Reference metadata template for data reported on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Goal: 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Target: 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

Indicator: Proportion of the population reporting trust in public institutions

Institutional information

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Concepts and definitions

Definition:
Trust is defined as "a person's belief that an institution or another person will act consistently with their expectations of positive behaviour" (*OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust, 2017).* This definition encompasses both institutional trust (i.e. trust in public institutions) and interpersonal trust (i.e. trust in other people). The proposed indicator refers to the former.

Rationale:

People's trust in institutions is a prerequisite for good governance, institutional quality and political participation, as it captures the trustworthiness of institutions from the perspective of people themselves. Trust in institutions shapes people's willingness to cooperate with others and hence the type of policies that governments can put in place to address their goals and deliver public goods. Without trust in institutions such as the parliament, the civil service, the justice system and the police, it would be impossible for a community to perform effectively, or for people within it to live the sort of life that they wish to pursue. Trust in institutions requires that these institutions are competent and effective in delivering their goals, but also that they operate consistently with a set of values that reflect people's expectations of integrity, accountability and fairness (Murtin et al., 2018; Algan, 2018).

The indicator is easy to interpret and refers to the share of the population stating to trust the public institutions of the country where they live.

Concepts:

The *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust* refer to all types of public institutions of a country. Empirical evidence from available data suggest that respondents distinguish between three main types of institutions, i.e. the political system (which includes the government, political parties and the parliament), the judicial system (which includes the police, military and courts) and non-political institutions (the civil service). An ideal data set would cover each of these different institutions with a separate indicator. Based on the internationally comparable sources that currently exist (i.e. the Gallup World Poll), time-series on people's trust in the national government are available for the majority of countries worldwide.

Comments and limitations:

Internationally comparable annual data on people's trust in the national government are available for over 160 countries via the Gallup World Poll since 2006. Data for all OECD countries from this source are published in the biannual OECD report *How's Life?*. Gallup World Poll data can be used as provisional baseline estimates until comparable official data on trust become available in a sufficient number of countries. A similar approach has been used by the IAEG in the case of the indicator of "prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population" (Target 2.1), for which the custodian agency (FAO) is also supplying provisional baseline estimates from the Gallup World Poll (http://www.fao.org/in-action/voices-of-the-hungry/sdgs/en/).

Already today, statistical offices use trust questions in their official surveys that are in line with the OECD recommendations, while close variants of these questions are included in a wide range of official and non-official surveys. Official initiatives focusing on trust include the GPS modules implemented by several African NSOs and data collection in Australia, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand and Poland. Eurostat recently included a trust question in its 2018 ad-hoc well-being module to EU-SILC. The OECD complied data on people's trust in different public institutions (political, law and order, and non-political) for 124 countries worldwide from different sources spanning 2002-15 into an OECD Trust Database.

As with other intangible concepts, measuring trust through self-report raises issues about respondents' interpretation of the question and about their subjective judgement, but these issues are tractable through careful survey-design. Available evidence shows that questions on trust in institutions produce valid data: Analysis from the Trust Database shows that measures of institutional trust have high face validity (e.g. have high response rates compared to other self-reported measures) and construct validity (e.g. there is a strong relation between trust and several of its expected drivers and consequences, such as GDP per capita, unemployment rates, life expectancy, life satisfaction). This holds true whether measures are assessed across countries or at the individual level. In terms of convergent validity (i.e. whether survey measures of trust are highly correlated with other measures of the same construct), experimental measures of institutional trust drawn from behavioural psychology tends to validate survey-based trust measures (Gonzalez and Smith, 2017; Murtin et al, 2018; OECD, 2017).

Methodology

The information in this section refers to the data on trust in the national government collected by Gallup World Poll and reported in the OECD's *How's Life?* publication.

Computation Method:

For each country, the proposed indicator refers to the share of the population responding "yes" to the question: "In this country, do you have confidence in each of the following, or not? How about national government?". Sample data are weighted using weights supplied by the Gallup World Poll.

Disaggregation:

This indicator, which relies on household surveys, can be disaggregated by a variety of respondents' characteristics, including age, gender, education, labour force status, income and place of living. However, access to microdata from the Gallup World Poll comes at a higher price than in the case of aggregate data.

Treatment of missing values:

Gallup World Poll data generally have very few missing values (data are available for all OECD countries since 2006 for this indicator); as data are collected annually, missing values are not a significant issue. In case of missing data, values should be left blank rather than imputed.

Regional aggregates:

While the OECD has in the past used population-weighted averages to compute a regional OECD average, it will now move to a simple average. It is recommended to pool data over 2-3 years to increase the sample size and reduce variability of the estimates.

Sources of discrepancies:

n/a

Methods and guidance available to countries for the compilation of the data at the national level:

The *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust* provide guidance on collecting, publishing, and analysing trust data. The goal is to encourage their use by National Statistical Offices, so as to improve the quality and availability of official data on trust in the future.

Quality assurance

All data for OECD countries contained in *How's Life?* were selected using a variety of criteria referring to their relevance and statistical quality, in line with the Quality Framework for OECD Statistical Activities.

Data Sources

Description:

Household survey

Collection process:

Interviews are conducted by Gallup via telephone in OECD and other countries where telephone coverage is at least 80% of the population. In much of Latin America, the former Soviet Union, nearly all of Asia, the Middle East and Africa data are collected through face-to-face interviews.

The sample (at least 1000 people per country) is ex ante designed to be nationally representative of the population aged 15 and over (including rural areas).

Data Availability

Description:

Data are collected and released annually

Time series:

Since 2006

Calendar

Data collection and release:
Data are released a year after collection by Gallup, and every two years by the OECD in the *How's Life?* report (upcoming edition: 2020).

Data providers

Gallup World Poll

Data compilers

OECD, Statistics and Data Directorate

References

URL:

How's Life? data online annex (2017 edition): https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/how_life-2017-54-en.pdf?expires=1540893592&id=id&accname=ocid84004878&checksum=0FF09F92A9E2BE2732B22AA201DA8BBB

Gallup World Poll methodology:
http://www.oecd.org/sdd/43017172.pdf

Quality Framework for OECD Statistical Activities:
https://www.oecd.org/sdd/qualityframeworkforoecdstatisticalactivities.htm

References:

Algan Y. (2018), "Trust and Social Capital", Chapter 10 in Stiglitz, Fitoussi and Durand (2018), *For Good Measure: Advancing Research on Well-Being Beyond GDP*, OECD Publishing, Paris.
González, S. and C. Smith (2017), "The accuracy of measures of institutional trust in household surveys: Evidence from the OECD trust database", OECD Statistics Working Papers, No. 2017/11, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/d839bd50-en.
Murtin, F., et al. (2018), "Trust and its determinants: Evidence from the Trustlab experiment", *OECD Statistics Working Papers*, No. 2018/02, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/869ef2ec-en.
OECD (2017), *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264278219-en.

Related indicators

Linkages with any other Goals and Targets:

16.3. Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all
16.5. Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
16.6.2. Proportion of the population satisfied with their last experience of public services
16.7. Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels