives, performance targets, resource arrangements and monitoring requirements, creating continuity between strategic direction and the operational and financial cycles through which they are implemented. Their recurring nature also provides opportunities to assess performance and adjust priorities over time. The framework is primarily organised within the ministry's administrative branch rather than through a strategy jointly developed by the full range of state and non-state justice actors. It nevertheless demonstrates how planning can remain influential when it is incorporated into the routine processes through which resources are allocated, responsibilities are assigned and performance is reviewed.

Source: (Government of Spain, 2021^[9]), (Government of Colombia, 2017^[8]), (Judiciary of the Dominican Republic (Poder Judicial de la República Dominicana), n.d.^[303]), (Government of Costa Rica, 2023^[304]), (Government of Finland, 2024^[305]).

A sector-wide planning process is only one component of people-centred planning and budgeting. Effective planning and budgeting must also be systematically informed by data and evidence. Many justice systems collect and publish caseload, waiting time, and other administrative data, but the availability of such information does not in itself demonstrate that it informs planning or budgeting. The key distinction is whether recurring decisions about priorities and resources incorporate evidence on both the availability of justice services, including their coverage, accessibility, capacity and timeliness, and on their effectiveness, including the outcomes achieved and people's experiences of using them. Good practice therefore depends on the breadth and quality of the evidence available, as well as its regular and institutionalised use across the justice sector. This requires formal mechanisms through which evidence can shape the allocation and prioritisation of resources, rather than remaining confined to the monitoring of performance after decisions have been made (Indicator 9.a).

Figure 3.13. Use of availability and effectiveness evidence in planning and budgeting



Note: This graph illustrates countries' scorings to the question: 'Is justice sector planning and budgeting based on data and evidence about availability and effectiveness of justice services?'.

Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/25e9vp>

Measured against this standard, the use of evidence in justice-sector planning is widespread across the countries assessed, but its scope, institutionalisation and influence vary considerably. Among the stronger examples are systems in which performance evidence is embedded in recurring planning, budgeting and reporting processes, creating a formal route through which findings can inform subsequent priorities and resource decisions (see Box 3.26). A large group of countries has developed robust evidence systems through statutory performance frameworks, ministry planning processes or judicial reporting arrangements, but important differences remain along three dimensions. First, the coverage of evidence often remains uneven, with some systems concentrating on particular institutions, such as the courts, rather than the justice sector as a whole. Second, the content of the evidence frequently emphasises service availability and institutional performance more than service effectiveness and user outcomes. Third, the institutional integration of evidence into budgeting is often incomplete. In some countries, sector-wide monitoring informs planning without being formally translated into resource allocation, while in others evidence influences funding decisions but not yet in a fully institutionalised arrangement. By contrast, in other countries, evidence primarily supports the management and accountability of individual institutions rather than co-ordinated sector-wide planning or budgeting. Ministries, courts and other justice bodies may publish extensive administrative statistics and monitor progress against strategic objectives, but these processes remain largely organisation-specific. In a smaller subset of countries, evidence use remains more limited or ad hoc, consisting mainly of project evaluations, administrative reporting or isolated monitoring exercises that are not systematically incorporated into recurring planning and budgeting decisions.

Two dimensions help explain these differences. The first concerns the scope and depth of the evidence available. Administrative information on service availability, particularly caseloads, backlogs, processing times and geographical coverage, is widely collected and used across the countries assessed. By contrast,

evidence on effectiveness, including whether services resolve people's problems and how the services are experienced by those who use them, is incorporated much less consistently, partly because such evidence is not always collected. Most countries can describe the volume and operation of formal justice services, but far fewer systematically assess the outcomes they produce. The systematic inclusion of non-state and community justice providers within the evidence base is rarer still, meaning that several otherwise well-developed systems stop short of providing a sector-wide account of justice needs and services. The second dimension concerns how evidence is used. In many countries, performance indicators primarily support monitoring, accountability and institutional management. Far fewer systems establish a formal link between evidence and decisions about the allocation and prioritisation of resources. As a result, performance frameworks frequently coexist with budgeting processes in which the role of evidence remains implicit rather than institutionalised. The reasons for changing resource priorities are also rarely documented in a way that makes the influence of evidence transparent.

Box 3.26. Evidence-based budgeting

Finland provides a strong example of an institutionalised framework connecting performance evidence with recurring planning and budgeting. The Ministry of Finance describes performance management as a system for balancing available resources with the outcomes those resources are intended to achieve. The state budget provides appropriations, after which ministries and agencies negotiate multiannual performance agreements that record both the targets for the budget year and the resources required to attain them. Agencies report on the achievement of these targets, ministries assess performance in their annual accounts, and the results are reported to Parliament through the Government Annual Report. Targets and resources are also reviewed through recurring performance negotiations and the annual spending-limits process. The Ministry's annual budget proposal presents proposed priorities and appropriations alongside assessments of past performance and targets for the coming year. Although appropriations continue to reflect broader political priorities and the multi-year fiscal framework, this institutionalised cycle creates a formal route through which evidence on performance can inform subsequent planning and resource allocation. **Türkiye** offers a comparable route achieved through different means. A statutory performance-based budgeting framework (Law No. 5018) ties the Ministry of Justice's strategic plan and annual performance programme directly to appropriations, drawing not only on performance and workload statistics but also on survey data on public trust in and satisfaction with justice services. Unlike Finland's agreement-based cycle, however, the process is led by the ministry rather than jointly owned with the judiciary and non-state actors.

Sweden illustrates how evidence on users' experiences can be incorporated into justice-sector planning, even where its connection to resource allocation remains only partially institutionalised. The annual Budget Bill reports results against justice-sector objectives and assesses performance before presenting appropriations. Alongside administrative indicators on case flows and court performance, the evidence base incorporates findings from the National Crime Survey conducted annually by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, which measures victimisation, perceived safety, confidence in justice institutions and people's experiences of interacting with them. At the same time, the budget does not establish a formal mechanism through which observed performance systematically determines the distribution of resources. Evidence therefore informs policy and budgeting decisions without systematically driving them.

Spain presents a different configuration, in which operational evidence feeds more directly into decisions about capacity and resource allocation. The General Council of the Judiciary uses quantitative analysis of workloads, resolution levels and backlogs to identify where additional judicial units are considered necessary and which should receive priority, providing an evidence-based input into the Government's decision on expanding judicial capacity. The General State Budget also embeds

quantitative objectives and indicators within programme 112A, presenting appropriations alongside measures of judicial and prosecutorial staffing, legal-aid provision, court infrastructure and digital modernisation. The broader Justicia 2030 strategy reinforces this approach through its emphasis on interoperability and data-driven justice management. The principal limitation concerns the breadth of the evidence used. While administrative indicators on service availability and institutional performance are closely integrated into planning and resource-management arrangements, systematic evidence on service outcomes and users' experiences remains comparatively limited.

Source: (Government of Finland, 2024^[305]), (Government of Türkiye, 2013^[306]), (Government of Sweden, 2024^[307]), (Government of Spain, 2023^[308]), (General Council of the Judiciary of Spain, 2024^[309]), (Government of Spain, 2021^[9]).

Priorities in justice sector planning and budgeting are driven by data about legal needs and justice problems

People-centred justice planning and budgeting require an empirical understanding of the legal needs and justice problems experienced by people, businesses and communities, rather than reliance primarily on historical expenditure, institutional caseloads or expressed demand for existing services. The OECD Recommendation defines people-centred justice data as information collected from people and communities about the justice problems they face, the effects of those problems, the justice they want and need, the decisions they make about resolution, their experiences with services and their ability to obtain a fair outcome. Caseload data capture the matters that reach an institution whereas legal-needs evidence reveals problems that are not recognised as legal, never reach a service provider or are abandoned because assistance is inaccessible. Caseload data can therefore inform operational decisions, such as where to locate judges or how to adjust staffing in response to backlogs, but they do not provide an equivalent measure of the prevalence, distribution and consequences of justice problems across the population. Incorporating legal-needs evidence into planning and budgeting enables priorities and resources to respond more closely to recurring patterns of need and to differences across population groups, particularly those that are marginalised, underserved or vulnerable (OECD, 2023^[2]) (Indicator 9.b).

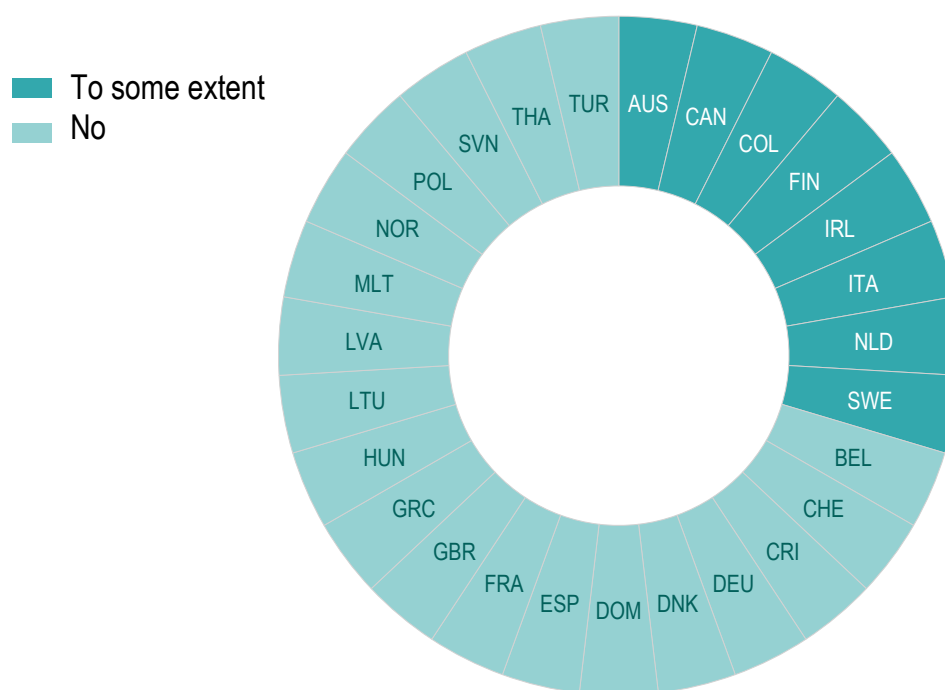
Operationalising this approach involves combining representative legal-needs surveys with administrative data, service-coverage evidence and other robust sources to build a fuller picture of needs across courts, legal aid, alternative dispute resolution and community-based justice services. This broader evidence base can then inform priority-setting and resource allocation across the justice sector. Evidence on the prevalence and consequences of justice problems can be translated into explicit allocation criteria, funding formulas or stated budget priorities and incorporated into recurring planning and budgeting cycles. Effective institutionalisation extends the use of needs data across the justice sector rather than confining it to individual institutions, pilot programmes or donor-supported initiatives. Planning and budget documents can further strengthen transparency and accountability by showing how the evidence has informed allocation criteria and resource priorities.

The use of evidence on legal needs and justice problems in justice-sector planning remains limited across the countries assessed, and its scope and influence vary considerably (see Figure 3.14). No country systematically uses population-level evidence on legal needs to identify priorities and allocate resources through recurring sector-wide planning and budgeting processes. Even within individual service fields, including legal aid, verified examples of explicit needs-based allocation were difficult to identify. This does not mean that justice planning is generally uninformed by evidence. Funding decisions frequently draw on caseloads, expenditure, expressed demand for services, and other administrative information, but these sources capture the problems reaching existing institutions rather than the prevalence and consequences of justice problems across the population. In a small group of countries, needs-related indicators or other proxy evidence inform particular policies or resource decisions without being incorporated into an explicit and recurring allocation mechanism. These include socio-economic vulnerability in Australia's legal-assistance funding model (Government of Australia, 2020^[310]); victimisation evidence from Sweden's

National Crime Survey (Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), 2026^[311]); consultation supporting family-justice reform in Ireland; indicators on victimisation and the resolution of serious legal problems within Canada's whole-of-government Quality of Life Framework (Government of Canada, 2026^[312]) and legal aid needs-related evidence in Finland (Government of Finland, 2024^[305]). In the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, legal-aid decisions draw substantially on caseload and cost information (Government of the Netherlands, 2024^[313]) (Government of the United Kingdom, 2026^[314]). These sources can provide valuable information for particular services or decisions but do not necessarily measure the incidence, severity and resolution of legal problems across the justice sector.

Two further patterns emerge. In some countries, legal-needs evidence is available but no verified connection to resource allocation could be identified, as in Colombia. In most countries, no representative legal-needs survey or comparable population-level source was identified, nor could a demonstrable connection between such evidence and the prioritisation of justice resources be established. The central gap is therefore not only the availability of legal-needs evidence, but its translation into resource decisions. Where relevant evidence exists, its use frequently remains confined to a particular institution, service or policy exercise rather than informing priorities across courts, legal aid, alternative dispute resolution and community-based justice services. Its influence is also rarely made explicit through allocation formulas, budget criteria or stated priorities. Connecting the growing evidence base on population-level needs with recurring and transparent resource-allocation processes remains an important opportunity for future development.

Figure 3.14. Use of legal-needs and justice-problem data in budget allocation



Note: This graph illustrates countries' scorings to the question: 'Is the allocation of funds within the justice sector budget driven by data about legal needs and justice problems?'.
Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/kx08hq>

Australia provides the strongest partial example incorporating needs-related evidence into resource allocation, although the approach remains confined to legal assistance rather than the justice sector as a whole. The National Strategic Framework for Legal Assistance states that finite resources should be directed towards areas of greatest legal need (Council of Attorneys-General, 2019^[315]). Under the National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020–2025, the population component of the funding models for legal aid commissions and community legal centres drew on *Need for Legal Assistance Services* indicators developed by the Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales (Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales, 2026^[316]). These indicators estimate vulnerability using combinations of low income, low educational attainment and other characteristics associated with the need for legal assistance. The approach moves beyond equal per-capita allocation by recognising that legal-assistance needs differ across jurisdictions and population groups. It also makes the needs component of the funding model explicit, allowing its assumptions and distributional effects to be scrutinised and revised. The underlying evidence considers the circumstances of specific groups including people living in regional or remote areas, people experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, single parents, women experiencing violence, people in detention and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

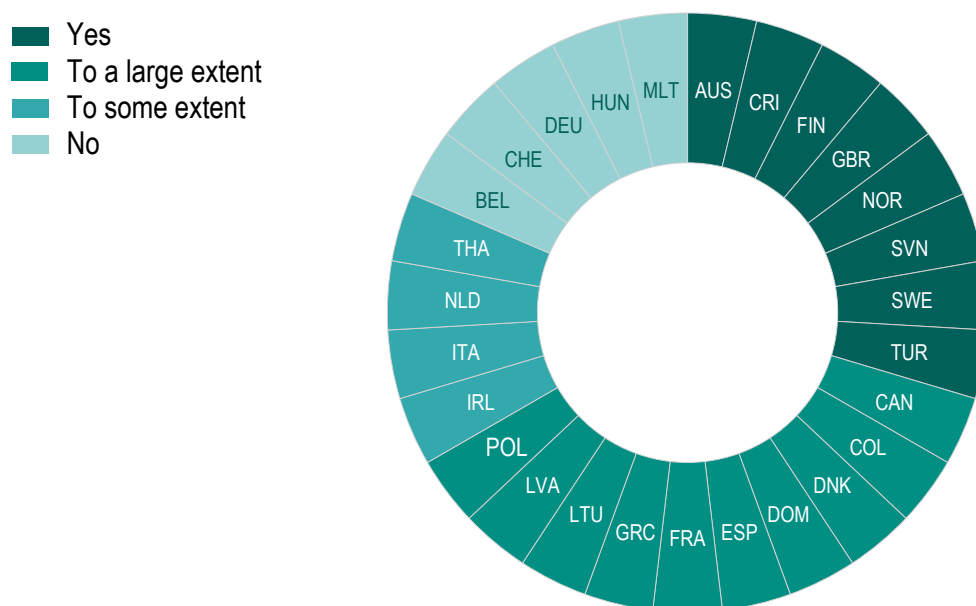
The model nevertheless remains confined to legal assistance rather than operating as a common allocation framework across courts, legal aid, alternative dispute resolution and community-based justice services. It also relies principally on indicators of socio-economic vulnerability and other characteristics associated with legal need, rather than on a recent national survey directly measuring the incidence, severity and resolution of legal problems. A 2024 independent review recommended a national legal-needs survey every five years, with sufficient regional and jurisdictional detail to support funding decisions and advised against carrying the existing distribution models forward without revision (Mundy, 2024^[317]). These recommendations confirm the value of making needs explicit within funding arrangements while identifying opportunities to strengthen both the evidence base and the design of the model. A more comprehensive approach would retain this transparency while combining representative legal-needs evidence with administrative and service-coverage data across the justice sector. This broader evidence base could inform not only where resources are directed, but also the appropriate mix of information, advice, representation, mediation, tribunal and court capacity. Subsequent evaluation could then assess whether those resources improve resolution, fairness and well-being, rather than merely increasing the volume of services delivered.

Justice budgets, for the sector and per institution or service, provide the information needed to understand the connection between resources, services provided, and justice outcomes achieved, and this information is made publicly available

Justice budgets need to make it possible to understand how resources support the delivery and performance of justice services, both across the sector and within individual institutions and service areas. The OECD Recommendation calls for greater transparency in justice-system budgeting, the use of data and evidence to support institutional performance, and the incorporation of evidence at an early stage of budget and service-delivery processes. It also emphasises the regular assessment of justice systems and services and the public availability of reliable information and data. Taken together, these principles support budget reporting that enables governments, justice stakeholders and the public to examine the relationship between resources allocated, services delivered and outcomes achieved (OECD, 2023^[21]). Good practice is demonstrated where sector-wide, institutional and service-level budget documents systematically link funding allocations to the services delivered and the justice outcomes achieved. Relevant performance indicators may capture service coverage and accessibility, case resolution and timeliness, substantive outcomes, and users' experiences or satisfaction. Effective reporting provides sufficiently comprehensive information to permit scrutiny across the justice sector and makes that information publicly accessible, rather than limiting these links to selected institutions or isolated narrative examples (Indicator 9.c).

Programme and performance budgeting are widely established across the countries assessed, but the clarity and scope of the connection between resources, services and results vary considerably (see Figure 3.15). In the most developed approaches, appropriations are expressly attributed to objectives, expected services and performance indicators through an integrated budget or performance-management framework. In the largest group of countries (rated ‘to a large extent’), financial allocations and performance measures are presented within the same programme or strategic structure, but the relationship between them remains partly implicit.

Figure 3.15. Transparency of the resource–service–outcome connection



Note: This graph illustrates countries' scorings to the question: 'Is the published justice sector budget designed to clearly indicate the connection between resources and services provided and/or justice outcomes achieved?'

Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/kjb2h0>

Elsewhere, the connection is explicit but applies only to particular services, investment programmes or additional funding measures, rather than across the justice budget and sector as a whole. Other arrangements are centred principally on individual institutions or administrative portfolios. In other cases, the linkage is present but not systematic: in the Netherlands it is most visible in decisions to continue or expand particular projects and pilots following evaluation, while in Italy the *Piano degli indicatori e dei risultati attesi di bilancio* links selected programmes and expenditure items to indicators and expected results, but primarily at the output level rather than through a comprehensive budget-to-outcome framework (Government of Italy, 2026^[318]). In a smaller group of countries, published budgets continue to classify expenditure primarily by institution or input, with limited information on the services funded or the results expected.

