

Legal Needs Survey in Colombia: meeting legal needs for more inclusive growth

Title of the governance Practice: Legal Needs Survey in Colombia

Summary of the governance practice

Colombia has made important advances in its efforts to measure and map the legal needs of its population through the use of a comprehensive legal needs survey. The legal needs survey was introduced in the Quality of Life Survey conducted by the National Department of Statistics and the National Planning Department of Colombia in 2016. Based on the survey results, Colombia developed the Effective Access to Justice Index to inform their long-term justice plan.

Short description of the governance practice

In an effort to measure and map the legal needs of its population, the Government of Colombia carried out a comprehensive legal needs survey. This survey was introduced as a component of the Quality of Life Survey conducted by the National Department of Statistics and the National Planning Department of Colombia in 2016. It built on methodologies and experiences of the civil society organisation Dejusticia, which had previously conducted an urban legal needs survey in Colombia. Indeed, Legal needs surveys are most effective when those defining and supporting the research bring other groups into the process. The survey was backed by the Government and carried out face-to-face. The response rate was therefore very high at 96%.

Achievement/outcome of the governance practice

Based on the survey results, Colombia developed the Effective Access to Justice Index to inform their long-term justice plan. It helps to measure and compare the capacity of Colombia's regions and departments to provide effective access to justice. It explores six dimensions of access to justice:

- favourable environment (which is concerned with structural and institutional barriers to justice that lie outside of the justice system);
- legal capability;
- legal assistance;
- fair procedure;
- compliance with judicial decisions; and
- access to institutions.

Colombia is currently preparing the next legal needs survey to be carried out in 2020 as a module of the Citizenship Security Survey. It will aim to collect data at the national and regional level (both urban and rural areas), including several main cities.

Source: OECD (2019) Equal Access to Justice for Inclusive Growth: Putting People at the Centre, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/597f5b7f-en>; OECD/Open Society Foundations (2019), Legal Needs Surveys and Access to Justice, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/g2q9a36c-en>; Information provided by the National Planning Department of Colombia.