Japan had the highest public debt among OECD countries in 2019. **COVID is worsening debt levels.** General government gross debt in Japan was 226% of GDP, above the average of 109% of GDP among OECD countries (Figure 2.8). The structural balance deteriorated from -3.7% of GDP in 2019 to -8.1% of GDP in 2020. This was the third largest structural deficit among OECD countries, after the United States and Israel (Figure 2.5).

**Chapter 2 – Public finance and economics**

![Figure 2.5. General government structural balance as a percentage of potential GDP, 2007, 2019 and 2020](image)

![Figure 2.8. General government gross debt as a percentage of GDP, 2007, 2019 and 2020](image)

Japan lags behind on gender parity in public administration and politics. In 2020, women held only 4.2% of senior management positions in central government in Japan, the lowest value among OECD countries (Figure 3.9). Women held only 10% of the seats in the lower house of parliament and in central governments’ ministerial positions in 2021. These percentages averaged 31.6% and 34%, respectively, in OECD countries (Figures 3.10 and 3.11).

**Chapter 3 – Public employment**

![Figure 3.9. Gender equality in senior management positions in central governments, 2015 and 2020](image)

![Figure 3.10. Gender equality in parliament and electoral gender quotas, 2012, 2017 and 2021](image)

![Figure 3.11. Gender equality in ministerial positions, 2012, 2017 and 2021](image)

Japan performs very well on quality of public services, but less so on responsiveness and access. Japan ranks best in the OECD on 30-day mortality following stroke hospitalization and health care coverage (Figure 14.23); it ranks among the top countries for most indicators of quality of health, education and justice (Scorecard 3). However, it ranks at the bottom for private expenditures on education and availability of educational material (Figures 11.7 and 11.16).

**Chapter 14 – Serving citizens**

![Figure 14.7. Share of private expenditures on education after transfers as a share of total spending on education, 2017](image)

![Figure 14.16. Indexes of shortage of education staff and education material, 2018](image)

![Figure 14.23. Thirty-day mortality after admission to hospital for ischaemic stroke based on unlinked data, 2007 and 2017](image)
Government resources

Government expenditures (2019) % of GDP

Government investment (2019) % of GDP

Fiscal balance (2019) % of GDP

Government gross debt (SNA definition, 2019) % of GDP

Government expenditures by selected functions (2019) % of GDP

Environmental protection

Education

General public services

Health

Social protection

General government employment as a % of total employment (2019)

Central government workforce by age (2020)

18-34

35-54

55+

Share of women in management positions in the central government (2020)

Senior management

Middle management

Source: OECD National Accounts

Source: OECD Survey on the composition of the workforce in central/federal governments
Public governance practices

Composite indices of public service leadership and capability (2020)
From 0 (worst) to 1 (best)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Index Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of a diverse workforce</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies to manage senior civil servants</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD Survey on the composition of the workforce in central/federal governments and OECD Survey on public service leadership and capability

Green budgeting tools (2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex ante or ex post environmental assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO GREEN BUDGETING 12 YES 2 NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO GREEN BUDGETING 7 YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD and European Commission – Joint survey on emerging green budgeting practices

Objectives included in infrastructure and public procurement strategies (2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public procurement strategy includes responsible business conduct objectives on...</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Human rights</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>21 YES 5 NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>13 YES 13 NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>19 YES 5 NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>5 YES 19 NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD Survey on infrastructure governance and OECD Survey on leveraging responsible business conduct through public procurement

Citizen and stakeholder participation (2020 or 2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early consultation in the regulation-making process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEVER 8 SYSTEMATIC 2 NEVER 27 NOT SYSTEMATIC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD Survey on centres of government’s role in managing the COVID-19 crisis, OECD open government Survey and OECD indicators of regulatory policy and governance (iREG) Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centres of government consulted stakeholders on COVID-19 recovery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. A. 15 YES 8 NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD Survey on centres of government’s role in managing the COVID-19 crisis, OECD open government Survey and OECD indicators of regulatory policy and governance (iREG) Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central government portal(s) for carrying out online consultations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES 22 YES 10 NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD Survey on centres of government’s role in managing the COVID-19 crisis, OECD open government Survey and OECD indicators of regulatory policy and governance (iREG) Survey

Digital government index (2019)
Composite index from 0 (worst) to 1 (best)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Range of OECD country values

Source: OECD Survey on digital government 1.0

Values have been rounded

N. A. not available
Government results

Government provides information on law enforcement, due process and respect of human rights (2020)
Composite index from 0 (worst) to 1 (best)

Citizens who express satisfaction with public services (2020)

Citizens who express trust in public institutions (2020)

Citizens who believe they have a say in what government does (2018)

Income inequality before taxes and post taxes and transfers (Gini index, 2018)

Figure notes

Government at a Glance 2021

Published every two years, Government at a Glance provides reliable, internationally comparable indicators on government activities and their results in OECD countries.

The 2021 edition includes input indicators on public finance and employment; while processes include data on institutions, budgeting practices and procedures, human resources management, regulatory governance, public procurement, the governance of infrastructure, public sector integrity, open government and digital government. Outcomes cover core government results (e.g. trust, political efficacy, inequality reduction) and indicators on access, responsiveness, quality and citizen satisfaction for the education, health and justice sectors. Governance indicators are especially useful for monitoring and benchmarking governments’ progress in their public sector reforms.

Each indicator in the publication is presented in a user-friendly format, consisting of graphs and/or charts illustrating variations across countries and over time, brief descriptive analyses highlighting the major findings conveyed by the data, and a methodological section on the definition of the indicator and any limitations in data comparability.

The Excel spreadsheets used to create the tables and figures in Government at a Glance 2021 are available via the StatLinks provided throughout the publication: https://doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en

For more information on the data (including full methodology and figure notes) and to consult all other Country Fact Sheets: www.oecd.org/gov/govataglance.htm