Two gaps recur across these arrangements. First, budget indicators tend to focus on inputs and outputs, such as staffing, infrastructure, caseloads and services delivered, while measures of accessibility, timeliness, service quality, outcomes and people's experiences are included less consistently. A budget may therefore establish a clear connection between funding and what institutions produce while providing much less information about what those services achieve for people. Second, reporting is often fragmented across institutions or documents, making it difficult to trace the relationship between resources and results across the justice sector as a whole. In federal or devolved systems, relevant expenditure may also sit partly outside the national budget. Many countries therefore have the foundations for transparent, results-

oriented budgeting, but the connection between resources, services and outcomes often remains implicit, partial or difficult to follow across the sector.

The strongest cases are found in systems where resources, objectives and performance results are connected through recurring public budgeting and management processes (see Box 3.27). For instance, Finland's state budget sets effectiveness targets for the justice branch and links the measures intended to achieve them to the relevant funding chapters. Read together with the multiannual performance agreements and annual accounts that form part of the same statutory management cycle, these documents identify the targets for each budget year, the resources available to attain them and, subsequently, the extent to which they were achieved and any follow-up measures required. Sweden provides the broadest sectoral coverage: a single justice expenditure area encompasses the police, prosecution, courts, prison and probation, forensic medicine, crime prevention and victim-support bodies. It states sector objectives, reports performance, provides the government's assessment of progress and sets out the appropriations and purposes of individual agencies. The inclusion of findings from the National Crime Survey also extends the assessment beyond institutional activity to public confidence and victims' experiences. Across the three systems, the connection is established at the level of branches, agencies, programmes and performance targets rather than through the costing of each individual outcome, providing a proportionate basis for tracing resources, delivery and results over time. Across the three systems, budget reporting creates a traceable sequence from objectives and resources to reported results, assessment and subsequent management decisions.

Box 3.27. Transparency about the results-chain in budgeting

Slovenia achieves a comparable degree of transparency through the combination of its programme-budget structure and public expenditure-reporting tools. Justice is organised as a dedicated budget policy covering functions including the courts, prosecution, criminal sanctions, protection of state interests, redress of past injustices and alternative dispute resolution. These functions are divided into programmes with objectives and performance indicators that can be tracked across years, while an online public budget portal allows users to examine expenditure by function and compare allocations and spending over time. Annual court reporting adds measures of case resolution, accessibility and cost efficiency, including expenditure relative to planned resolved cases. The resource-to-result connection is assembled across the budget structure, reporting requirements and public tracing tool, rather than presented in a single document. The framework also remains stronger on operational performance than on measures such as users' experiences and satisfaction.

Costa Rica offers the most explicit single-document example, although within a narrower institutional scope. The Ministry of Justice and Peace's Strategic Institutional Plan 2022–2026 applies a results-based management approach through an action-plan matrix, the Matriz de Articulación Plan-Presupuesto, which makes the intended chain from resources to results visible. Each strategic objective and action line is aligned with expected results, products, result and product indicators, baselines, targets, budget estimates and responsible units. Unlike arrangements that establish only parts of this connection, or do so across separate documents or at a higher level of aggregation, Costa Rica makes each link explicit and attaches a budget estimate to it within the same public instrument. Its scope, however, is limited to the Ministry and its prevention, corrections and related functions and does not extend to the Judicial Branch, prosecution, public defence or other justice institutions. Costa Rica therefore illustrates strong institutional practice rather than comprehensive sector-wide budget transparency.

Source: (Government of Slovenia, 1994^[319]), (Government of Slovenia, 2026^[320]), (Government of Costa Rica, 2023^[304]), (Government of Costa Rica, 2026^[321]).

There is a system of participatory and evidence-based monitoring, evaluation and accountability of justice systems, institutions and services

To improve the effectiveness of justice sector policies and their implementation, systematic monitoring and evaluation can increase understanding of whether interventions are achieving their intended objectives and producing desired outcomes. This calls for a justice system that systematically learns from evidence and experience. Regular and robust reviews of the performance of justice systems, institutions and services can identify strengths, weaknesses and emerging reform priorities, while providing a basis for public accountability. This can be reinforced by deliberate efforts to identify gaps in data and knowledge about what works to resolve people's problems, and by sustained support for research, evaluation and the development of effective approaches. Comparative evidence and experience from other countries can further strengthen this learning cycle, helping justice actors adapt relevant best practices from other countries to national contexts and improve the effectiveness, fairness, accessibility and resilience of the system over time. Such a culture of continuous learning, ensuring that evidence from assessments is used to create feedback loops strengthening policy design and implementation.

Box 3.28. Indicator 10: There is a system of participatory and evidence-based monitoring, evaluation and accountability of justice systems, institutions and services

- a. There are regular and robust reviews and assessments of the performance of the justice system and justice services.
- b. The justice sector identifies gaps in data, evidence and knowledge about what works to resolve people's problems, and it provides support for justice system research and development.
- c. Justice sector actors draw on experiences and effective strategies from other countries to inform justice policies and practice.

Source: (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[1]).

There are regular and robust reviews and assessments of the performance of the justice system and justice services

Ensuring the continuous improvement of justice policies requires regular and robust reviews and assessments of the performance of the justice system and justice services. Services assessed should include multiple providers - the judiciary, legal professions, alternative dispute resolution bodies, mediators, administrative justice providers, community justice services, and other frontline justice providers. (Indicator 10.a).

Table 3.3. Reviewing and assessing the performance of the justice system and justice services

Country name	The Judiciary	Legal Professions	ADR mediators and administrative providers	Community justice services and other frontline justice service providers
Australia	×	×	×	✓
Belgium	✓	✓	×	✓
Canada	✓	✓	✓	✓
Colombia	×	×	×	✓
Costa Rica	✓	×	×	×
Denmark	✓	×	×	×
Dominican Republic	✓	✓	✓	✓
Finland	×	×	×	×
France	✓	✓	✓	✓
Germany	✓	×	×	×
Greece	✓	✓	×	×
Hungary	×	×	×	×
Ireland	×	✓	✓	✓
Italy	✓	×	✓	✓
Latvia	✓	×	×	×
Lithuania	✓	×	✓	✓
Malta	✓	✓	✓	×
Netherlands	✓	✓	✓	✓
Norway	×	×	×	×
Poland	✓	✓	✓	✓
Slovenia	✓	×	×	×
Spain	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sweden	×	×	×	×
Switzerland	✓	✓	×	×
Thailand	✓	✓	✓	✓
Türkiye	✓	×	×	×
United Kingdom	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: This table is based on self-reporting by the countries participating in the questionnaire. The responses have not been verified by the OECD. The table illustrates countries' responses to the question: 'Are there regular reviews and assessments of the performance of the justice system and justice services?' for the four categories of stakeholders.

Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

Monitoring and reporting by the government on the implementation of their justice strategies is common among countries. For instance, the Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands periodically submits progress reports to Parliament on the National plan on Strengthening Access to Justice. In Malta, the Digital Justice Strategy explicitly establishes dedicated governance structures to ensure the implementation and regular update of the strategy, with a 'steering committee' for auditing the strategy and a 'project team' for co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of projects allocated to specific teams. In Australia, the NAJP includes nationally agreed performance indicators that provide information on the delivery of legal assistance services. The indicators measure the number of clients receiving legal assistance, the types of services provided, the extent to which services are delivered to priority client groups, and the use of specialist service models. They also capture information on legal information and referral services, community legal education activities, stakeholder engagement, law and legal service reform activities, and selected indicators relating to specialist services.²⁹

Regular assessments of court performance are conducted by the large majority of countries, though the scope and the evidence base for these assessments varies, and most continue to rely on administrative

data for their assessment. As such, they generally cover case statistics and case processing timelines, and reflect data and information collected by the institutions themselves. For instance, Thailand reports on judgment quality, case backlogs and service user satisfaction through established key performance indicators. Responsibility for these assessments varies across countries. It often rests with the governance and oversight body of the judiciary like the Council of the Judiciary in the Netherlands or the Council of Judges and Prosecutors in Türkiye with its newly set up office on "The Efficiency and Performance of Judiciary" (Council of Judges and Prosecutors of Türkiye, n.d.^[322]). In other cases, reporting exercises are conducted by the public body responsible for the administration and management of the courts, like the Courts Service in Ireland.

The findings of these assessments are commonly published through reports on the performance of the judiciary. In many jurisdictions, these reports are issued by the body responsible for conducting the assessments or issued directly by ministries of justice. They typically provide information on court activity, including pending cases, clearance rates, case backlogs, and the duration of proceedings. In Slovenia, for instance, they are adopted annually by the Supreme Court and contain a selection of indicators and assessment of the functioning of the judicial power. When published by the Ministry of Justice, the majority of countries issue these reports annually. For example, in Italy, the Ministry publishes an annual report on the Administration of Justice ("Relazione sull'Amministrazione della Giustizia"), which consolidates nationwide data on court activity, case backlogs and the duration of proceedings, offering an annual overview of system performance (Senate of Italy, 2025^[323]), while the Directorate General for Statistics and Organisational Analysis (Direzione Generale di Statistica e Analisi Organizzativa – DGStat) of the Ministry of Justice publishes quarterly statistical monitoring reports on civil and criminal justice with data on resolved and pending proceedings (Government of Italy, 2025^[324]). In Sweden, the Government presents a report on the performance of the justice system each year as part of the expenditures for the Budget Bill.

In several countries, reporting requirements are institutionalised and embedded into formal instruments. In Ireland, for example, the *Governance Code for State Bodies* includes requirements for monitoring and reporting, including reporting frequency. It establishes Performance Delivery Agreements between the Department of Public Expenditures and Reform and states bodies (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2016). Similarly, some countries establish reporting requirements through legislation. In Lithuania, for example, the Law on Courts provides that the Judicial Council shall annually, no later than March 31, publish a review of the activities of courts for the previous year on the website of the National Courts Administration. Several countries report that judicial performance assessment is conducted indirectly through the performance of individual judges. For example, the Dominican Republic refers to the judicial assessments conducted by the National Council of the Magistracy, which reviews judges every seven years, while Slovenia reports assessment of the performance of individual judges by the personnel councils of higher courts every three years, based on the criteria adopted by the Judicial Council.

