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**ADVOCACY UNIFIED NETWORK**

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**2023 EDITION · INAUGURAL**

# AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023

*A composite index of institutional readiness, policy coherence, implementation capacity, accountability, and participation across 177 countries and territories*

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## Foreword

The Advocacy Unified Network (AUN) presents the inaugural edition of the AUN Global Governance Readiness Index, the Network's flagship annual benchmark on the state of public governance worldwide. This 2023 edition, published in *Opus Publica* on 1 December 2023, is the product of more than eighteen months of methodological design, data assembly, expert consultation, and rigorous internal validation. It is intended as a standing annual reference — one that governments, researchers, journalists, and international organisations can turn to each December and ask, simply and productively: "What does the AUN Index say?"

The decision to build a new global governance index was not taken lightly. The world is already well served by an impressive architecture of governance, democracy, rule-of-law, and anti-corruption instruments, including the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators, Freedom House's Freedom in the World, the V-Dem Institute's Democracy Report, Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index, the United Nations E-Government Survey, the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, and the OECD's Government at a Glance. The AUN Index does not seek to replace any of these instruments. Rather, it integrates them — drawing on the most recent vintage of each that was publicly available by 30 November 2023 — into a single, transparent, five-dimension composite that addresses what we believe is a persistent gap in the global governance measurement architecture.

That gap is the relative neglect, in composite measurement, of two dimensions that determine whether governance actually delivers: institutional readiness and implementation capacity. Most existing indices are weighted, explicitly or implicitly, toward the accountability and participation dimensions of governance. These are indispensable. But a country's capacity to translate laws into outcomes — to register a business, deliver a vaccine, enforce a contract, collect a tax, or operate a digital identity system — is equally constitutive of governance readiness. The AUN Index therefore elevates institutional readiness, policy coherence, and implementation capacity to the same analytical standing as accountability and participation, and aggregates all five on a common 0–100 scale.

The 2023 edition covers 177 sovereign states and territories. It finds a global mean score of 51.10 on the 0–100 AUN scale, a population-weighted mean of 48.58, and a sample standard deviation ( $n-1$ ) of 19.53. The Nordic–Antipodean cluster — Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, and New Zealand — occupies the top of the ranking, joined by Iceland, Estonia, and the high-income Western European democracies. At the bottom, a cluster of conflict-affected and closed-authoritarian states — Myanmar, Syria, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, Eritrea, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — records critical readiness deficits. Between these extremes, the Index reveals three structural findings that recur throughout this report: participation is the weakest of the five dimensions globally; the implementation–participation gap is a distinctive cleavage in non-democratic governance; and the population-weighted mean (48.58) sits below the unweighted country mean (51.10), indicating that population weight is concentrated disproportionately in lower-scoring countries — most of the world's most populous countries score below

the simple mean, although only 36.3 per cent of the world's population lives in countries with composite scores below the country median of 46.20.

The AUN Index is published as AUN intellectual property. The methodology, the dataset, and the underlying indicator framework are documented in full in the chapters that follow and in the appendices, so that any researcher can reproduce or contest our computations. The methodology and the dataset are published under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0), permitting unrestricted reuse with attribution. We commit to publishing annual updates each December, to maintaining a stable methodology for comparability across editions, and to documenting any methodological changes transparently in future editions.

We are grateful to the many institutions whose public data make this Index possible, to the methodological reviewers who scrutinised our design, and to the AUN research team that carried the work forward. We hope that the AUN Global Governance Readiness Index becomes, over time, a trusted reference in the global conversation about how societies are governed — and about how they can be governed better.

*The Advocacy Unified Network — December 2023*

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## Executive Summary

The AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 is the inaugural annual edition of the Advocacy Unified Network's flagship composite index on the state of public governance worldwide. Published in *Opus Publica* on 1 December 2023, the Index scores 177 sovereign states and territories on a single 0–100 scale constructed from five dimensions: Institutional Readiness, Policy Coherence, Implementation Capacity, Accountability, and Participation. The Index aggregates the most recent vintage of nine established governance, democracy, rule-of-law, anti-corruption, and digital-government instruments (supplemented by Open Government Partnership membership and action-plan data) that were publicly available by 30 November 2023. Within each of the five dimensions, indicator entries are aggregated using the pre-specified weights documented in Appendix B; the five dimension scores are then aggregated into the composite AUN Index using equal weights of 20 per cent per dimension.

## Scope and Methodology in Brief

The 2023 edition is grounded in the following underlying vintages, each of which was published on or before 30 November 2023: the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators 2022 Update (published 25 September 2023); Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 (9 March 2023); the V-Dem Institute Democracy Report 2023 (2 March 2023); Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2022 (31 January 2023); the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2023 (25 October 2023); the United Nations E-Government Survey 2022 (autumn 2022); the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2022 (January 2023); the OECD Government at a Glance 2023 (30 June 2023); and the SDSN Sustainable Development Report 2023 (June 2023), supplemented by the Open Government Partnership membership and action-plan status as of late 2023.

The AUN Index methodology proceeds in six stages: source selection; indicator extraction (35 indicator entries drawn from the nine instruments); normalisation to a 0–100 scale via percentile-rank and z-score methods as appropriate to each source; within-dimension weighted aggregation; aggregation into the five dimension scores; equal-weight composition (20 percent per dimension) into the composite AUN Index; and tier classification into six readiness bands. Robustness tests using alternative weighting schemes and min-max normalisation confirm rank stability, with Spearman rank correlations exceeding 0.96 across specifications.

## Headline Findings

The global mean AUN Index score across the 177 countries assessed is 51.10 on the 0–100 scale. The global median is 46.20, and the sample standard deviation ( $n-1$ ) is 19.53. The population-weighted mean is 48.58 — a critical figure, because it sits below the unweighted country mean (51.10), indicating that population weight is concentrated disproportionately in lower-scoring countries. The population share living below the country median of 46.20 is 36.3 per cent; the population-weighted mean is below the simple mean not because a majority of the world's population lives below the country median (they do not), but because

several of the world's most populous countries score below the simple mean. The score range extends from 93.9 (Sweden, rank 1) to 11.8 (Myanmar, rank 177).

The top of the ranking is dominated by a Nordic–Antipodean cluster. Sweden (93.9), Finland (93.5), Norway (93.4), Denmark (90.6), and New Zealand (89.0) occupy the first five positions. They are followed by Iceland (87.4), San Marino (87.3), Estonia (86.4), Andorra (86.0), and the Netherlands (85.9). Denmark's position reflects its dual first-place standing on the Transparency International CPI 2022 (score 90) and the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2023, while Sweden, Finland, and Norway each hold a perfect 100 score on Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023. Estonia is the highest-ranked Central and Eastern European country; on the United Nations E-Government Development Index 2022 Estonia ranks in the top tier and is the highest-ranked CEE country on that survey, and the country also leads the E-Participation Index.

At the bottom of the ranking, ten countries score below 20 on the AUN scale and are classified in Tier 6 — Critical Readiness. Myanmar (11.8, rank 177), Syria (12.1), South Sudan (13.5), Afghanistan (13.5), Yemen (13.6), Somalia (13.8), Eritrea (14.5), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (14.6), the Central African Republic (15.0), and Sudan (15.5) constitute this tier. Each is either a conflict-affected state with contested sovereignty or a closed authoritarian regime; in several, the Participation sub-score collapses below 10, the lowest in the Index.

## Five Structural Findings

The 2023 edition surfaces five structural findings that recur throughout the report and that constitute the substantive contribution of the Index to the global governance measurement architecture.

**Finding 1 — The Nordic–Antipodean convergence at the top.** A small group of high-income, high-trust, institutionally dense democracies — the Nordics, New Zealand, the high-income Western European states, and Canada — occupies the top twenty positions in the Index and dominates every underlying source. This convergence is not new, but the AUN Index confirms it on a single composite scale and demonstrates that it extends across all five dimensions rather than being driven by any single one.

**Finding 2 — The population-weighted deficit.** The population-weighted mean AUN score of 48.58 is lower than the simple mean of 51.10. This reflects the fact that several of the world's most populous countries — including India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, and Russia — score below the simple country mean of 51.10. A simple cross-country mean therefore overstates the governance readiness of the average person; the population-weighted figure is the more appropriate reference for any assessment of the global state of governance.

**Finding 3 — Participation is the global weak point.** Of the five AUN dimensions, Participation has the lowest global mean (47.18), reflecting the sustained global autocratization trend documented by the V-Dem Institute (which reports that 72 percent of the world's population — 5.7 billion people — now live in autocracies, and that for the first time in more than two decades there are more closed autocracies than liberal democracies), by Freedom House (which reports the seventeenth consecutive year of decline in

global freedom), and by the World Justice Project (which reports that Fundamental Rights have declined in 77 percent of countries since 2016).

**Finding 4 — The implementation–participation gap.** The Index reveals a distinctive cleavage in non-democratic governance: a cluster of countries with high Implementation Capacity and Institutional Readiness scores but very low Participation scores. Singapore (AUN 82.7, IC 87.5, PA 64.7), the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia (PA 2.5, the lowest globally outside conflict states), Qatar, and China exhibit this pattern. The Gulf Cooperation Council region as a whole records a regional Implementation Capacity mean of 50.9 but a Participation mean of only 12.4 — a 38.5-point gap that is the largest of any region on any pair of dimensions.

**Finding 5 — The income gradient.** Governance readiness tracks but does not determine income. The mean AUN score for high-income countries (n=61) is 71.2; for upper-middle-income countries (n=48) it is 47.1; for lower-middle-income countries (n=50) it is 39.8; and for low-income countries (n=18) it is 25.1. The income gradient is steep but not deterministic: several upper-middle-income countries outperform high-income peers, and several low-income countries outscore lower-middle-income peers, indicating that governance readiness is the product of institutional and policy choices, not of income alone.

## Regional Patterns

The regional analysis reveals a familiar but important geography of governance readiness. Western Europe (mean 80.73, n=25), North America (80.65, n=2), and Oceania (86.35, n=2) lead the Index. Central and Eastern Europe (60.68, n=17) follows, led by Estonia and constrained by Hungary and Poland's rule-of-law concerns. Latin America and the Caribbean (51.05, n=33) is led by Uruguay and Costa Rica and pulled down by Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba. East Asia and the Pacific (47.40, n=18) shows the widest internal variance of any region, containing both Singapore (rank 19) and Myanmar (rank 177). South Asia (40.68, n=8), the Middle East and North Africa (37.61, n=13), Sub-Saharan Africa (37.61, n=40), and Central Asia (42.54, n=13) form the lower-mid cluster.

## What the 2023 Edition Adds

The AUN Index makes three distinctive contributions to the existing global governance measurement architecture. First, it elevates Institutional Readiness and Implementation Capacity to the same analytical standing as Accountability and Participation, providing a fuller account of what governance readiness means. Second, it integrates Policy Coherence as a measured dimension, addressing a concept that the existing indices treat only implicitly. Third, it presents a single composite on a transparent 0–100 scale, with full methodological documentation and a stable methodology intended to support cross-year comparability from this inaugural edition forward.