So, while regular and robust reviews of the performance of courts is common, these are usually not based on people-centred justice data, nor is the performance of the individual institutions considered in the broader context of overall justice system performance.

Governments also commonly evaluate the performance of other key justice institutions that receive public funding, such as the police, prison and probation services, etc. France reports for instance that the Ministry of Justice General Secretariat conducts public policy evaluations in certain areas and that each department of the Ministry has a unit dedicated to steering and evaluation which provides data-based analysis for potential adjustment of public policies. In Denmark, annual performance agreements are drawn up for the agencies under the Ministry of Justice (the police, the prosecution service, the prison and probation service, and the Department of Civil Affairs). These agreements include a number of KPIs, which are reviewed three times a year. In the Netherlands, justice institutions and service providers funded via the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security maintain an annual planning and reporting process, with some formulating a multi-annual strategy, although these are not published. In Colombia, the Ministry of Justice and Law, through the Internal Working Group on Inspection, Surveillance, and Control (GIT IVC) in Family Police

Stations, conducts periodic reviews and evaluations of the performance of family justice services at the territorial level. These reviews are materialised through technical visits (on-site and virtual) to the Family Police Stations and municipal mayors' offices responsible for ensuring this service. During these visits, compliance with requirements regarding infrastructure, human talent, staffing, administrative operations, workload, information systems interoperability, and guarantees of effective access to rights is verified. Mayors' offices must present improvement plans in response to the identified findings

Ministries of Justice can also evaluate the activity of the legal professions (lawyers, advocates, notaries, bailiffs, etc), though many countries report that professional regulatory bodies bear the primary responsibility to conduct quality assessment and oversight of activities in respect of the professionals under their remit. In some cases they report the results to government authorities. In the Netherlands, the Legal Aid Board sets quality requirements for legal aid lawyers (ABD TOPConsult, 2021^[325]). The General Council of the Spanish Bar Association (CGAE) promotes the use of KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) as an essential tool for the efficient management of law firms. According to Poland, the Supreme Bar Council and the National Council of Legal Advisers annually submit information to the President of the Republic of Poland on the activities of their respective professions. These reports are published on the official websites of the Supreme Bar Council and the National Chamber of Legal Advisers. Similarly, the National Council of Notaries submits a report and an assessment of the condition of the notary to the Minister of Justice. Lithuania reports that the Tax Disputes Commission submits an annual report on their activities for the previous year to the Government. The Lithuanian Prison Service provides annual activity plan reports, strategic guideline reports, plan implementation reports, as well as monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, and annual statistical reports. The State guaranteed Legal Aid Service has performance dashboards, annual statistics and performance targets. In Switzerland, cantonal bar supervisory authorities also publish annual reports.

Reporting, monitoring and evaluation is more limited when it comes to alternative dispute resolution bodies, administrative justice providers, community justice services and other frontline justice services providers. As a result, opportunities to integrate data across all dealing with a specific problem type remains limited. Some countries are making efforts to strengthen their monitoring and evaluation framework in these areas. Lithuania, for instance, has amended its Law on Mediation to integrate a duty of the mediator to submit an annual report on the mediations completed in the previous calendar year. The purpose is to help collect statistical data and assess opportunities for expanding mediation. Thailand reports good practices among community justice and other frontline service providers. Community Justice Centres, under the Ministry of Justice, prepare annual reports through Provincial Justice Offices, with quarterly monitoring. The Damrong Dhamma Centres, under the Ministry of Interior, maintain a complaint statistics database covering case volume, case type, and processing duration in dashboard format, and produce case-by-case problem resolution reports and provincial/central-level summary reports. A mechanism for tracking cases through to resolution and reporting to the Ministry of Interior is in place, along with periodic satisfaction assessments.

Overall, countries report a wide range of initiatives to ensure reporting, evaluation and accountability of the justice sector. In Italy, a joint committee made of the Ministry of Justice and the High Council of the Judiciary provides a co-ordination mechanisms for the exchange and joint verification of data relevant to judicial organisation, including statistics, ICT systems and performance indicators (CSM, 2025^[326]). In the Netherlands, once every four years, the judiciary requests an independent visitation committee and shares the conclusions of the committee with the Ministry of Justice and Security which send it to Parliament. In Costa Rica, the Restorative Justice Office of the Costa Rican Judiciary, together with institutional leaders, conducts a semi-annual review of the actions and results obtained in each period and annually presents its work report through an accountability ceremony addressed to the various institutions involved in the restorative justice process and to civil society. In many countries like Malta, the Ministry of Justice publishes press releases to provide updates on the implementation of reforms and initiatives (Government of Malta, n.d.^[327]). While these are not part of formal reporting, they contribute to public accountability on the justice

performance and reforms. Member countries also report on their justice activity within European frameworks like the CEPEJ and the EU Justice Scoreboard. Where relevant countries may conduct reporting under their EU National Recovery and Resilience Program, the Ministry conducts regular monitoring indicators including disposition time and clearance rate, with results formally reported to the European Union (Ministry of Justice of Italy, 2024^[328]).

There is thus no lack of efforts to monitor and evaluate justice policies and practices through various reporting mechanisms and procedures, both at the regional, national and international levels. Yet there is much to be gained from more standardised approaches across institutions and across countries. These monitoring mechanisms can be strengthened to reduce the fragmentation of initiatives and enhance cross-organisational goals. There is also room to improve monitoring frameworks so that they are not limited to procedural efficiency and case management indicators but include systematic evaluations of whether justice services effectively resolve justice problems, at what cost, and how they are experienced by users.

The justice sector identifies gaps in data, evidence and knowledge about what works to resolve people's problems, and it provides support for justice system research and development

Monitoring and evaluation should help identify gaps in data, evidence and knowledge about what works to resolve justice problems. It can support the identification of timely adjustments and priority areas for research and development. Effective strategies from other countries can also help inform justice policies and practices (Indicator 10.b, 10.c).

Several countries report identifying gaps in data, evidence and knowledge regarding what works to resolve justice problems. In the Netherlands, for example, the periodic legal needs survey serves as an important tool for identifying areas that require further research. Findings such as low satisfaction or resolution rates might indicate potential negative experiences with a justice service. These data can then inform the development of targeted research to gather further evidence and knowledge to identify effective policies.

In many countries, people-centred data and evidence remain limited and there is insufficient evidence available to assess the scope and effectiveness of efforts to identify gaps in informing policies that deliver for people (OECD, 2025^[329]). There is therefore room to further structure and systematise processes for identifying gaps in data and evidence related to what works to resolve people's problems. At the same time, it is evident that a number of governments are taking action to strengthen evidence and data collection to inform policies, with some having adopted formal commitments to support and institutionalize such work, but it is unclear whether these will target people's justice outcomes and what works for people. In Ireland, the Family Justice Strategy, for example, contains an explicit goal on data and information management. It proposes the establishment of a Working Group to improve data collection, sharing and quality across the family justice sector. The Courts Service Corporate Strategic Plan 2024-2027 notes progress in monitoring and review and notes the introduction of a dedicated data unit and data policies (Department of Justice, 2022^[330]; Courts Service, 2024^[331]). Justice Canada acknowledges the importance of identifying gaps in data and evidence related to effective solutions for resolving people's problems. In particular, the GBA Plus Policy recognises that 'disaggregated data is not always available' and that 'it is a best practice to note these data gaps and develop plans to address them, as feasible, through the monitoring and implementation phases of an initiative in particular as well as through collaboration with internal and external partners'. Australia reports that the NAJP National Legal Assistance Data Strategy 2026-2030 and Outcomes Framework will support strengthened evidence collection and reporting and improve understanding of the impact of legal assistance services on justice outcomes.

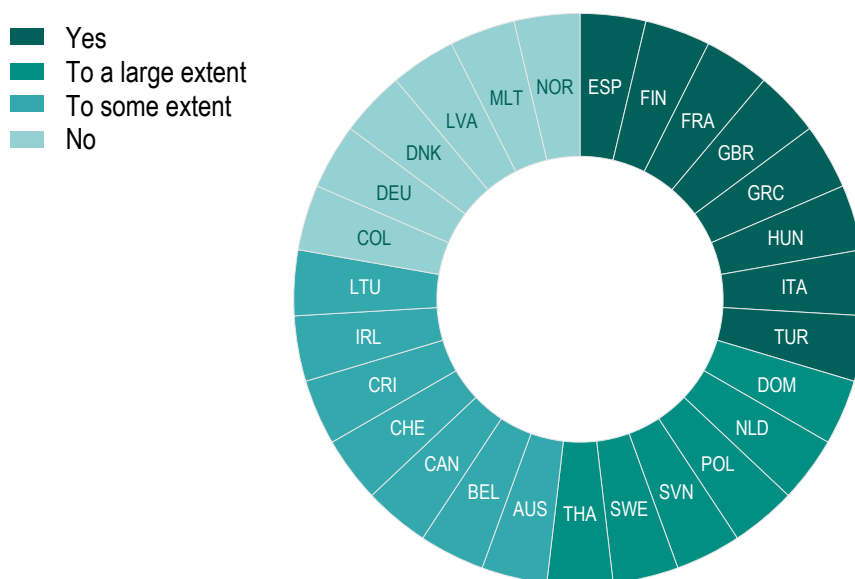
Several countries such as Malta and the Netherlands report that the identification of issues that need to be addressed often arise out of dialogue between the government and justice stakeholders. For instance, in the Netherlands, the Dutch Bar Association, legal aid lawyers and the Dutch Legal Aid Board have raised concerns about the availability of legal aid lawyers in the more rural parts of the Netherlands. Because concrete data was missing about this problem, the government has asked the knowledge centre of the

Dutch Legal Aid Board to conduct further research on the developments in legal aid. A similar approach seems to have been taken by Sweden which reports commissioning relevant authorities to gather further data or evidence once a need is identified. This is often done through formal assignments (regeringsuppdrag) to the agencies with expertise in the field, such as the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) or Statistics Sweden (SCB).

Other countries report initiatives in the framework of international projects and co-operation. For instance, in Dominican Republic, the World Justice Project's General Population Poll helped highlight areas where justice services fall short and where targeted interventions are needed. Additionally, the USAID/Dominican Republic Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (DR MEL) Platform has played a key role in identifying systemic gaps in justice sector performance. Through quarterly data registries, focus group discussions, and data quality assessments, DR MEL uncovered issues such as overlapping activities, weak indicator definitions, and insufficient internal controls in data collection. These findings reportedly informed project redesigns and capacity-building efforts across the justice system.

Identified gaps in data, knowledge and evidence can support countries in developing a more strategic research agenda. Targeted research and development initiatives can deepen understanding of existing knowledge and insights into specific issues or help testing innovative solutions for designing and delivering more people-centred and effective justice policies and services.

Figure 3.16. Providing support for people-centred justice research and development



Note: This graph is based on self-reporting by the countries participating in the questionnaire. The responses have not been verified by the OECD. The graph illustrates countries' responses to the question: 'Does the Justice Ministry or government provide support for people-centred justice research and development?'.

Source: OECD authors' elaboration based on the 2025 OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/ryzgua>

In many countries, ministries of justice conduct or support research to improve justice policies. It is frequent that ministries of justice have their own research departments or knowledge units which produce studies across the justice sector. It is for example the case of the Italian Ministry of Justice, and of the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration of Ireland and its Research and Data Analytics Unit (Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, 2026^[332]; Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, 2021^[333]). In Costa Rica, the Research and Statistics Department of the General Directorate of Social Adaptation attached to the Ministry of Justice aims to promote scientific research to inform policies in the areas of prison and rehabilitation. In Thailand, the National Commission on Justice Administration Development (NCJAD) has established a sub-committee dedicated to the Development and Promotion of Research in the Justice Process which carries key functions including aligning research agendas; developing research capacity; securing research funding and establishing criteria for the consideration of research proposals; enhancing research quality and translating research into practice; and integrating both domestic and international research co-operation networks.

In other cases, ministries of justice commission independent stakeholders to conduct research, while funding their work. For instance, in the Netherlands, the Ministry of Justice and Security relies on the WODC, an independent research institute that falls within its remit, and the Knowledge Centre of the Legal Aid Board for research on the justice system. In Italy, the Ministry of Justice has a framework agreement with the Foundation of the Italian universities for funding a range of research programmes. In France, the Ministry of Justice supports the Badinter Institute, which conducts research on law and justice. In Thailand, the Thailand Institute of Justice, a public organisation affiliated with Ministry of Justice and the United Nations, conducts research on people's justice needs, women and children in the justice system. In Türkiye, the Ministry of Justice supports numerous projects conducted by different stakeholders, including bars, associations, universities, etc. (TÜBİTAK, n.d.^[334]). In Lithuania, a publicly funded state research institute, the Lithuanian Law Institute (part of the Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences) contributes research.

Funding for policy-relevant research is often channelled through dedicated programmes, project-based grants or specialised funding mechanisms. In Poland, the Ministry of Justice of Poland has established a 'Justice Fund' for financing research, educational and social projects related to crime prevention, assistance to victims and the development of legal services, including from non-governmental organisations and scientific units. In Australia, under the Community Legal Services Program 2025-2030 (CLSP), the government is funding projects dedicated to legal assistance. In Slovenia, the Government's Research and Innovation Agency funds targeted research project (CRP) through public calls on thematic proposed by ministries and other public administration bodies and are intended to support the preparation of strategic documents, legislation, policies and measures. In Switzerland, the Confederation and the Canton of Obwalden are participating to the funding of National Research Programs (NRP) including on justice related topics, as well as the Obwalden Institute for Justice Research (IJF) (IJF, n.d.^[335]).

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NOTES

¹ LOI n° 2023-1059 du 20 novembre 2023 d'orientation et de programmation du ministère de la justice 2023-2027 (1).

² *Strategic Framework for Citizenship and Inclusion against Racism and Xenophobia* (2023-2027) available at:

[https://www.inclusion.gob.es/documents/3976301/4202317/Resumen+en+ingl%C3%A9s+del+Marco+Estrat%C3%A9gico+de+Ciudadan%C3%ADa+e+Inclusi%C3%B3n%2C+contra+el+Racismo+y+la+Xenofobia+\(2023-2027\).pdf](https://www.inclusion.gob.es/documents/3976301/4202317/Resumen+en+ingl%C3%A9s+del+Marco+Estrat%C3%A9gico+de+Ciudadan%C3%ADa+e+Inclusi%C3%B3n%2C+contra+el+Racismo+y+la+Xenofobia+(2023-2027).pdf) and its *Action Plan to Combat Hate Crime* (2022-2024). available at: lamoncloa.gob.es/consejodeministros/resumenes/Documents/2022/120422_II_Plan_Accion_contra_delitos_odio.pdf.

³ Anti-Racism Strategy 2021-2023 available at: <https://humanrights.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/english-policy-doc-online.pdf>.

⁴ National Plan against racism, xenophobia, and intolerance available at: <https://eumigrab.unimi.it/national-plan-against-racism-xenophobia-and-intolerance/>.

⁵ Action Plan for the Reduction of Racism and Anti-Semitism for 2023 available at: <https://www.km.gov.lv/lv/media/33024/download?attachment>.

⁶ Plan against Racism (2021-2024).

⁷ National Action Plan Against Racism and Intolerance 2020-2023 available at: <https://ministryofjustice.gr/English/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/NAP-en-l.pdf>.

⁸ National Plan to Fight Against Racism, Antisemitism, and Discrimination linked to Origin (2023-2026).available at: [DISCRIMINATION A5 V2 EL EN site-1.pdf](#).

⁹ Action Plan against Racism and Hate Crime (2023-2026) available at: https://www.kk.dk/sites/default/files/2023-08/Handleplan%20mod%20racisme_Rapport_A4_08-a.pdf.

¹⁰ National Policy for Effective Equality between Women and Men (PIED 2018-2030) available at: [oig.cepal.org/sites/default/files/politica_nacional_para_la_igualdad_efectiva_entre_hombres_y_mujeres_-_pieg_2018-2030.pdf](oig.cepal.org/sites/default/files/politica_nacional_para_la_igualdad_efectiva_entre_hombres_y_mujeres_-_pieg_2018-2030.pdf); and National Policy for Prevention and Attention of Violence against Women of all ages (PLANONI 2017-2032) available at: <https://observatoriodegenero.poder-judicial.go.cr/images/Biblioteca/Otros/Politica-Nacional-2017-2032.pdf>.

¹¹ Action Plan on Gender and Sexual Diversity (2023-2026) available at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/documents/the-norwegian-governments-action-plan-on-gender-and-sexual-diversity-20232026/id2963172/?ch=1>.

¹² Costa Rica has also developed Latin America's first National Strategy against Hate Speech and Discrimination, which addresses emerging forms of discrimination, including online hate in social media.

¹³ As these initiatives fall outside the 2023-2024 reference period, they were not considered in the country's scoring and are therefore not reflected in Figure 3.3.

¹⁴ For example, a study conducted by the Radboud University and commissioned by the WODC indicates that levels of legal capability influence people's ability to access notary services (Radboud Universiteit, 2024^[336]). Similarly, a study among Rotterdam residents in vulnerable circumstances shows that not knowing which experts or organization to approach for help is a key factor behind inaction when facing a justice problem (Radboud Universiteit, 2024^[336]).

¹⁵ Organic Law 1/2025.

¹⁶ Mediation Act B.E. 2562 (2019), Chapter 5.

¹⁷ Law no 5235, Articles 6 and 9.

¹⁸ Law on Notarial Profession of the Republic of Lithuania.

¹⁹ article 3(2) of law 399-22.

²⁰ under Open Data and Data Governance of the Capitolo 5 – Dati e Intelligenza Artificiale.

²¹ These country initiatives are out of the scope of the PCJ questionnaire assessment and have therefore not been considered for the scoring.

²² *Justicia 2030*.

²³ *Plan Decenal del Sistema de Justicia*.

²⁴ Planes Estratégicos Institucionales.

²⁵ Visión Justicia 20/24.

²⁶ Strateginis veiklos planas.

²⁷ Poland's Plan działalności Ministra Sprawiedliwości, Belgium's Plan stratégique of the FPS Justice, Ireland's statutory Statement of Strategy, Latvia's Ministry of Justice Strategy, Türkiye's Adalet Bakanlığı Stratejik Planı, Greece's Ετήσιο Σχέδιο Δράσης, Netherlands' Jaarplan van de Rechtspraak, Italy's Piano integrato di attività e organizzazione (PIAO).

²⁸ e.g. Türkiye's Performans Programı under Kanun No. 5018 (Public Financial Management and Control Law), France's multi-year justice programming law (Loi d'orientation et de programmation du ministère de la justice), Finland's tulossopimus performance-agreement system between the MoJ and its agencies, Slovenia's budget policy 09 Pravosodje; Lithuania's Strateginio valdymo įstatymas (Law on Strategic Management); Costa Rica's Gestión para Resultados en el Desarrollo (GpRD); Canada's Departmental Plans under the Treasury Board.

²⁹ This plan falls outside the 2023-2024 reference period but has been integrated into the report as a good practice example.

Annex A. Methodology and country coverage

This annex sets out the country coverage for the report and presents the measurement methodologies used in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 draws on population-based legal needs survey data to provide data for a set of seven justice outcome indicators. Chapter 3 draws on country responses to the OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire, examining selected policy and institutional arrangements linked to the implementation of the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems using the ten policy indicators derived from the Recommendation.