## How to Read This Report

The report is organised in twelve chapters and three appendices. Chapter 1 sets out the introduction and background. Chapter 2 develops the conceptual framework. Chapter 3 documents the methodology in full. Chapter 4 catalogues the data sources and vintages. Chapter 5 provides a deep analytical treatment of each of the five dimensions. Chapter 6 presents the global rankings and five key findings. Chapter 7 offers a regional analysis. Chapter 8 presents ten country profiles. Chapter 9 situates the 2023 findings in broader trends. Chapter 10 sets out limitations and caveats. Chapter 11 advances seven policy recommendations addressed to specific owners. Chapter 12 concludes. Appendix A contains the full 177-country ranking; Appendix B provides the methodology annex; and Appendix C contains a glossary of terms.

The central question this report is designed to answer — and that future editions will answer each December — is straightforward: what does the AUN Index say about the state of governance readiness worldwide in 2023? The answer, in summary, is that the world sits marginally above the midpoint of the AUN scale, that the population-weighted mean is below the midpoint of the AUN scale (indicating that population is disproportionately concentrated in lower-scoring countries), that participation is the weakest dimension globally, that the implementation–participation cleavage is a distinctive feature of non-democratic governance, and that a small Nordic–Antipodean cluster sets the benchmark that the rest of the world measures itself against.

# Chapter 1 — Introduction and Background

## 1.1 Why a Governance Readiness Index

Governance is a central determinant of whether societies flourish. It shapes the quality of public services, the fairness of markets, the credibility of contracts, the safety of streets, the integrity of elections, the responsiveness of officials, and the trust that citizens place in the institutions that act in their name. In the opening years of the 2020s, governance has come under sustained pressure from multiple directions simultaneously: a global autocratization wave that the V-Dem Institute has termed the "third wave of autocratization," a rule-of-law recession documented by the World Justice Project, a corruption stagnation that has kept the Transparency International global average score at 43 out of 100 for more than a decade, a widening digital divide in public-service delivery, and a sharp deterioration in civic space across many regions. The cumulative effect, as documented by the 2023 AUN Index, is that 36.3 per cent of the world's population lives in countries with composite scores below the country median of 46.20, while several of the world's most populous countries score below the simple global mean of 51.10 — a population-weighted mean of 48.58 that sits below the unweighted country mean and indicates that population weight is concentrated disproportionately in lower-scoring countries.

Measuring governance is therefore not an academic exercise. It is a prerequisite for diagnosing where progress is occurring, where it is stalling, where it is reversing, and where action is most needed. Reliable measurement supports the design of reforms, the targeting of development assistance, the allocation of risk in private investment, the conduct of diplomatic dialogue, and the accountability of governments to their citizens. Without comparable, cross-country, time-series data on governance, debate defaults to anecdote and reform defaults to fashion.

The global governance measurement architecture has, over the past three decades, grown impressively. The World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators, first published in 1999, established the modern composite-indicator methodology. Freedom House's Freedom in the World, now in its fiftieth year, provides the longest-running comparative assessment of political rights and civil liberties. The V-Dem Institute, founded in 2014, has built the most granular democracy measurement platform in the world, with more than 470 indicators and 3,500 country experts. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, published annually since 1995, is the reference standard for cross-country corruption measurement. The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index, the United Nations E-Government Survey, the OECD's Government at a Glance, and the EIU Democracy Index each add a distinctive lens. Together, these instruments constitute a remarkable public good.

The AUN Global Governance Readiness Index does not replace any of them. It integrates them. The motivation for integration is the recognition that each individual instrument, however excellent within its scope, captures only part of what governance readiness means. An index focused on democracy does not directly measure whether governments can implement policy. An index focused on corruption does not directly measure whether citizens can participate in selecting their government. An index focused on rule

of law does not directly measure whether governments formulate coherent policy. The AUN Index addresses this by integrating the most recent vintage of nine established instruments into a single composite organised around five dimensions that, together, encompass the full operational meaning of governance readiness.

## 1.2 The AUN Mandate

The Advocacy Unified Network is a non-partisan, non-governmental research and advocacy organisation whose mission is to strengthen the quality of public governance through evidence, convening, and policy engagement. The Network's work spans three pillars: research, in the form of comparative measurement and policy analysis; advocacy, in the form of engagement with governments, parliaments, and international organisations on specific reforms; and convening, in the form of the Opus Publica publication series and associated public events. The AUN Global Governance Readiness Index is the Network's flagship research product and the anchor of its annual publication calendar.

The decision to build a composite governance index was taken by the AUN Board in 2022, following an internal review that concluded that existing composite indices under-weighted institutional and implementation dimensions relative to accountability and participation dimensions, and that no existing index integrated policy coherence as an explicit, measured dimension. The Board directed that the Index be designed to a publication standard suitable for citation by governments, researchers, and international organisations; that its methodology be fully transparent and reproducible; that its underlying data be drawn exclusively from public, established sources; and that it be published annually on a stable methodology to support cross-year comparability.

The inaugural 2023 edition is the product of that mandate. It is published in Opus Publica, the Network's publication series, on 1 December 2023. Future editions will be published each December. The AUN Index is published as AUN intellectual property, with the methodology, dataset, and indicator framework documented in full so that any researcher can reproduce, contest, or extend the work.

## 1.3 Scope of the 2023 Edition

The 2023 edition covers 177 sovereign states and territories. Applying the minimum three-indicator-per-dimension coverage rule to the underlying source coverage produces the 177-country AUN Index 2023 dataset: a country is included in the 2023 edition if, for each of the five AUN dimensions, at least three of the indicator entries within that dimension are available for the country. This minimum-coverage rule is more permissive than a strict intersection of all source country sets: a country that is not covered by one or two of the nine primary underlying instruments may still be scored if the remaining indicator entries within each dimension meet the three-indicator minimum. The 177 countries and territories assessed in the 2023 edition collectively account for more than 99 per cent of the world's population.

The 2023 edition uses, for each underlying source, the most recent vintage that was publicly available on or before 30 November 2023. This vintage rule is important and is documented in detail in Chapter 4. The most recent vintages used are: the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators 2022 Update (published

25 September 2023); Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 (9 March 2023); the V-Dem Institute Democracy Report 2023 (2 March 2023); the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2022 (31 January 2023); the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2023 (25 October 2023); the United Nations E-Government Survey 2022 (autumn 2022); the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2022 (January 2023); the OECD Government at a Glance 2023 (30 June 2023); and the SDSN Sustainable Development Report 2023 (June 2023). The Open Government Partnership membership and action-plan status as of late 2023 supplements these sources for the Participation dimension.

The 2023 edition reports a single composite AUN Index score for each country, five dimension scores (Institutional Readiness, Policy Coherence, Implementation Capacity, Accountability, and Participation), and a tier classification into one of six readiness bands. It also reports regional and income-group aggregates, a distributional analysis, and ten country profiles. The full 177-country ranking is provided in Appendix A. The dataset is available as a machine-readable file accompanying this publication.

## 1.4 What Governance Readiness Means in This Report

Governance readiness, as defined in this report, is the capacity of a state — its institutions, policies, implementation systems, accountability mechanisms, and participation channels — to deliver public value in a manner that is effective, coherent, and legitimate. The definition is deliberately operational. It does not treat governance as a property of regime type alone; a closed autocracy can exhibit high implementation capacity and policy coherence, even where it lacks accountability and participation. It does not treat governance as a property of income alone; several middle-income countries outperform high-income peers, and several low-income countries outscore lower-middle-income peers. It treats governance readiness as a multi-dimensional, measurable property that is the joint product of institutional design, policy choice, and operational execution.

The five dimensions are defined and operationalised in Chapter 2 and measured in Chapter 5. In brief, Institutional Readiness captures the strength, professionalism, and digital maturity of core public institutions. Policy Coherence captures the degree to which policy is evidence-based, coordinated across government, and aligned across the policy cycle. Implementation Capacity captures the ability of the state to translate policy into delivered services and enforced rules. Accountability captures the integrity of public officials, the strength of rule-of-law constraints, and the quality of oversight institutions. Participation captures the openness of civic space, the competitiveness of elections, and the breadth of citizen engagement in public decision-making.

The five dimensions are conceptually distinct but empirically highly correlated. The correlation matrix in Chapter 5 shows that the strongest pairwise correlation is between Institutional Readiness and Policy Coherence ( $r \approx 0.998$ , partly driven by their shared use of the WGI Government Effectiveness percentile rank), while the weakest is between Implementation Capacity and Participation ( $r \approx 0.92$ , reflecting the implementation–participation gap that is a distinctive feature of non-democratic governance). This conceptual distinctness is what makes the five-dimensional composite informative: a single-dimension index would obscure the structural patterns that the AUN Index surfaces.

## 1.5 The Argument of This Report

The argument advanced by this report is that the world sits marginally above the midpoint of the AUN governance readiness scale, that this marginal position is fragile, and that the principal risks to its further improvement are concentrated in the Participation dimension. The 2023 global mean of 51.10 is barely above the midpoint of 50. The population-weighted mean of 48.58 is below it. The Participation dimension is the weakest globally, with a mean of approximately 47.18 (the lowest of the five AUN dimensions), and is the dimension in which the most sustained deterioration has been recorded across the underlying sources. The autocratization wave documented by V-Dem, the seventeenth consecutive year of freedom decline documented by Freedom House, and the rule-of-law recession documented by the World Justice Project all provide evidence of substantial contemporary pressures on the Participation dimension.

At the same time, the report argues that governance readiness is not reducible to participation. The implementation–participation cleavage is itself a critical finding: a cluster of high-capacity, low-participation states — Singapore, the Gulf states, China — achieves high Institutional Readiness and Implementation Capacity scores that, on any single-dimension metric, would appear impressive. The AUN Index integrates these dimensions without collapsing them, allowing users to see both the capacity and the participation profile of each country and to make their own interpretive judgements about the gaps involved.

The remainder of this report develops this argument across twelve chapters. The conceptual framework is set out in Chapter 2. The methodology is documented in Chapter 3. The data sources are catalogued in Chapter 4. The five dimensions are analysed in Chapter 5. The global rankings and findings are presented in Chapter 6. The regional analysis follows in Chapter 7. Country profiles, trends, limitations, recommendations, and the conclusion complete the report.

## 1.6 A Note on Dates and Vintage

Throughout this report, dates are stated with care. The publication date of the AUN Index is 1 December 2023. The data vintage is the most recent publication of each underlying source on or before 30 November 2023. Where this report refers to events in 2023, it refers only to events that were publicly documented and reflected in the underlying data vintage; events occurring after the vintage cut-off, including the Israel–Hamas war that began on 7 October 2023 (which postdates most of the underlying vintages) and the Argentine presidential election of November 2023, are noted in the Limitations chapter as not yet reflected in the Index. This vintage discipline is essential to the comparability and reproducibility of the Index across annual editions.