This report on *Justice as a Public Service* represents the first international application of the OECD Measurement Framework for People-Centred Justice Systems that brings together comparable information on justice systems within a common measurement architecture (OECD, MF paper 2025). The Framework provides a common structure linking government policy, justice services and justice outcomes, and supports the progressive development of common indicators, definitions, classifications and methodologies for justice measurement across countries. By combining internationally comparable measures of selected justice outcomes with structured comparative evidence on relevant government policies and system characteristics, this report provides an initial operationalisation of that approach. It establishes a basis for progressively strengthening the scope, comparability and regularity of international evidence on the performance of justice systems.

Country coverage

Table A A.1 presents the countries covered in the report and indicates whether they are included in Chapter 2 outcome indicators based on legal needs survey data, Chapter 3 policy indicators based on the OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire, or both. The table also identifies the country grouping used in the report: OECD Member country, OECD accession country, Justice Action Coalition (JAC) country, or a combination of these categories. In total, the report covers 49 countries, including 36 OECD Member countries, 8 OECD accession countries and 17 JAC countries or observers, some of which are also OECD Member countries.

Table A A.1. Country coverage of the report

Country	Code	Region	Category	Coverage in the report
Argentina	ARG	LAC	OECD accession	Outcome indicators (2022)
Australia	AUS	Asia-Pacific	OECD	Outcome indicators (2018) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Austria	AUT	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024)
Belgium	BEL	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Brazil	BRA	LAC	OECD accession	Outcome indicators (2022)
Bulgaria	BGR	Europe	OECD accession	Outcome indicators (2024)
Canada	CAN	North America	OECD & JAC	Outcome indicators (2017) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Chile	CHL	LAC	OECD & JAC	Outcome indicators (2017)
Colombia	COL	LAC	OECD & JAC	Outcome indicators (2022) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Costa Rica	CRI	LAC	OECD & JAC	Outcome indicators (2022) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Croatia	HRV	Europe	OECD accession	Outcome indicators (2024)
Czechia	CZE	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024)

Country	Code	Region	Category	Coverage in the report
Denmark	DNK	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Dominican Republic	DOM	LAC	JAC	Outcome indicators (2018) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Estonia	EST	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024)
Finland	FIN	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
France	FRA	Europe	OECD & JAC	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Germany	DEU	Europe	OECD & JAC	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Greece	GRC	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Hungary	HUN	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Indonesia	IDN	Asia-Pacific	OECD accession & JAC	Outcome indicators (2017)
Ireland	IRL	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2021) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Italy	ITA	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Japan	JPN	Asia-Pacific	OECD	Outcome indicators (2018)
Korea	KOR	Asia-Pacific	OECD	Outcome indicators (2018)
Latvia	LVA	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Liberia	LBR	Africa	JAC	Outcome indicators (2018)
Lithuania	LTU	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Luxembourg	LUX	Europe	OECD & JAC	Outcome indicators (2024)
Malta	MLT	Europe	OECD collaborating country	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Mexico	MEX	LAC	OECD	Outcome indicators (2017)
Netherlands	NLD	Europe	OECD & JAC	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
New Zealand	NZL	Asia-Pacific	OECD	Outcome indicators (2017)
Norway	NOR	Europe	OECD & JAC Observer	Outcome indicators (2017) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Peru	PER	LAC	OECD accession	Outcome indicators (2022)
Poland	POL	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Portugal	PRT	Europe	OECD & JAC	Outcome indicators (2024)
Romania	ROU	Europe	OECD accession	Outcome indicators (2024)
Sierra Leone	SLE	Africa	JAC	Outcome indicators (2018)
Slovak Republic	SVK	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024)
Slovenia	SVN	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Spain	ESP	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Sweden	SWE	Europe	OECD & JAC	Outcome indicators (2024) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
Switzerland	CHE	Europe	OECD & JAC Observer	Policy indicators (2023-2024)
Thailand	THA	Asia-Pacific	OECD accession	Policy indicators (2023-2024)
Türkiye	TUR	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2018) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
United Kingdom	GBR	Europe	OECD	Outcome indicators (2018) and policy indicators (2023-2024)
United States	USA	North America	OECD	Outcome indicators (2018)

Note: “Outcome indicators” refers to indicators analysed in Chapter 2 and based on data from the WJP Global Legal Needs Survey. “Policy indicators” refers to Chapter 3 indicators based on country responses to the OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire. Coverage for Chapter 2 varies by indicator, as some questions were not included in earlier survey waves or had insufficient eligible respondents for reliable sub-estimates. Coverage for Chapter 3 reflects countries that submitted responses to the OECD People-Centred Justice Questionnaire.

Methodology for the justice outcome indicators (Chapter 2). The justice outcome indicators presented in Chapter 2 were developed jointly by the OECD, the Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (HiIL) and the World Justice Project (WJP) to assess what justice systems deliver for people, communities and businesses. They operationalise the justice outcomes dimension of the OECD Measurement Framework for People-Centred Justice Systems by focusing on people’s experiences and justice problems to assess the outcomes that the justice system achieves for society at the aggregate level. The outcome indicators were selected on the basis of their conceptual relevance and the availability of comparable data, drawing on legal needs surveys and other existing data sources. They represent an initial set of indicators that can be measured with data generally available today, and can be a starting point for the longer-term development of a more comprehensive and internationally comparable system for measuring justice

outcomes. The paper *Outcome indicators for people-centred justice* (HiIL/OECD/WJP, forthcoming), sets out the conceptual and methodological basis for the indicators, assesses current data availability and measurement gaps, and identifies priorities for strengthening outcome measurement and the justice data ecosystems needed to support it.

Data source and common analytical approach

Legal needs surveys are a foundational source for measuring people-centred justice outcomes because they capture how people experience and navigate justice problems in everyday life, including problems that never reach courts or other formal justice services. Unlike administrative data, which primarily describe the activities of institutions and the people who use them, population-based legal needs surveys can capture problem prevalence, pathways to resolution, sources of help, the status and consequences of problems, and people's experiences of fairness and trust. They therefore provide evidence on the justice journey from the perspective of users and non-users of formal services.

This chapter draws on the World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey (WJP GLNS),¹ a module of the WJP General Population Poll. The GLNS contains more than one hundred questions covering common justice problems, legal capability, sources of information and help, pathways to resolution, problem status, fairness, trust and the wider consequences of justice problems (WJP, 2019^[1]). Its standardised design supports comparison across countries while capturing both formal and informal ways in which people seek to address their problems. Legal needs survey evidence is nevertheless most informative when used alongside administrative and service-level data, other population surveys and qualitative evidence.

A common concept across the indicators is the nontrivial justice problem. Respondents are asked about problems or disputes experienced during the two years before the survey and rate their seriousness on a scale from 0 to 10. For this chapter, a problem is treated as nontrivial when it receives a seriousness rating of 4 or higher. The GLNS covers 38 common problem types grouped into 12 categories, including employment, housing, family and access to public services. Depending on the indicator, the reference population is then narrowed further, for example to people whose resolution process has concluded or to people who needed a particular form of support. These differences in reference populations are important when interpreting and comparing the indicators.

Construction and interpretation of the indicators

The chapter presents seven outcome indicators. The prevention indicator is represented by two complementary measures - the prevalence of nontrivial justice problems and the hardship associated with those problems – so eight quantitative measures are reported in total. Higher values indicate stronger attainment for resolution, fairness, trust and the three justice services measures. For prevalence and hardship, higher values indicate a greater incidence of justice problems or their consequences and therefore do not represent stronger attainment. Because the indicators use different reference populations, their percentages should not be read as directly comparable shares of the same population. Their main analytical value lies in examining how different stages and outcomes of the justice journey relate to one another.

Several indicators are presented as dichotomous measures to support cross-country comparability and readability. This necessarily simplifies more nuanced underlying responses, including differences in intensity, reasons for the response and variation across problem types or pathways. The results should therefore be interpreted as broad signals of attainment rather than as complete measures of each outcome. Where possible, national analysis should examine the full response distribution and disaggregate results by problem type, pathway and population group.

People solve their justice problems

The resolution indicator measures the share of respondents who consider their nontrivial justice problem fully resolved among those whose resolution process has concluded. A process is considered concluded when all parties have ceased taking further action to resolve the problem, irrespective of whether a court, mediator or other dispute resolution mechanism was used. Resolution is therefore based on the respondent's own assessment of the problem rather than on formal case closure or the existence of a legal decision. Ongoing problems are excluded from the denominator. The measure can consequently coexist with lengthy unresolved processes outside the reference population, and a concluded process may in some cases reflect disengagement or abandonment rather than an effective remedy. The indicator is best interpreted alongside fairness, access and information on the quality and sustainability of outcomes.

People experience the process of resolving their justice problem as fair

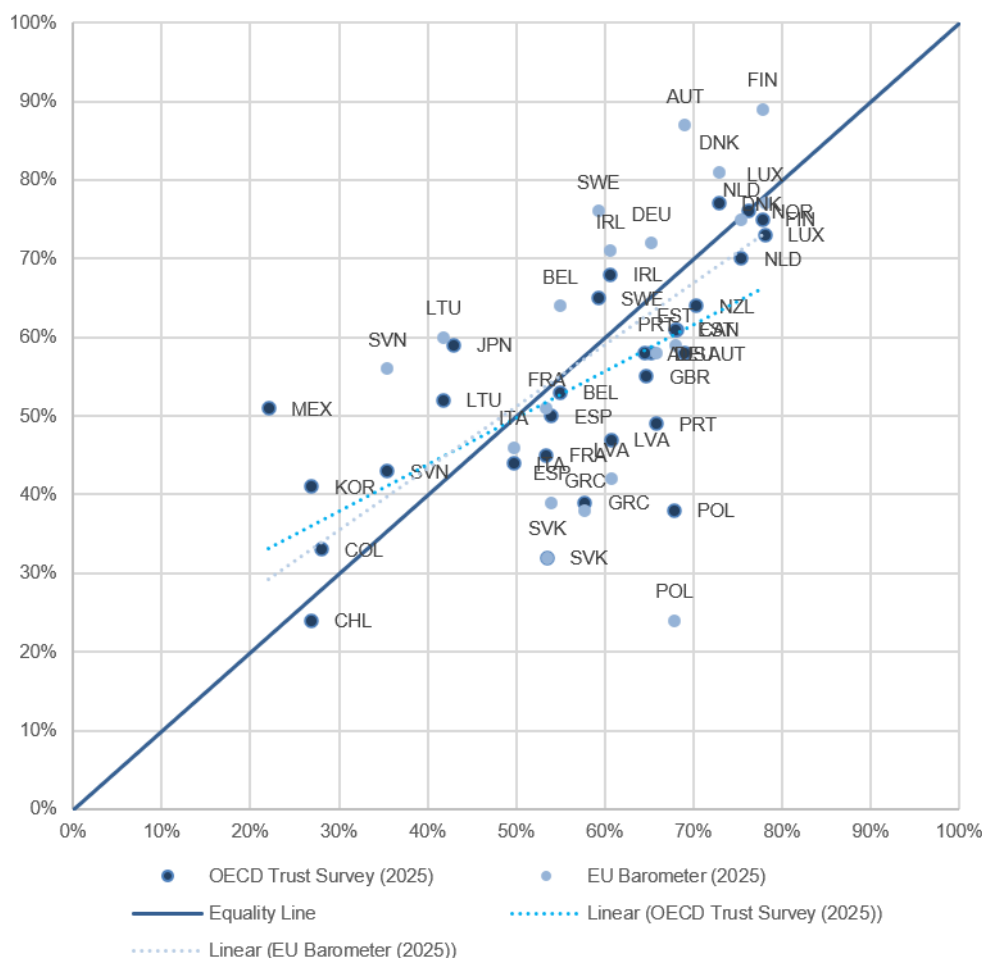
The fairness indicator measures the share of respondents with a nontrivial justice problem and a concluded resolution process who report that the process was fair, regardless of the outcome. It captures an overall assessment of the process and does not distinguish the particular elements that shaped that assessment, such as respectful treatment, neutrality, participation, clarity or timeliness. It should therefore be treated as a summary measure and an entry point for more detailed national analysis of procedural fairness. Coverage is lower than for some other indicators because the relevant question was not asked consistently to all eligible respondents in earlier GLNS waves; figure notes identify affected countries and estimates excluded because of small sample sizes.

People trust the justice system

Internationally comparable data on trust in the justice system as a whole are limited. The chapter therefore uses trust in judges and magistrates as a proxy for one important dimension of trust. The indicator is calculated among respondents who experienced a nontrivial justice problem in the previous two years and combines responses reporting high or some trust; responses reporting little or no trust are grouped as no trust. Because the reference population consists of people with a recent justice problem, the measure is not equivalent to general-population measures of trust in courts or the justice system. Nor does it capture trust in prosecutors, police, administrative bodies, legal aid providers or other justice actors. Cross-source comparisons require particular caution where question wording or reference populations differ.

For data validation purposes, the WJP GLNS results for 2024 for this indicator were compared with two more recent sources: the OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions 2025 and the 2026 EU Justice Scoreboard, drawing on Flash Eurobarometer 554 from 2025. The scatter plot compares country-level WJP GLNS estimates on the horizontal axis with the corresponding estimates from the OECD Trust Survey and Eurobarometer on the vertical axis.

Figure A A.1. Relationship between WJP GLNS estimates of trust in judges and magistrates and other trust measures across the OECD Member countries



Note: Each point represents a country with available data. The horizontal axis shows the WJP GLNS estimate of high or some trust in judges and magistrates. The vertical axis shows either the OECD estimate of high or moderately high trust in courts and the judicial system, or the Eurobarometer estimate of a positive assessment of judicial independence. The diagonal line represents equality and dotted lines show linear trend lines. Country coverage varies across sources. The Eurobarometer indicator measures perceived judicial independence rather than trust and is not directly equivalent to the other measures.

Source: Calculations based on the World Justice Project Global Legal Needs Survey, (OECD, 2026^[2]) and (EU, 2026^[3]).

Importantly, the three sources do not measure the same construct. The WJP GLNS measure used in this report captures respondents reporting high or some trust in judges and magistrates, and the reference population is restricted to respondents who experienced a nontrivial justice problem in the preceding two years. The OECD Trust Survey asks respondents how much they trust the courts and judicial system on a 0–10 scale, with responses from 6 to 10 classified as high or moderately high trust. The Eurobarometer measure is conceptually different. Rather than trust, it asks the general public to assess the justice system in terms of the independence of courts and judges, with “very good” and “fairly good” responses constituting a positive assessment. Flash Eurobarometer 554 is the general-public survey underpinning this indicator in the 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard.

The surveys also differ in their reference populations, sample sizes and substantive focus. In particular, the WJP indicator reflects the views of people with recent experience of a justice problem, whereas the OECD Trust Survey and Eurobarometer provide broader population-level measures; sample sizes and

country coverage also vary across the three sources. The OECD Trust Survey itself applies country-specific samples and weighting to produce population estimates, while Eurobarometer is designed to capture perceptions among the general public. These differences can contribute to variation in country estimates, alongside differences in question wording, response scales and survey timing. The comparison should therefore be understood as a cross-source robustness check rather than a test of equivalence. The generally positive relationships provide some indication that the WJP indicator captures a similar underlying dimension of confidence in justice institutions, while the observed deviations underline the importance of interpreting individual country results in light of the specific methodology and construct measured by each survey.

People experience fewer justice problems over time

Prevention is represented through two complementary measures. The prevalence measure is the percentage of all respondents who report at least one nontrivial justice problem during the two years before the survey. It provides a standardised measure of the occurrence of justice problems and, when repeated over time using comparable methods, can inform assessment of primary prevention.

The hardship measure focuses on respondents who experienced a nontrivial justice problem and reports the share who experienced at least one of four types of consequence: loss of income or employment, relocation or financial strain; physical ill health, injury or stress-related illness; relationship breakdown or damage to a family relationship; or problems with alcohol or drugs. It is particularly relevant to tertiary prevention because it captures wider harms arising after a problem occurs. Neither measure on its own establishes the effect of justice policy: prevalence and reported hardship can also reflect socioeconomic conditions, exposure to different types of problems, problem recognition and reporting practices. Higher values on both measures indicate less favourable outcomes.

People obtain the information they need to recognise and solve their justice problems

The information indicator is calculated among respondents with a nontrivial justice problem and measures the share who agree or strongly agree that they knew where to obtain good information about resolving it. The measure captures awareness of an information source or pathway rather than whether information was actually obtained, understood or used, or whether it was accurate and suitable to the respondent's circumstances. It should therefore be interpreted as an indicator of access to an initial informational entry point and read alongside the more tailored support captured by the assistance and advice indicator.

People obtain the assistance and advice they need to solve their justice problems

The assistance and advice indicator focuses on respondents with a nontrivial justice problem who needed tailored support. Need is identified by combining respondents who obtained assistance or advice with those who did not obtain it because they encountered a barrier; respondents who did not obtain assistance because they reported not needing it are excluded. The numerator is the share of this reference population who received assistance or advice from an appropriate source. Appropriate sources include lawyers and professional advisers, legal aid, courts and government bodies, health or welfare professionals, employers or trade unions, community or religious organisations, civil society organisations, and relatives, friends or acquaintances with a legal background. The indicator therefore measures whether people who needed support obtained it, rather than the overall use of advice services in the population. It does not assess the quality, intensity or effectiveness of the support received.

People obtain access to the dispute resolution mechanism they need to solve their justice problems

The dispute resolution indicator measures access among respondents with a nontrivial justice problem who needed third-party support. Respondents are treated as needing a mechanism if they used one or if they did not use one because they encountered a barrier; those who did not use a mechanism because they reported not needing one are excluded. Access includes turning to a third-party individual or

organisation to adjudicate, mediate or otherwise help resolve the problem and can therefore encompass courts, administrative bodies, mediation, conciliation and other formal or informal mechanisms. The full question sequence has been included in the GLNS since 2018, which limits coverage for countries surveyed earlier. As with the other access indicators, use or access should not be interpreted as evidence that the mechanism was timely, affordable, fair or effective in resolving the underlying problem.

Cross-cutting methodological considerations

The indicators are deliberately constructed around different stages of the justice journey and therefore use different denominators. Resolution and fairness are conditional on a concluded process; trust, information and the prevention measures are based on respondents with recent justice problems or, for prevalence, the full surveyed population; and assistance and dispute resolution are conditional on an identified need for the relevant service. Differences between indicator values can consequently be informative about where gaps arise, but they should not be interpreted as a single sequential conversion rate unless the underlying reference populations are aligned in further analysis.

All measures are based on respondents' self-reported experiences and assessments. This is central to a people-centred perspective, but it also means that estimates can be influenced by recall, expectations, recognition of a problem as serious, willingness to report sensitive experiences and broader social or cultural context. These considerations are particularly relevant for the prevalence and hardship measures. Cross-country differences should therefore be interpreted together with national context and, where possible, triangulated with administrative, service-level and qualitative evidence.

The chapter reports country-level percentages and uses summary statistics to describe the distribution of results. A reported median is the median of the available country estimates. Where the central 75% of countries is reported, the range runs from the 12.5th to the 87.5th percentile. These descriptive statistics are intended to show broad patterns and variation across countries rather than to establish statistically significant differences or rank justice systems.

The coding rules and denominator specifications used to construct each indicator are set out in the *Codebook for the WJP Global Legal Needs Survey Indicators of People-Centred Justice*. The Codebook and the full *Categorisation of Justice Problems* are available upon request at GOV.AccessToJustice@oecd.org. Figure-specific notes identify additional exclusions or questionnaire limitations relevant to individual estimates.