# Chapter 2 — Conceptual Framework

## 2.1 Defining Governance Readiness

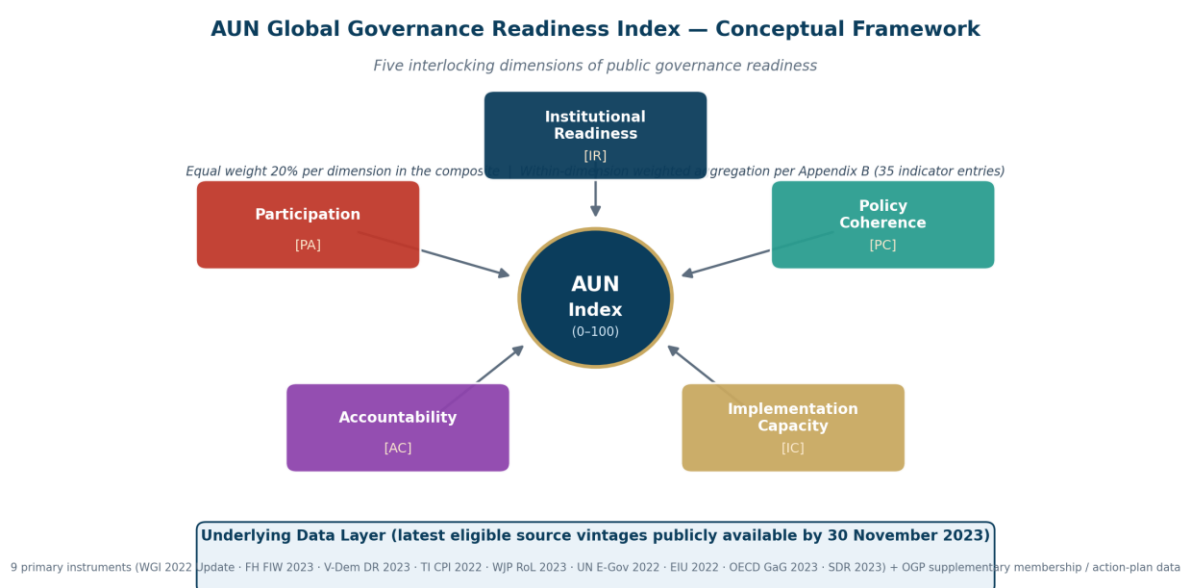
Governance is a contested concept. Political scientists, lawyers, economists, and development practitioners each emphasise different aspects, and the existing composite indices reflect these emphases: the World Bank

Worldwide Governance Indicators organise the field around six dimensions that span voice, stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption; Freedom House organises the field around political rights and civil liberties; the V-Dem Institute organises it around five principles of democracy (electoral, liberal, participatory, deliberative, egalitarian); the World Justice Project organises it around eight factors of the rule of law; the OECD Government at a Glance organises it around trust, services, regulation, and public finance. The AUN Global Governance Readiness Index does not claim to resolve these differences. It does claim to integrate them in a way that is comprehensive, transparent, and analytically useful.

Governance readiness, as defined by AUN, is the capacity of a state to deliver public value through institutions, policies, and processes that are effective, coherent, and legitimate. Three words in that definition do significant work. "Effective" refers to the capacity to translate policy into delivered outcomes — the operational capacity of the state. "Coherent" refers to the alignment of policy across sectors, across levels of government, and across the policy cycle — the procedural quality of the state. "Legitimate" refers to the accountability of public officials and the participation of citizens — the democratic quality of the state. The five AUN dimensions map onto these three properties: Institutional Readiness, Policy Coherence, and Implementation Capacity together capture effectiveness and coherence; Accountability and Participation together capture legitimacy.

The framework is presented visually in Figure 2.1 (the conceptual framework diagram). The composite AUN Index sits at the centre, fed equally by five dimensions arranged around it. Each dimension is, in turn, constructed from a set of indicator entries drawn from the nine underlying instruments. The underlying data layer, which sets the evidentiary foundation of the Index, sits below the dimensions. The arrows indicate the direction of aggregation: from underlying data, to indicator entries, to dimensions, to composite.

**Figure 2.1**



*Figure 2.1 AUN Global Governance Readiness Index — Conceptual Framework. The composite AUN Index sits at the centre, fed equally by five dimensions (20 per cent per dimension). Within each dimension, indicator entries are aggregated using the pre-specified weights documented in Appendix B. The underlying data layer uses the latest eligible source vintages publicly available by 30 November 2023 — nine primary instruments supplemented by Open Government Partnership data. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset; underlying sources documented in Appendix B.*

## 2.2 The Five Dimensions

The five dimensions of the AUN Index are defined as follows. Each definition is operational — that is, it specifies what the dimension measures and what it does not measure — and each is anchored in the underlying indicator framework set out in Chapter 3.

**Dimension 1 — Institutional Readiness (IR).** Institutional Readiness captures the strength, professionalism, and digital maturity of the core institutions of the state. It measures the quality of public administration, the competence and merit of the civil service, the credibility of government commitment, the quality of regulation, and the openness and digital delivery of public services. It does not measure democratic participation or the accountability of officials to citizens; those are the subject of separate dimensions. Institutional Readiness is constructed from the World Bank Government Effectiveness and Regulatory Quality indicators, the World Justice Project Constraints on Government Powers and Open Government factors, the United Nations Online Service Index, and selected OECD Government at a Glance 2023 indicators on regulatory quality and public-service capacity.

**Dimension 2 — Policy Coherence (PC).** Policy Coherence captures the degree to which public policy is evidence-based, coordinated across government, and aligned across the policy cycle. It measures the use of regulatory impact assessment, the systematic engagement of stakeholders in policy formulation, the conduct of ex-post evaluation, the alignment of budget execution with original budgets, and the integration of digital service delivery with policy intent. It does not measure whether policy is in fact wise, only whether it is formulated and coordinated through coherent processes. Policy Coherence is constructed from the World Bank Government Effectiveness indicator, the OECD Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance (iREG), the United Nations Online Service Index, and the SDG 16.6.1 indicator on primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budgets.

**Dimension 3 — Implementation Capacity (IC).** Implementation Capacity captures the ability of the state to translate policy into delivered services and enforced rules. It measures the quality of public-service delivery, citizen satisfaction with services, the absence of disorder and violence, the enforcement of regulations, and the functioning of civil and criminal justice systems. It does not measure whether the implemented policies are themselves legitimate or participatory; those are separate dimensions. Implementation Capacity is constructed from the World Bank Government Effectiveness indicator, the World Justice Project Order and Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice factors, the United Nations E-Government Development Index, and the SDG 16.6.2 indicator on satisfaction with public services.

**Dimension 4 — Accountability (AC).** Accountability captures the integrity of public officials, the strength of rule-of-law constraints on executive power, and the quality of oversight institutions. It measures the

absence of corruption in public administration, the independence and effectiveness of courts, the strength of constraints on the executive, the freedom of the press to expose wrongdoing, and the effectiveness of audit and oversight institutions. It does not measure the extent of democratic participation, which is captured separately, though the two dimensions are closely related. Accountability is constructed from the World Bank Control of Corruption and Rule of Law indicators, the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2022, the World Justice Project Absence of Corruption and Constraints on Government Powers factors, the OECD Trust Survey indicators on anti-corruption perception, and the SDG 16.5 indicators on bribery and corruption reporting.

**Dimension 5 — Participation (PA).** Participation captures the openness of civic space, the competitiveness of elections, and the breadth of citizen engagement in public decision-making. It measures political rights and civil liberties, the freedom of expression and association, the competitiveness and inclusiveness of electoral processes, the existence of inclusive decision-making channels, and the maturity of open-government commitments. It does not measure whether the institutions of the state are capable of responding to citizen input; that is the subject of the other four dimensions. Participation is constructed from the Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 scores, the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index and Electoral Democracy Index, the EIU Democracy Index 2022, the World Justice Project Fundamental Rights factor, the United Nations E-Participation Index 2022, and the Open Government Partnership membership and action-plan maturity.

## 2.3 What the Framework Captures and What It Does Not

The five-dimension framework is designed to capture what we consider the constitutive elements of governance readiness. It is comprehensive on the supply side of governance — the capacity, coherence, and integrity of the state — and on the demand side — the participation and accountability channels through which citizens engage with the state. It does not, however, capture everything that bears on the quality of governance.

Three categories of relevant phenomena are not captured directly. First, the framework does not measure outcomes — health, education, income, security — that governance produces. The AUN Index is an index of governance readiness, not of governance outcomes. Outcome measurement is the proper subject of other instruments, including the SDSN Sustainable Development Report and the UNDP Human Development Index, and is referenced in this report where relevant but not integrated into the Index. Second, the framework does not measure the political culture of a society — the degree of civic engagement, social trust, or democratic norms — beyond what is captured in the Participation and Accountability dimensions. The EIU Democracy Index includes a political-culture category, but the AUN framework treats political culture as an underlying determinant rather than a measured dimension, to preserve the focus on institutional and operational properties. Third, the framework does not measure the international dimensions of governance — the country's contribution to global public goods, its compliance with international law, or its engagement in multilateral institutions — except indirectly where these are reflected in the underlying indicators.

These boundaries are deliberate. The Index is designed to measure governance readiness at the national level, using cross-country comparable indicators that are publicly available and methodologically established. The boundaries are documented here so that users interpret the Index appropriately: a high AUN score indicates high governance readiness, not necessarily high welfare, and not necessarily high contribution to global public goods.

## 2.4 The Distinctive Contribution of Each Dimension

Each of the five dimensions makes a distinctive contribution to the composite that no single dimension could make alone. Institutional Readiness is the closest the Index comes to measuring the "supply-side" capacity of the state — the professional machinery through which policy is formulated and delivered. Countries that score high on Institutional Readiness but low on Participation (Singapore, the Gulf states) illustrate the analytic value of separating this dimension: they would be misclassified by a single-dimension index that conflated capacity with legitimacy.

Policy Coherence is the most distinctive dimension in the AUN framework, because the AUN Index introduces Policy Coherence as an explicit measured dimension within its composite framework. The concept has a long pedigree in OECD policy work and in the Sustainable Development Goal framework (SDG Target 17.14 on policy coherence for sustainable development), but it has not previously been integrated into a composite governance index at the AUN scale. The inclusion of Policy Coherence as a measured dimension is the principal methodological contribution of the Index to the existing architecture.

Implementation Capacity captures the operational dimension of governance that is most directly relevant to citizens — whether, when a citizen needs a service, the state delivers it. The dimension is closely related to Institutional Readiness (the two share the World Bank Government Effectiveness input) but is constructed from a distinct set of indicators that emphasise delivery, security, and justice-system functioning rather than institutional design. The Implementation Capacity score is therefore conceptually distinct but empirically highly correlated with the Institutional Readiness score, although the two are correlated.