Methodology for the policy indicators (Chapter 3)

The policy indicators presented in Chapter 3 were developed by the OECD to assess key dimensions of the justice system, as set out in the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems. Within the OECD Measurement Framework for People-Centred Justice Systems, they provide structured comparative evidence on the government policy and system characteristics that shape how justice systems are organised and operate. They complement the outcome indicators presented in Chapter 2, which assess what justice systems deliver for people, by focusing on the policies, institutional arrangements, services, data systems and governance practices that can support those outcomes. Taken together, the two sets of indicators enable the report to examine, within a common measurement architecture, both how justice systems operate and the outcomes they achieve.

The policy indicators were developed through an iterative process following the adoption of the Recommendation in 2023, with draft indicators refined between 2024 and 2025 and translated into a country questionnaire developed between January and June 2025. The framework comprises 10 policy indicators and 31 elements. The indicators are organised around the five pillars of the Recommendation, with two indicators under each pillar. They were validated through policy discussions with piloting countries

(i.e. Ireland, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands and Sierra Leone), presented in the Justice Action Coalition policy dialogue meeting in February 2025, at the World Justice Forum in June 2025 and at the OECD Global Roundtable on Equal Access to Justice in November 2025. The indicators were also published in the OECD reports “Making Justice Systems More Effective and People Centred” and “Towards a measurement framework for people-centred justice systems” (de Langen, Teplova and Mulherin, 2026^[4]; OECD, 2025^[5]).

Questionnaire development and deployment

An initial version of the questionnaire was developed between January and April 2025. It was programmed in LimeSurvey and pilot-tested by the Ministries of Justice of Ireland, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands and Sierra Leone in May 2025. Feedback was also received from partners in Workstream 1 of the Justice Action Coalition, namely the World Justice Project, HiiL and Pathfinders between May and June 2025. Following this feedback, the questionnaire was revised in June 2025.

The survey was updated in LimeSurvey in June 2025, following additional user testing, and a guidance document was developed to support country responses. Invitations to respond to the questionnaire were sent to OECD and Justice Action Coalition countries in July 2025. Individualised links were provided to focal points nominated by each country between July and August 2025.

The OECD Secretariat engaged with countries between July and December 2025 to collect responses and manage deadline extensions, and an FAQ was developed and shared with focal points between July and August 2025. Responses to the questionnaire were received from 27 countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Türkiye and the United Kingdom.

Data validation and scoring

The reference period for data validation was 2023 – 2024. Based on the validation and scoring methodology developed to assess countries’ responses, the OECD carried out a data validation process between December 2025 and August 2026. Once validation was completed for a country, the OECD contacted national focal points for final validation of selected answers that required further clarifications between January and August 2026. Validated data were used for the analysis and drafting of the Justice as a Public Service report.

Interpretation of the policy indicators

The policy indicators should be interpreted as structured comparative evidence on the presence and development of selected people-centred justice policies, practices and institutional arrangements. They do not measure final outcomes for people and businesses directly. Rather, they assess whether countries report having in place selected conditions that may support people-centred justice, such as people-centred strategies, services, governance arrangements, data systems, communication practices, participatory planning and monitoring mechanisms.

The policy indicators are based on country questionnaire responses validated by the OECD Secretariat. As with all questionnaire-based comparative exercises, results should be interpreted in light of differences in institutional structures, legal traditions, terminology and the availability of documentary evidence across countries. The indicators are intended to identify patterns, gaps and areas for policy dialogue, rather than to provide a definitive ranking of justice systems.

List of policy indicators

While the 10 indicators and 31 indicator elements do not seek to capture every aspect of the 5 pillars, they are designed to provide a meaningful and practical overview of how the 5 pillars of the Recommendation can be operationalised and materialised in practice.

Pillar I – Establish a people-centred purpose and culture in the justice sector

1. There is a people-centred purpose and culture in the justice system.

- a. The government and/or the ministry of justice have explicitly committed to promote people-centred justice as the purpose and culture for the justice system, through whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.
- b. Key justice institutions and service providers have publicly embraced the goal of ensuring equal access to justice for all, define shared goals for collaboration between them and regularly monitor progress towards these goals.
- c. The roles and independence of justice sector stakeholders are clearly recognised, while ensuring mutual co-operation and co-ordination.
- d. Strategies are implemented to identify, analyse and eradicate any explicit or implicit bias and discrimination within the justice system and in the outcomes it produces.

2. The justice system makes regular and rigorous efforts to understand the legal needs and justice problems of people, businesses and communities.

- a. The legal needs and justice problems of people, businesses and communities are assessed and monitored, through legal needs surveys.
- b. Research is done or other efforts are undertaken to assess and monitor the most common legal needs and justice problems for specific groups.
- c. Mechanisms exist to ensure that the data and evidence on legal needs and justice problems is translated into preventative action and/or structural solutions.

Pillar II – Design and deliver people-centred justice services

3. The justice sector designs a continuum of services taking into account people's legal capabilities and effective problem resolution.

- a. Justice service design (including online and digital services) is informed by an assessment of legal capabilities of the people experiencing justice problems.
- b. Justice service design is informed by evidence on effective problem resolution.
- c. Justice services are distributed geographically in such a way that people are reasonably able to reach them, including with public transportation.

4. The justice sector delivers a continuum of affordable and effective services, continuously improving them based on people's experiences.

- a. Justice services address the legal needs and justice problems of people, businesses and communities, and in particular consider the most common justice problems
- b. Justice services ask for feedback about people's experiences with the service, as well as their assessment of the fairness of the process and the outcome.

Pillar III – Establish a governance infrastructure that enables people-centred justice

5. Digital transformation and innovation in the justice sector support the effective delivery of justice services.

- a. There is a national or sectoral strategy guiding the digital transformation of the justice sector.
- b. The justice sector embeds a digital by design approach to maximise access to justice.
- c. In their digitalisation efforts, the justice sector preserves access for those experiencing barriers to using technology.
- d. Innovation is fostered across the justice sector to enhance the delivery of people-centred justice services and pathways.

6. The justice sector maintains a people-centred justice data system and ensures proper data governance.

- a. There is a justice data strategy that provides sound and coherent governance arrangements for justice data and evidence.
- b. There is a core set of people-centred data variables identified, collected and reported across the justice sector.
- c. Data quality standards and data collection and management protocols for people-centred justice data are established and implemented across the justice sector.

Pillar IV – Empower people to make people-centred justice transformation happen

7. People are empowered to make people-centred justice transformation happen.

- a. Justice actors engage with people, businesses and communities and specific groups impacted by justice systems, including through legal aid providers and civil society organisations, to inform justice policies and practice).
- b. People (both in and outside of justice system) and stakeholders have opportunities to be informed, consulted and engaged in the design and delivery of justice services.
- c. There are effective mechanisms in place to foster empowerment and legal literacy of people, including to manage their own legal matters and justice problems.

8. Justice sector communications are targeted for the intended audience, and are provided in plain language, avoiding complexity.

- a. There is a government or justice sector policy that requires efforts to reduce complexity and use plain language in justice sector communications.
- b. There are online and offline efforts to enable people to access relevant legal information, navigate forms and procedures, and find appropriate justice services.
- c. People are aware of services that can address their legal needs and justice problems.

Pillar V – Commit to participatory and evidence-based planning, monitoring and evaluation

9. Justice sector planning and budgeting is people-centred, data-driven and evidence-based.

- a. The justice sector planning and budgeting process is based on data and evidence about the availability and effectiveness of justice services.
- b. Priorities in justice sector planning and budgeting are driven by data about legal needs and justice problems.
- c. Justice budgets, for the sector and per institution or service, provide the information needed to understand the connection between resources, services provided, and justice outcomes achieved, and this information is made public.

10. There is a system of participatory and evidence-based monitoring, evaluation and accountability of justice institutions and services.

- a. There are regular and robust reviews and assessments of the performance of the justice system and justice services.
- b. The justice sector identifies gaps in data, evidence and knowledge about what works to resolve people's problems, and it provides support for justice system research and development.
- c. Justice sector actors draw on experiences and effective strategies from other countries to inform justice policies and practice.

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Note

¹ The GLNS was informed by an extensive review of existing legal needs survey methodologies and shaped through a structured advisory process involving the Open Society Justice Initiative and the OECD. This advisory stream provided methodological guidance on core concepts, including the definition of justiciable problems and essential survey components. The survey underwent a multi-year process of piloting, consultation, and validation, including testing in diverse country contexts and comparison of urban and nationally representative samples to ensure robustness. The implementation of the GLNS has expanded significantly over time, while retaining comparability. WJP first developed and implemented it at the national level, with findings reported in *Global Insights on Access to Justice* (WJP, 2019^[1]), producing the first globally comparable dataset on legal needs across more than a hundred countries and jurisdictions. Building on this foundation, subsequent waves expanded country coverage and strengthened comparability across diverse legal and socioeconomic contexts.

Justice as a Public Service

Delivering Better Outcomes

Effective justice systems underpin the rule of law, trust in public institutions, social development and economic productivity. This report provides the first cross-country assessment of the implementation of the OECD Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems. Covering OECD and Justice Action Coalition member and partner countries, it combines evidence on people's justice problems, pathways and outcomes with analysis of the policies and institutional arrangements of the justice system. The findings show that justice problems remain widespread and consequential, while significant gaps persist in tailoring assistance and co-ordinating across justice pathways. Although countries are making progress in digitalisation, service innovation and user engagement, more can be done to use legal needs evidence for policymaking and implementation, invest in research and development, and link resources and outcomes. The report highlights the need to move beyond institution-centred approaches towards justice as a responsive public service, supported by stronger data and evidence, integrated service delivery, outcome-oriented planning and financing, and continuous learning and improvement.



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