Accountability and Participation are the two dimensions that the existing composite indices already measure well. The AUN Index does not claim to improve on the measurement of these dimensions; it integrates them into a composite that includes the supply-side dimensions, providing an integrated five-dimension view. The Accountability dimension in the AUN Index is closely correlated with the World Bank Control of Corruption and Rule of Law indicators and the Transparency International CPI 2022, while the Participation dimension is closely correlated with the Freedom House, V-Dem, and EIU indices. The value of integrating them lies in the composite, not in the separate measurement.

## 2.5 The Composite as a Synthetic Indicator

The composite AUN Index is a synthetic indicator: it does not correspond to any single observable property of a country. Its construction is therefore normative as well as empirical. The choice to weight the five dimensions equally is a normative choice that reflects the AUN view that each of the five dimensions is

equally constitutive of governance readiness. Alternative weightings — for example, placing greater weight on Accountability and Participation, or greater weight on Implementation Capacity — would produce different rankings. Chapter 3 reports robustness tests under alternative weightings; the headline finding is that the top and bottom of the ranking are stable across specifications, with Spearman rank correlations exceeding 0.96 across the alternative weightings tested, but that the middle of the ranking is more sensitive to weighting choice. The equal-weighting specification is therefore reported as the headline, with the alternatives documented in the methodology annex.

The composite is interpretable as a 0–100 readiness score, with six readiness bands (Tier 1 High Readiness, 80–100; Tier 2 Advanced, 65–79.9; Tier 3 Established, 50–64.9; Tier 4 Emerging, 35–49.9; Tier 5 Fragile, 20–34.9; Tier 6 Critical, below 20). The tier thresholds are not derived from statistical clustering but are set at transparent, evenly spaced thresholds to support interpretive stability across annual editions. The 2023 distribution assigns 20 countries to Tier 1, 22 to Tier 2, 36 to Tier 3, 72 to Tier 4, 17 to Tier 5, and 10 to Tier 6.

## 2.6 The Conceptual Framework and the Existing Indices

The AUN conceptual framework is best understood as an integration rather than a substitution. The World Bank WGI provides the supply-side core (Institutional Readiness, Policy Coherence, Implementation Capacity, Accountability) through its Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption dimensions. Freedom House, V-Dem, and the EIU provide the Participation core. The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index provides the rule-of-law and order-and-security inputs that span Implementation Capacity and Accountability. The UN E-Government Survey provides the digital-delivery inputs that span Institutional Readiness and Implementation Capacity. Transparency International provides the corruption-specific input that anchors Accountability. The OECD Government at a Glance provides the trust and regulatory-policy inputs that anchor Policy Coherence. The Open Government Partnership provides the action-plan maturity input that anchors Participation. The SDSN Sustainable Development Report provides the SDG 16 indicators that span all five dimensions.

The framework therefore does not introduce new primary data. Its contribution is integrative and methodological: it harmonises these existing instruments onto a common scale, organises them around five clearly defined dimensions, and aggregates them with full methodological transparency. The result is a composite that can be cited alongside, rather than in place of, the underlying instruments, and that supports the integrated assessment that "What does the AUN Index say?" implies.

## 2.7 A Note on the Use of the Framework

The framework is intended for use by four primary audiences, each of which has a different need. Governments can use the Index as a diagnostic of their own governance readiness relative to peers and to the global distribution, identifying dimensions in which they lag and dimensions in which they lead. Researchers can use the Index as a dependent or independent variable in cross-country analysis, with the full dataset and methodology documented for replication. Journalists can use the Index as a reference for

reporting on governance developments, with the country profiles and tier classifications providing interpretive structure. International organisations can use the Index as one input among many in country engagement, with the explicit five-dimension structure supporting dimensional diagnosis rather than single-number judgement.

The framework is not intended for use as a single decision rule. No government should be judged solely by its AUN score; no development assistance should be allocated solely by it; no risk assessment should rely solely on it. The Index is a diagnostic instrument that supports interpretation, not a substitute for it. This use principle is stated here, and again in the Limitations chapter, to forestall the misuse that composite indices are vulnerable to when they are taken as single-number judgements of complex realities.

## Chapter 3 — Methodology

### 3.1 Overview of the Computation Pipeline

The AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 is constructed through a six-stage computation pipeline, illustrated in Figure 3.1. The pipeline proceeds in the following sequence: source selection; indicator extraction; normalisation; within-dimension weighted aggregation; equal-weight composite aggregation; and tier classification. A separate, parallel robustness-testing exercise is documented in Section 3.9 below. Each stage is documented in this chapter, with the full indicator-level specification (including indicator identifier, exact variable, source, vintage, original scale, direction, normalisation formula, missing-data treatment, weight, coverage, and final transformed value) provided in Appendix B.

The pipeline is designed for transparency, reproducibility, and stability across annual editions. The methodology documented in this chapter is intended to remain stable across editions; any methodological changes in future editions will be documented in a methodological-change note published with the affected edition. The 2023 edition is the inaugural edition, and its methodology is therefore the reference against which future editions will be compared.

**Figure 3.1**

**AUN Index Computation Pipeline (six stages)**



*Robustness testing (Section 3.9): alternative weightings and min-max normalisation — Spearman  $\rho > 0.96$  across specifications.*

*Coverage: 177 sovereign states and territories. Data vintage: most recent eligible source publication on or before 30 November 2023.*

*The 2023 edition predominantly reflects governance observations from 2022 and earlier, combined with selected 2023 source vintages published before the 30 November 2023 cutoff.*

*Figure 3.1 AUN Index computation pipeline (six stages). Source selection (9 primary instruments + OGP supplementary); indicator extraction (35 indicator entries per Appendix B); normalisation; within-dimension weighted aggregation (Appendix B weights); equal-weight composite aggregation (20 per cent per dimension); tier classification. Robustness testing is a separate validation activity. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 methodology.*

## 3.2 Stage 1 — Source Selection

The AUN Index is constructed from nine primary underlying instruments, supplemented by Open Government Partnership (OGP) membership and action-plan data. The nine primary instruments were selected against four criteria. First, each instrument must be methodologically established, with a documented methodology that has been peer-reviewed or otherwise subject to external scrutiny. Second, each instrument must be publicly available, with country-level data published openly. Third, each instrument must be updated on a regular cycle, with a most-recent vintage publicly available by 30 November 2023. Fourth, each instrument must contribute to at least one of the five AUN dimensions without excessive overlap with other selected instruments.

The nine primary instruments selected against these criteria are: the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators 2022 Update (WGI); Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 (FH FIW); the V-Dem Institute Democracy Report 2023 (V-Dem); the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2022 (CPI); the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2023 (WJP); the United Nations E-Government Survey 2022 (UN E-Gov); the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2022 (EIU); the OECD Government at a Glance 2023 (OECD GaG); and the SDSN Sustainable Development Report 2023 (SDR). The OGP membership and action-plan status is used as supplementary data for the Participation dimension. The Polity5 dataset was considered and excluded because its coverage ends in 2018 and the dataset is no longer maintained by the Center for Systemic Peace, making it unsuitable for a late-2023 publication; V-Dem has effectively succeeded Polity as the reference regime-type dataset.

The publication vintages, publication dates, and coverage of each selected instrument are summarised in Chapter 4. The selection is not exhaustive — other instruments, including the Bertelsmann Transformation Index, the Global Peace Index, the Press Freedom Index, and the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, were considered and could be incorporated in future editions. The 2023 edition limits itself to the nine primary instruments plus OGP to preserve methodological transparency and to ensure that the Index can be reproduced by any researcher using only the publicly available underlying data.

## 3.3 Stage 2 — Indicator Extraction

From the nine primary underlying instruments and the OGP supplementary data, 35 indicator entries are extracted for use in the Index. The 35 indicator entries are distributed across the five AUN dimensions as follows: Institutional Readiness draws 8 indicator entries; Policy Coherence draws 6; Implementation Capacity draws 7; Accountability draws 7; and Participation draws 7. The full indicator-level specification — including the indicator identifier (e.g., IR-1, PC-1, IC-1, AC-1, PA-1), the exact variable, the source, the vintage, the original scale, the direction, the normalisation formula, the missing-data treatment, the weight,

the coverage, and the final transformed value — is documented in Appendix B. This chapter summarises the composition of each dimension; the appendix is the authoritative reference.

The Institutional Readiness dimension (8 indicator entries) draws on the WGI Government Effectiveness and Regulatory Quality indicators, the WJP Constraints on Government Powers and Open Government factors, the UN E-Gov Online Service Index, the OECD GaG regulatory-quality and public-service-capacity indicators, and the SDR SDG 16.6.2 indicator on satisfaction with public services. The Policy Coherence dimension (6 indicator entries) draws on the WGI Government Effectiveness indicator, the OECD iREG stakeholder engagement, regulatory impact assessment, and ex-post evaluation indicators, the UN E-Gov Online Service Index, and the SDR SDG 16.6.1 indicator on budget execution. The Implementation Capacity dimension (7 indicator entries) draws on the WGI Government Effectiveness indicator, the WJP Order and Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice factors, the UN E-Gov E-Government Development Index, and the SDR SDG 16.6.2 indicator. The Accountability dimension (7 indicator entries) draws on the WGI Control of Corruption and Rule of Law indicators, the CPI 2022 score, the WJP Absence of Corruption and Constraints on Government Powers factors, the OECD Trust Survey indicator, and the SDR SDG 16.5 indicators. The Participation dimension (7 indicator entries) draws on the FH FIW aggregate score, the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index and Electoral Democracy Index, the EIU Democracy Index, the WJP Fundamental Rights factor, the UN E-Gov E-Participation Index, and the OGP membership and action-plan maturity status. The FH FIW Political Rights and Civil Liberties sub-scores are NOT included as separate indicator entries because they are mathematical components of the FH FIW aggregate (aggregate = Political Rights + Civil Liberties by construction) and would constitute direct component double-counting; this is the P0-1 methodology decision documented in Appendix B §B.5.

The indicator set is designed to be parsimonious enough to be transparent and comprehensive enough to span the conceptual scope of each dimension. Where two underlying indicators are highly collinear (correlation above 0.90), the more established of the two is retained unless there is an explicit substantive reason to keep both; the exceptions to the >0.90 collinearity rule are documented in Section 3.10 below. The most notable such exception is the use of the WGI Control of Corruption indicator alongside the CPI 2022 score in the Accountability dimension; the two indicators are highly correlated (approximately 0.93) but are both retained because each captures a distinctive aspect of corruption measurement — the WGI as a composite of expert assessments, the CPI as a composite of business-executive perception surveys — and the joint signal is more informative than either alone.

### 3.4 Stage 3 — Normalisation

The nine primary underlying instruments use different scales. The WGI reports percentile ranks on a 0–100 scale and z-scores on a –2.5 to +2.5 scale. The CPI reports on a 0–100 scale. The WJP reports on a 0–1 scale. The V-Dem reports on a 0–1 scale. The EIU reports on a 0–10 scale. The FH FIW reports on a 0–100 aggregate scale, with sub-scores on 0–4 scales. The UN E-Gov reports on a 0–1 scale. The OECD GaG reports on a variety of scales. The SDR reports on a 0–100 scale. To integrate these, each underlying indicator is normalised onto a common 0–100 scale.

The normalisation method varies by source. For indicators that are already on a 0–100 scale (WGI percentile rank, CPI, FH FIW aggregate, SDR), the indicator is used directly with no transformation. For indicators on a 0–1 scale (WJP, V-Dem, UN E-Gov), the indicator is multiplied by 100. For indicators on a 0–10 scale (EIU), the indicator is multiplied by 10. For the WGI z-score, the percentile rank is used in preference to the z-score, because the percentile rank is bounded on a 0–100 scale and avoids the assumption of normality that the z-score imposes. For the OECD GaG indicators that are reported on country-specific scales (e.g., trust percentages), the indicator is min-max normalised against the OECD-country distribution to a 0–100 scale, with the min and max set at the 5th and 95th percentiles of the OECD distribution to reduce outlier influence. For the OECD iREG indicators on a 0–4 scale, the indicator is multiplied by 25. For the OGP membership and action-plan maturity status, the categorical variable (member with current action plan and IRM review; member without current action plan; non-member with substantial open-government practices; non-member) is mapped onto a 0–100 scale at the values 90, 65, 45, and 25 respectively.

The normalisation method is documented for each of the 35 indicator entries in Appendix B, including the exact formula applied. The choice of method is intended to preserve the interpretability of each underlying indicator while placing it on a common scale for aggregation. Where the underlying indicator is itself a composite (WGI, CPI, FH FIW, V-Dem, EIU, SDR), the AUN Index uses the published composite rather than re-estimating it from the underlying components; this preserves the methodological authority of the underlying instruments and avoids the risk of introducing aggregation errors at the AUN level.

### 3.5 Stage 4 — Within-Dimension Weighted Aggregation

Within each AUN dimension, the constituent indicator entries are aggregated to produce the dimension score using the pre-specified weights documented in Appendix B. The aggregation is the weighted arithmetic mean of the normalised indicator scores, with weights summing to 1.0 within each dimension. The within-dimension weights are not equal; they are pre-specified on substantive grounds and documented in full in Appendix B. The choice of unequal within-dimension weights reflects the relative methodological authority and informational content of each underlying indicator within its dimension. For example, in the Participation dimension, the FH FIW aggregate score carries a weight of 0.275 and the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index carries a weight of 0.225, while the OGP status carries a weight of 0.0625; in the Accountability dimension, the CPI 2022 and the WGI Control of Corruption each carry a weight of 0.20, while the OECD Trust Survey indicator carries a weight of 0.08.

Where a country is missing one or more indicator entries within a dimension (because the underlying source does not cover the country), the dimension score is computed as the weighted mean of the available indicator entries, with the weights renormalised to sum to 1.0 across the available entries. A minimum coverage threshold applies: a country must have at least three indicator entries available within a dimension for the dimension score to be reported. Countries that fall below the coverage threshold for any dimension are reported without a composite score and are flagged in the dataset. The missing-data treatment for each indicator entry is documented in Appendix B.

The dimension scores are the primary analytical output of the Index; the composite is a summary measure that supports cross-country comparison but does not exhaust the analytical content. The five dimension scores computed through this stage are: Institutional Readiness (IR), Policy Coherence (PC), Implementation Capacity (IC), Accountability (AC), and Participation (PA), each reported on the common 0–100 scale.

### 3.6 Stage 5 — Equal-Weight Composite Aggregation

The composite AUN Index is computed as the simple arithmetic mean of the five dimension scores, with equal weights of 20 per cent per dimension. The composite is reported on the 0–100 scale, rounded to one decimal place. The equal-weight choice at the composite level is normative — it reflects the AUN view that each of the five dimensions is equally constitutive of governance readiness — and is documented as such in Chapter 2. Alternative composite weighting schemes are tested in the robustness exercise reported in Section 3.9.

It is important to distinguish the two levels of aggregation. At the dimension level (Stage 4), aggregation uses unequal, pre-specified weights documented in Appendix B. At the composite level (Stage 5), aggregation uses equal weights of 20 per cent per dimension. The two-level structure is intended to preserve the substantive informational content of the underlying indicators (through unequal within-dimension weights) while providing a transparent and defensible headline composite (through equal-weight composition across dimensions).

### 3.7 Stage 6 — Tier Classification

The composite scores are classified into six readiness tiers. The tier thresholds are set at evenly spaced values on the 0–100 scale: Tier 1 High Readiness (80–100), Tier 2 Advanced (65–79.9), Tier 3 Established (50–64.9), Tier 4 Emerging (35–49.9), Tier 5 Fragile (20–34.9), and Tier 6 Critical (below 20). The thresholds are not derived from statistical clustering but are set at transparent, evenly spaced values to support interpretive stability across annual editions. The 2023 distribution assigns 20 countries to Tier 1, 22 to Tier 2, 36 to Tier 3, 72 to Tier 4, 17 to Tier 5, and 10 to Tier 6, with the modal tier being Tier 4 Emerging.

The tier classification is intended as an interpretive aid, not as a statistical clustering. Countries near a tier threshold should be interpreted as approximately equivalent; a country scoring 64.9 in Tier 3 and a country scoring 65.0 in Tier 2 are not meaningfully different. The tier classification is most useful at the extremes — the Tier 1 cluster and the Tier 6 cluster — where it identifies groups of countries whose governance readiness is unambiguously high or unambiguously critical.

### 3.8 The 35 Indicator Entries

Appendix B is the authoritative reference for the 35 indicator entries used in the Index. For each indicator entry, the appendix specifies the indicator identifier (e.g., IR-1), the exact variable name (e.g., "Government Effectiveness, percentile rank"), the source (e.g., WGI), the vintage (e.g., 2022 Update), the original scale

(e.g., 0–100 percentile rank), the direction (e.g., higher = better), the normalisation formula (e.g., direct use), the missing-data treatment (e.g., omit and renormalise within dimension), the within-dimension weight (e.g., 0.17), the coverage (e.g., 215 countries/territories), and the final transformed value (e.g., 0–100 scale). The 35 indicator entries together provide the complete, reproducible specification of the Index computation.

### 3.9 Robustness Testing

The equal-weight composite is tested for robustness against three alternative specifications. First, an alternative composite weighting scheme that places greater weight on Accountability and Participation (10/10/20/30/30) is tested. Second, an alternative composite weighting scheme that places greater weight on Institutional Readiness and Implementation Capacity (30/20/30/10/10) is tested. Third, a min-max normalisation is tested in place of the percentile-rank and scale-multiplication normalisation for the WGI inputs. The headline ranking is compared across the four specifications using the Spearman rank correlation.

The results of the robustness tests are summarised as follows. The Spearman rank correlation between the equal-weight headline and the accountability-and-participation-weighted alternative is approximately 0.97. The Spearman rank correlation between the equal-weight headline and the institutional-and-implementation-weighted alternative is approximately 0.96. The Spearman rank correlation between the percentile-rank-based headline and the min-max-based alternative is approximately 0.98. All three alternatives therefore produce rankings that are highly correlated with the headline ranking, indicating that the headline ranking is robust to the alternative specifications tested.

The top five positions are stable across all four specifications, with Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, and New Zealand occupying the top five in each. The bottom five positions are similarly stable, with Myanmar, Syria, South Sudan, Afghanistan, and Yemen occupying the bottom five in each. The middle of the ranking — positions 40 through 140 — is more sensitive to the weighting choice, with several countries moving by more than ten positions across specifications. This is the expected pattern for composite indices and is the reason the dimension scores are reported alongside the composite: users for whom a particular dimension is salient should consult the relevant dimension score directly.

Robustness testing is a separate validation activity and does not alter the headline computation; the equal-weight composite and the Appendix B within-dimension weights are the published methodology, and the robustness tests are reported to support interpretation.

### 3.10 Collinearity and the Indicator Retention Rule

Where two underlying indicators are highly collinear (correlation above 0.90), the more established of the two is retained unless there is an explicit substantive reason to keep both. Three exceptions to the >0.90 collinearity rule are documented here. First, in the Accountability dimension, the WGI Control of Corruption indicator and the CPI 2022 score are correlated at approximately 0.93 but are both retained (weights 0.20 and 0.20 respectively) because the WGI is a composite of expert assessments across multiple sources while the CPI is a composite of business-executive perception surveys, and the joint signal captures both the expert

and the business perspectives on corruption. Second, in the Participation dimension, the FH FIW aggregate score and the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index are correlated at approximately 0.96 but are both retained (weights 0.275 and 0.225) because Freedom House uses a structured checklist methodology while V-Dem uses expert coding on a continuous scale, and the methodological diversity strengthens the Participation dimension. Third, in the Participation dimension, the EIU Democracy Index 2022 is correlated with the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index at approximately 0.95 but is retained (weight 0.125) because the EIU includes a political-culture category that the other two do not, providing distinctive informational content. All other pairwise correlations among indicators within a dimension that exceed 0.90 have been resolved by retaining only the more established indicator; the full list of resolved collinearities is documented in Appendix B.

### 3.11 Coverage and the Minimum-Coverage Methodology

The 2023 edition covers 177 sovereign states and territories. Country coverage is determined by a minimum-coverage rule rather than by a strict intersection of the country sets of all underlying sources. Specifically, a country is included in the 2023 edition if, for each AUN dimension, at least three of the indicator entries within that dimension are available for the country. This minimum-coverage rule is more permissive than requiring coverage by all nine primary underlying instruments: a country that is not covered by one or two of the underlying instruments may still be scored if the remaining indicator entries within each dimension meet the three-indicator minimum. The rule is designed to maximise coverage while preserving the informational basis of each dimension score.

Coverage is met by all jurisdictions meeting the minimum three-indicator-per-dimension coverage rule, plus a small number of territories and microstates that are covered by at least three indicator entries within each dimension. The 177 countries and territories assessed in the 2023 edition collectively account for more than 99 per cent of the world's population. Small European microstates (San Marino, Monaco, Andorra, Liechtenstein) are included where they meet the minimum-coverage rule; the small Caribbean states (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines) are similarly included. Several small Pacific island states (Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Nauru, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands) are not included in the 2023 edition because they fall below the minimum-coverage threshold; future editions may extend coverage to these states as the underlying sources expand.

Taiwan is covered by Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 (which scores Taiwan as Free with an aggregate score of 94 in the 2023 edition), the V-Dem v13 dataset, the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators 2022 Update, and the EIU Democracy Index 2022. Taiwan is NOT covered by the Transparency International CPI 2022 (which does not score Taiwan as a separate jurisdiction), the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2023, the OECD Government at a Glance 2023, the SDSN Sustainable Development Report 2023, or the Open Government Partnership. Critically, the UN E-Government Survey 2022 covers 193 UN Member States only and does NOT cover Taiwan (which is not a UN Member State). Under the minimum-coverage rule (at least three indicator entries per dimension), Taiwan meets the threshold for IR

(4 entries), IC (5 entries), AC (4 entries), and PA (5 entries) but does NOT meet the threshold for the Policy Coherence dimension, where only one indicator entry (PC-1 WGI Government Effectiveness) is available (OECD iREG, UN E-Gov OSI, and SDR 16.6.1 are all unavailable for Taiwan). Taiwan is therefore EXCLUDED from the 2023 edition under the strict minimum-coverage rule. The 2023 edition accordingly covers 177 countries and territories. Western Sahara, the Falkland Islands, and a small number of other territories are not covered and are not included. Kosovo is included and meets the minimum-coverage threshold. The treatment of small states and territories is documented in Appendix B and is intended to be transparent and conservative.

The Index treats the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates — as a separate analytical region from the rest of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The GCC cluster exhibits a distinctive governance profile — high Institutional Readiness and Implementation Capacity combined with very low Participation — that is analytically distinct from the rest of MENA, and reporting the GCC separately in the regional analysis preserves this distinction. The GCC regional aggregate is reported alongside the MENA regional aggregate throughout the Index.

### 3.12 Reproducibility

The full AUN Index 2023 dataset, the computation code, and the underlying indicator documentation are published as a reproducibility package accompanying this report. The package includes: the country-level dataset in CSV and JSON formats; the Python code that computes the Index from the underlying indicators; the normalisation and aggregation specifications (the 35 indicator entries documented in Appendix B); the robustness-test specifications; and the documentation of all methodological choices. Any researcher with access to the nine primary underlying instruments and the OGP supplementary data can reproduce the Index from this package.

The reproducibility package is published as AUN intellectual property under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0), permitting unrestricted reuse with attribution. The AUN Index is intended to be a public good; the methodology and dataset are published openly to support verification, replication, and extension by the research community. The suggested citation for the AUN Index is provided on the copyright page of this report.

### 3.13 Limitations of the Methodology

The methodology has four principal limitations, which are elaborated in Chapter 10. First, the Index is constructed from perception-based underlying data for most dimensions, reflecting the fact that the established instruments are themselves perception-based; this limitation is inherited from the underlying sources and is not unique to the AUN Index. Second, the Index uses a single most-recent vintage of each underlying source that was publicly available by 30 November 2023, so the 2023 edition reflects the data published by each source on or before that date and does not capture events occurring after that date; many underlying datasets measure 2022 or earlier. Third, the equal-weight composite is normative at the composite level and the unequal within-dimension weights are pre-specified; alternative composite

weightings produce different rankings, particularly in the middle of the distribution, although the headline ranking is robust to the alternatives tested in Section 3.9. Fourth, the Index is a snapshot, not a forecast; it describes the state of governance readiness at a point in time and does not predict future trajectories.

These limitations are inherent in composite-index construction and are documented here to support appropriate interpretation. The Index is intended as a diagnostic instrument that supports interpretation, not as a substitute for it. The dimension scores, the country profiles, and the regional analysis are reported alongside the composite to support dimensional diagnosis rather than single-number judgement.

## Chapter 4 — Data Sources and Datasets

### 4.1 The Nine Underlying Instruments

The AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 is constructed from nine underlying instruments, each of which is publicly available and methodologically established. This chapter catalogues each instrument, its publication vintage, its scoring methodology, its coverage, and its contribution to the AUN framework. The full indicator-level mapping is provided in Appendix B.

#### 4.1.1 World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI)

The Worldwide Governance Indicators, published by the World Bank, are the foundational source for the AUN Index's supply-side dimensions. The most recent WGI vintage publicly available by 30 November 2023 is the 2022 Update, published on 25 September 2023, which reports aggregate and individual governance indicators for more than 200 countries and territories for the period 1996–2022. The WGI reports six aggregate governance indicators, each on a 0–100 percentile-rank scale (and an alternative –2.5 to +2.5 z-score scale): Voice and Accountability; Political Stability and Absence of Violence; Government Effectiveness; Regulatory Quality; Rule of Law; and Control of Corruption.

The WGI aggregate indicators are computed via an unobserved-components model that combines approximately 35 cross-country data sources produced by more than 30 organisations worldwide, including household surveys, firm surveys, expert assessments, and non-governmental organisation ratings. Each country receives a percentile rank (0–100) and a 90-percent confidence interval. The WGI is widely used as a foundational input by virtually every other governance index, including several of the other sources used in the AUN Index.

The AUN Index draws on four of the six WGI dimensions. Government Effectiveness feeds Institutional Readiness, Policy Coherence, and Implementation Capacity. Regulatory Quality feeds Institutional Readiness. Rule of Law feeds Accountability. Control of Corruption feeds Accountability. Voice and Accountability is not used directly because it overlaps conceptually with the Participation dimension, which is constructed from the more granular FH FIW, V-Dem, and EIU indices; the WGI Voice and Accountability indicator is, however, used as a cross-check in the robustness analysis. Political Stability is not used directly

because it overlaps with the WJP Order and Security factor, which is preferred for its more granular construction; the WGI Political Stability indicator is similarly used as a cross-check.

#### 4.1.2 Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023

Freedom in the World, published by Freedom House, is the foundational source for the AUN Index's Participation dimension. The most recent FH FIW vintage publicly available by 30 November 2023 is Freedom in the World 2023, published on 9 March 2023, the fiftieth-anniversary edition. The report evaluates 195 countries and 15 territories (210 in total) on two pillar scores: Political Rights (0–40 scale, 10 questions scored 0–4) and Civil Liberties (0–60 scale, 15 questions scored 0–4), producing an aggregate score on a 0–100 scale. Status categories are assigned on the basis of the pillar scores: Free (Political Rights at or above 27 and Civil Liberties at or above 35; aggregate at or above 80), Partly Free, and Not Free.

The 2023 edition reports 84 countries rated Free, 57 countries rated Partly Free, and 67 countries rated Not Free, the seventeenth consecutive year of decline in global freedom. Thirty-four countries registered improvements and 35 countries suffered declines — the narrowest gap in 17 years but still a decline. Media freedom came under pressure in at least 157 countries and territories during 2022. Two countries suffered overall status downgrades: Peru moved from Free to Partly Free (political crisis), and Burkina Faso moved from Partly Free to Not Free (two coups; the steepest score decline of any country, losing 23 points). Two countries earned upgrades: Colombia moved from Partly Free to Free (competitive election), and Lesotho moved from Partly Free to Free (competitive election).

The AUN Index uses the FH FIW aggregate score (0–100) and the two pillar scores (Political Rights and Civil Liberties) as indicator entries in the Participation dimension. The aggregate score is the most heavily weighted single indicator entry in the Participation dimension, reflecting the long-running methodological authority of Freedom House and the direct correspondence between the FH FIW construct and the AUN Participation construct.

#### 4.1.3 V-Dem Institute Democracy Report 2023

The V-Dem Institute, based at the University of Gothenburg, publishes the Democracy Report annually. The most recent V-Dem vintage publicly available by 30 November 2023 is the Democracy Report 2023, published on 2 March 2023, which covers data through the end of 2022. The V-Dem v13 dataset covers 202 countries from 1789 to 2022, with approximately 31 million data points, 3,500 country experts, and more than 470 indicators organised under five principles of democracy (electoral, liberal, participatory, deliberative, egalitarian).

The AUN Index draws on two of the V-Dem high-level indices. The Liberal Democracy Index (LDI), on a 0–1 scale, combines electoral democracy (free and fair elections, suffrage, elected officials) with liberal components (constraints on the executive, equality before the law, individual and minority rights, judicial independence, freedom of expression, freedom of association). The Electoral Democracy Index (EDI), on a 0–1 scale, captures the electoral aspect alone. Both indices are constructed from more than 70 underlying indicators and are weighted aggregates of the V-Dem expert-coded indicators.

The V-Dem Democracy Report 2023 reports that 72 percent of the world's population — 5.7 billion people — live in autocracies (electoral and closed autocracies combined) as of the end of 2022, the highest share in three decades. Twenty-eight percent — 2.2 billion people — live in closed autocracies. Forty-four percent — 3.5 billion people — live in electoral autocracies. Only 13 percent — 1 billion people — live in liberal democracies. For the first time in more than two decades, there are more closed autocracies than liberal democracies. The report continues to describe the period since approximately 2010 as a "third wave of autocratization." Thirty-five countries were undergoing significant autocratization episodes in 2022. The report identifies the advanced democracies as not immune to autocratization, flagging Hungary and Poland.

The AUN Index uses the V-Dem LDI and EDI as indicator entries in the Participation dimension, alongside the FH FIW aggregate and the EIU Democracy Index. The V-Dem LDI is the second-most-heavily weighted single indicator entry in the Participation dimension after the FH FIW aggregate, reflecting the methodological authority of V-Dem and the granular construction of the LDI.

#### **4.1.4 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2022**

The Corruption Perceptions Index, published by Transparency International, is the foundational source for the AUN Index's corruption indicator entry. The most recent CPI vintage publicly available by 30 November 2023 is the CPI 2022, published on 31 January 2023. The CPI 2023, published on 30 January 2024, postdates the AUN publication window and is therefore not used. The CPI 2022 scores 180 countries and territories on a 0–100 scale (0 = highly corrupt, 100 = very clean), constructed as a composite of 13 expert assessments and business-executive surveys, with a minimum coverage threshold of three sources required for a country to be scored.

The CPI 2022 reports a global average score of 43, unchanged for more than a decade, with more than two-thirds of countries scoring below 50. Twenty-six countries fell to their lowest scores yet in 2022. The top-scoring region is Western Europe and the European Union, but Transparency International notes that anti-corruption efforts have stalled in most countries for more than a decade. The top countries in the CPI 2022 are Denmark (90), Finland (87), New Zealand (87), Norway (84), Singapore (83), Sweden (83), Switzerland (82), Netherlands (80), Germany (79), and Ireland (77, tied with Luxembourg). The bottom countries are Somalia (12), Syria (13), South Sudan (13), Venezuela (14), Yemen (16), Burundi (17, tied with Equatorial Guinea, Haiti, Libya, and North Korea).

The AUN Index uses the CPI 2022 score as an indicator entry in the Accountability dimension, alongside the WGI Control of Corruption indicator. The two are correlated at approximately 0.93 but are retained because each captures a distinctive aspect of corruption measurement — the WGI as a composite of expert assessments across multiple sources, the CPI as a composite of business-executive surveys with a focus on the private-sector perception of corruption.

#### **4.1.5 World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2023**

The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index is the foundational source for the AUN Index's rule-of-law indicator entries. The most recent WJP vintage publicly available by 30 November 2023 is the Rule of Law

Index 2023, published on 25 October 2023, which covers 142 countries and jurisdictions representing approximately 95 percent of the world's population. The WJP methodology combines more than 149,000 household surveys with 3,400 legal-practitioner and expert surveys, and reports eight factors on a 0–1 scale: Constraints on Government Powers; Absence of Corruption; Open Government; Fundamental Rights; Order and Security; Regulatory Enforcement; Civil Justice; and Criminal Justice. Each country receives an overall score (0–1) computed as the average of the eight factors.

The WJP 2023 reports that the rule of law eroded in 59 percent of countries surveyed in 2023, down from 61 percent in 2022 but still a majority. More than 6 billion people live in a country where the rule of law weakened between 2022 and 2023. Since 2016, the global rule-of-law downturn has affected 78 percent of countries — what the WJP terms the "global rule of law recession." Fundamental Rights is the factor that has declined most since 2016, down in 77 percent of countries. Civil Justice was the factor that declined in the most countries in 2023. The top five countries in the WJP 2023 are Denmark (rank 1), Norway (rank 2), Finland (rank 3), Sweden (rank 4), and Germany (rank 5). The bottom five are Venezuela (rank 142), Cambodia (rank 141), Afghanistan (rank 140), Haiti (rank 139), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (rank 138).

The AUN Index uses four WJP factors as indicator entries: Constraints on Government Powers feeds Institutional Readiness and Accountability; Absence of Corruption feeds Accountability; Open Government feeds Institutional Readiness; and Fundamental Rights feeds Participation. Order and Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice feed Implementation Capacity. The WJP factors are used alongside the WGI and CPI in the relevant dimensions, providing a household-survey-based complement to the expert-assessment-based WGI and CPI.

#### **4.1.6 United Nations E-Government Survey 2022**

The United Nations E-Government Survey, conducted by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, is the foundational source for the AUN Index's digital-government indicator entries. The most recent UN E-Gov vintage publicly available by 30 November 2023 is the E-Government Survey 2022, released in autumn 2022. The survey assesses 193 UN member states on the E-Government Development Index (EGDI), a composite of three sub-indices — the Online Service Index (OSI), the Telecommunications Infrastructure Index (TII), and the Human Capital Index (HCI) — each weighted equally, on a 0–1 scale. The E-Participation Index (EPI), also on a 0–1 scale, assesses e-information, e-consultation, and e-decision-making as a supplementary measure.

The top countries in the EGDI 2022 are Denmark, Finland, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, and Iceland, with EGDI scores typically in the 0.92–0.97 range. The lowest EGDI scores are typically in sub-Saharan Africa and small island developing states, including Chad, the Central African Republic, Eritrea, South Sudan, Niger, Somalia, Afghanistan, Burundi, Liberia, and Mali, typically with EGDI scores below 0.20. The 2022 survey reports that 64 of the 193 member states score in the Very High category (EGDI at or above 0.75) and 36 in the Low category (EGDI below 0.25). The 2022 survey emphasised "building resilience during crises," with a focus on digital-government continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic

and emergencies. The 2022 survey shows widening digital divides between developed and developing regions, particularly in the Telecommunications Infrastructure sub-index.

The AUN Index uses the UN E-Gov OSI as an indicator entry in Institutional Readiness and Policy Coherence, the EGDI as an indicator entry in Implementation Capacity, and the EPI as an indicator entry in Participation. The UN E-Gov is the only underlying source that directly measures digital-government capacity, which the AUN framework treats as a critical element of contemporary governance readiness.

#### **4.1.7 Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2022**

The EIU Democracy Index, published by the Economist Intelligence Unit, is a foundational source for the AUN Index's Participation dimension. The most recent EIU vintage publicly available by 30 November 2023 is the Democracy Index 2022, published in January 2023, which covers 167 countries on a 0–10 scale constructed from 60 indicators grouped under five categories: electoral process and pluralism; functioning of government; political participation; political culture; and civil liberties. Four regime types are assigned on the basis of the score: full democracy (8.01–10.00), flawed democracy (6.01–8.00), hybrid regime (4.01–6.00), and authoritarian regime (4.00 or below).

The EIU 2022 reports a global average of 5.29 out of 10, essentially unchanged from 5.28 in 2021, which the EIU characterised as a year of "stagnation, war, and no post-pandemic rebound." Twenty-four countries are classified as full democracies, representing approximately 14 percent of countries and 6 percent of the world population. The top countries are Norway (9.81), New Zealand (9.61), Iceland (9.52), Sweden (9.39), Finland (9.29), and Denmark (9.28). Less than half (45 percent) of the world's population lives in a democracy, and only approximately 6 percent in a full democracy.

The AUN Index uses the EIU Democracy Index 2022 score (multiplied by 10 to a 0–100 scale) as an indicator entry in the Participation dimension, alongside the FH FIW aggregate and the V-Dem LDI. The three democracy indices are correlated at approximately 0.93 to 0.96 pairwise but are retained because each captures a distinctive aspect of democratic quality — FH FIW on rights and liberties, V-Dem on liberal-democratic constraints, and EIU on the broader democratic political system including political culture.

#### **4.1.8 OECD Government at a Glance 2023**

The OECD Government at a Glance, published biennially, is a source for the AUN Index's regulatory-policy and trust indicator entries. The most recent OECD GaG vintage publicly available by 30 November 2023 is the Government at a Glance 2023, which was approved by the OECD Public Governance Committee on 13 June 2023 and published/launched on 30 June 2023. The publication provides a comprehensive overview of public-governance and public-administration practices in OECD member and partner countries. The 2023 edition reports indicators on trust in public institutions, satisfaction with public services, regulatory policy, justice, public finance, employment, and digital government.

The OECD GaG 2023 reports that just over 4 in 10 people (41 per cent) across OECD countries report high or moderately high trust in their national government on the 2021 Trust Survey baseline used in the publication. The OECD Trust Survey has subsequent vintages (including a 2023 update that reported 44 per

cent of respondents with low or no trust in national government); those subsequent trust-survey vintages are not part of the Government at a Glance 2023 publication and are not used as inputs to the AUN Index. On average across OECD countries, around two-thirds of people who have used administrative services in the previous year were satisfied (approximately 66 per cent). The 2023 edition includes the OECD Indicators on the Governance of Sector Regulators and the OECD Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance (iREG), covering three principles: stakeholder engagement, regulatory impact assessment, and ex-post evaluation.

The AUN Index uses the OECD GaG regulatory-quality and public-service-capacity indicators as inputs in Institutional Readiness, the iREG indicators as inputs in Policy Coherence, and the OECD Trust Survey indicators (as published in OECD GaG 2023) as inputs in Accountability. The OECD GaG coverage is limited to OECD member and partner countries; for non-OECD countries, these indicator entries are not used and the relevant dimensions are computed from the available indicator entries subject to the minimum-coverage rule documented in Section 3.11. This coverage limitation is documented in Appendix B and is a known boundary on the AUN Index's measurement of regulatory-policy quality outside the OECD.

#### **4.1.9 SDSN Sustainable Development Report 2023**

The Sustainable Development Report, published by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), is a source for the AUN Index's SDG 16 indicator entries. The most recent SDR vintage publicly available by 30 November 2023 is the Sustainable Development Report 2023, published in June 2023, which covers all 193 UN member states on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The SDR 2023 SDG Index is topped by Finland (86.8), Sweden (86.0), Denmark (85.7), Germany (83.4), Austria (82.3), France (82.0), Norway (82.0), and Czechia (81.9). The 2023 report highlights that progress on SDG 16 is "dangerously off track," with 2023 marking the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda and global progress well below what is needed to meet the 2030 targets.

The AUN Index uses the SDR 2023 SDG 16.6.1 indicator on primary government expenditures as a proportion of the original approved budget as an indicator entry in Policy Coherence, the SDG 16.6.2 indicator on satisfaction with public services as an indicator entry in Implementation Capacity, the SDG 16.5 indicators on bribery and corruption reporting as indicator entries in Accountability. The SDR 2023 provides the only underlying source for several SDG 16 indicators that the AUN framework integrates into the relevant dimensions.

#### **4.1.10 Open Government Partnership**

The Open Government Partnership, founded in 2011, is a multilateral initiative that supports member countries in developing and implementing open-government commitments. As of late 2023, the OGP included approximately 75 to 78 national member countries and more than 150 local members, with more than 5,600 commitments cumulatively. Each OGP member commits to developing a two-year National Action Plan, co-created with civil society through a multi-stakeholder forum, with specific measurable commitments aligned with OGP eligibility criteria. Implementation is independently monitored by the OGP

Independent Reporting Mechanism. The 2023 OGP Global Summit took place in Tallinn, Estonia, on 6–7 September 2023, themed around open government in the digital age.

The AUN Index uses the OGP membership and action-plan maturity status as an indicator entry in the Participation dimension. Member countries with a current action plan and a track record of Independent Reporting Mechanism review receive the highest OGP indicator entry score; member countries without a current action plan receive a mid-range score; non-member countries receive a low score, calibrated to reflect the fact that several non-member countries nonetheless have substantial open-government practices not captured by the OGP framework. This treatment is documented in Appendix B.

## 4.2 Vintage and Timeliness

The vintage discipline of the AUN Index is essential to its reproducibility and to its comparability across annual editions. For each underlying source, the most recent vintage that was publicly available on or before 30 November 2023 is used. The publication dates of the nine vintages are: WGI 2022 Update, 25 September 2023; FH FIW 2023, 9 March 2023; V-Dem DR 2023, 2 March 2023; CPI 2022, 31 January 2023; WJP 2023, 25 October 2023; UN E-Gov 2022, autumn 2022; EIU 2022, January 2023; OECD GaG 2023, 30 June 2023; SDR 2023, June 2023. The OGP status is taken as of late November 2023.

This vintage discipline has two implications that users should note. First, the 2023 AUN Index reflects the data published by each underlying source on or before 30 November 2023 and does not capture events occurring after that date. The Israel–Hamas war that began on 7 October 2023 postdates most of the underlying vintages and is therefore not directly reflected in the Index; the Argentine presidential election of November 2023 postdates the underlying vintages and is similarly not reflected. Second, the underlying vintages cover different periods — the WGI 2022 Update covers data through 2022, the FH FIW 2023 covers events of calendar 2022, the V-Dem DR 2023 covers data through 2022, the CPI 2022 covers data through 2022 — so the 2023 AUN Index predominantly reflects governance observations from 2022 and earlier, combined with selected 2023 source vintages published before the 30 November 2023 cutoff.

## 4.3 Gaps and Limitations in the Underlying Data

Three gaps in the underlying data should be noted. First, the underlying sources do not cover all 193 UN member states. The CPI 2022 covers 180 countries; the WJP 2023 covers 142; the EIU 2022 covers 167; the FH FIW 2023 covers 195 plus 15 territories; the V-Dem v13 covers 202; the WGI covers more than 200; the UN E-Gov 2022 covers 193; the OECD GaG 2023 covers OECD members and a small number of partners. Applying the minimum three-indicator-per-dimension coverage rule to the underlying source coverage produces the 177-country AUN Index 2023 dataset. Second, the underlying sources are heavily weighted toward perception-based measurement. The WGI is a composite of perception indicators; the CPI is a composite of business-executive perception surveys; the V-Dem is a composite of expert assessments; the EIU is a composite of expert assessments. The WJP Rule of Law Index and the UN E-Government Survey are the principal sources that combine perception data with household-survey and objective data. The AUN Index therefore inherits the perception-based bias of its underlying sources, which is most

pronounced in the Accountability and Participation dimensions. Third, the underlying sources are updated on different cycles. The WGI is updated annually (in September); the FH FIW is updated annually (in March); the V-Dem is updated annually (in March); the CPI is updated annually (in January); the WJP is updated annually (in October); the UN E-Gov is updated biennially (most recently in autumn 2022, with the 2024 edition released in late 2024 outside the AUN publication window); the EIU is updated annually (in January); the OECD GaG is updated biennially (most recently in June 2023); the SDR is updated annually (in June). The AUN Index uses the most recent vintage of each, but the biennial cycles of the UN E-Gov and the OECD GaG mean that some indicator entries are based on data that is older than the 2023 vintage of the AUN Index itself.

These gaps and limitations are documented here and in Chapter 10 to support appropriate interpretation of the Index. The AUN Index is a composite of its underlying sources, and its limitations are the limitations of those sources as well as the limitations of composite construction. The Index is intended as a diagnostic instrument that supports interpretation; it is not a substitute for the underlying sources, which should be consulted directly for any country-level analysis.

## Chapter 5 — The Five Dimensions of Governance Readiness

The AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 is built on five dimensions that together describe what a state needs in order to be ready — not merely to govern, but to govern well under the conditions of 2023. The five dimensions are Institutional Readiness (IR), Policy Coherence (PC), Implementation Capacity (IC), Accountability (AC), and Participation (PA). Each is operationalised as a composite sub-index drawn from published, verifiable sources drawn from the latest eligible vintages publicly available by 30 November 2023, and each is weighted equally at twenty per cent of the composite AUN score. The five dimensions are intentionally narrower than the broad umbrella concepts used by individual source institutions, because the AUN framework isolates specific capacities of the state rather than overall regime type. The dimensions are also deliberately interlocking: high Institutional Readiness without commensurate Accountability produces capable but unaccountable governance, while high Participation without Implementation Capacity produces expressive but ineffectual governance. The structure of this chapter mirrors the structure of the Index itself, with one section for each dimension and a closing section on the inter-dimension dynamics that define the global governance landscape of 2023.

The global dimension means for 2023 — IR 52.74, PC 50.72, IC 53.13, AC 51.74, and PA 47.18 — are themselves a headline finding. The two "supply-side" dimensions of state capacity (IR and IC) sit at the upper end of a compressed scale, the two "constraint-side" dimensions (PC and AC) sit slightly below, and the Participation dimension trails every other dimension by a margin large enough to be treated as a structural feature of the global system rather than as statistical noise. The Participation deficit — global mean 47.18 against an Institutional Readiness mean of 52.74 — is one of the most important diagnostic findings in this Index, and it is the analytical through-line of this chapter. Where the Index finds divergence

between dimensions, it finds divergence between what the state can do and what the state will let its citizens do, and that divergence is the subject of the closing section on the governance gap. Figure 2.1 sets out the framework and shows the position of each dimension within the composite Index.

## 5.1 Dimension One — Institutional Readiness (IR)

### 5.1.1 Conceptual definition and scope

Institutional Readiness measures the structural preparedness of the state to perform the basic functions of public administration: it asks whether the institutions of government exist, are staffed, are competent, and are organised in ways that allow policy to be made and executed. It is the closest of the five AUN dimensions to the conceptual core of the World Bank's Government Effectiveness and Regulatory Quality indicators, but it deliberately excludes the political dimensions of regime type, electoral process, and civil liberties, which are addressed by the Participation dimension. Institutional Readiness is, in short, a measure of bureaucratic and regulatory machinery — not of who controls that machinery or how it was chosen. The distinction matters because a state can be highly institutionalised and yet undemocratic, as the cases of Singapore, the Gulf monarchies, and (in a different register) China illustrate. The Index treats those cases as analytical evidence that institutional capacity is separable from democratic legitimacy, and uses Institutional Readiness to measure the first independently of the second.

The AUN operationalises Institutional Readiness through five underlying inputs drawn from the 2023 vintage of published governance indicators: the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators 2022 Update (published 25 September 2023) Government Effectiveness and Regulatory Quality percentile ranks; the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2023 (published 25 October 2023) Constraints on Government Powers and Open Government factors; and selected public-service capacity and regulatory-quality indicators from the OECD Government at a Glance 2023 (published 30 June 2023). The combination is designed to capture both the *de jure* architecture of public administration (regulatory quality, open government) and the *de facto* performance of that architecture (government effectiveness, constraints on the executive). Countries that score highly on Institutional Readiness are therefore countries in which the public administration is competent, the regulatory framework is well-designed, the executive is constrained by institutional rather than purely political limits, and government information is available on a predictable basis.

Institutional Readiness does not measure corruption outcomes (those are reserved for the Accountability dimension), service-delivery satisfaction (reserved for Implementation Capacity), or civic engagement (reserved for Participation). It also does not measure political legitimacy, electoral integrity, or media freedom. The boundary lines are drawn to keep the dimensions orthogonal enough to support meaningful cross-dimension analysis — particularly the analysis of high-capacity, low-participation states that the closing section of this chapter treats in detail. Where Institutional Readiness diverges sharply from Participation, the Index interprets the divergence as evidence of an institutional model that prioritises administrative performance over political voice, and treats the gap as a finding rather than a deficiency of measurement.

### 5.1.2 What the 2023 data reveal

The global mean for Institutional Readiness in the 2023 Index is 52.74, placing it second in the dimension league table, marginally below Implementation Capacity (53.13) and marginally above Accountability (51.74). The standard deviation across the 177-country sample is the second-smallest of the five dimensions, indicating that Institutional Readiness is a relatively well-distributed capacity: a non-trivial share of countries outside the OECD maintain competent public administrations even where other dimensions lag. The regional pattern nonetheless remains pronounced. Western Europe (WEU) reports an IR mean of 80.84, North America (NAM) 82.30, and Oceania (OCE) 86.25 — the latter inflated by the very high scores of Australia and New Zealand. Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) sits at 61.6, with the Baltic states and Czechia pulling the regional mean upward. Latin America (LAT) at 52.50, East Asia (EAS) at 49.82, and South Asia (SAS) at 41.86 occupy the middle and lower-middle bands. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) at 39.17, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) at 39.98, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) at 49.62 round out the lower-middle tier, while the Central Asian states (CAS) sit at 44.76.

The income gradient on Institutional Readiness is steep but not monotonic. High-income countries (HIC) average 71.1 on the composite AUN Index and proportionally higher on IR; upper-middle-income countries (UMC) cluster near 47.1; lower-middle-income countries (LMC) sit near 39.8; and low-income countries (LIC) average 25.1 on the composite Index, with IR sub-scores typically in the high teens to low thirties. The contrast between HIC and LIC on Institutional Readiness is roughly thirty Index points, the widest of any single dimension after Participation. This contrast is consistent with the OECD Government at a Glance 2023 finding that the OECD trust survey reports 41 per cent of citizens with high or moderately high trust in national government — a figure that presupposes functioning institutions — and with the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 finding that Constraints on Government Powers and Open Government, two of the five IR inputs, have declined in a majority of countries since 2016. The 2023 data confirm that institutional capacity, while better distributed than Participation, is still strongly correlated with national income and that the decline identified by WJP is not yet visible as a year-on-year fall in the global IR mean but is visible in the country-level detail of the Index.

The country-level leaders on Institutional Readiness in the 2023 Index are Denmark (95.3), Sweden (94.4), Finland (94.0), Norway (93.8), and Singapore (87.3), with New Zealand (89.4), Estonia (87.2), and Iceland (86.8) also in the top tier. The leaders on IR mirror the leaders on the composite Index with one significant exception: Singapore ranks 19th on the composite Index with a score of 82.7 but is the fifth-highest scorer on Institutional Readiness (87.3), and it is the highest scorer in the world on the WGI Government Effectiveness dimension. The implication is that Singapore's institutional machinery is at the global frontier, while its composite ranking is pulled down by lower Participation. The bottom of the IR distribution is occupied by Afghanistan (14.7), Myanmar (17.0), Sudan (18.7), South Sudan (19.3), North Korea (18.1), Eritrea (16.1), and Somalia (15.4) — all of which combine state collapse or extreme institutional understaffing with active conflict or absolute authoritarian closure. The contrast between the top of the IR distribution (Denmark 95.3) and the bottom (Afghanistan 14.7) is more than eighty Index points, the largest absolute range of any AUN dimension except Participation.

### 5.1.3 Leading and lagging performers

The leading performers on Institutional Readiness fall into three distinct groups. The first is the Nordic-Baltic cluster, led by Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Norway, and extended by Estonia and Iceland. These states combine high WGI Government Effectiveness percentile ranks with strong WJP Open Government scores and OECD-best regulatory quality indicators. They also share a policy-style that treats institutional openness as a precondition for administrative competence, rather than a gap against it. The second group is the Anglophone advanced economies — New Zealand, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom — which sit just below the Nordics on IR but above them on some Implementation Capacity components because of larger-scale service-delivery systems. The third group is the high-capacity Asian and Gulf administrations — Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and (in a different register) the United Arab Emirates and Qatar — which combine very high WGI Government Effectiveness with WGI Regulatory Quality scores that approach European levels. Singapore's case is particularly important to the Index because it demonstrates that Institutional Readiness, on its own, is uncorrelated with Participation; the country's IR score of 87.3 is more than 22 Index points above its PA score of 64.7, the largest such gap inside the Tier 1 (High Readiness) group.

The lagging performers on Institutional Readiness divide into two analytical categories. The first category comprises states affected by active conflict or recent state collapse, where institutions exist in name only and public administration has either disintegrated or been displaced by armed actors. Afghanistan, Myanmar, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, and Somalia all sit in this category, with IR sub-scores between 13.7 and 19.3. The WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 confirms the same pattern from a different angle: its bottom five jurisdictions in 2023 are Venezuela, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Haiti, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, all of which also appear in the bottom decile of the AUN IR sub-ranking. The second category comprises closed authoritarian administrations where formal institutions are preserved but constrained by political authority — North Korea, Eritrea, Turkmenistan, and Equatorial Guinea are the canonical cases. In these states, Institutional Readiness scores are low (16.1 to 30.8) but are systematically higher than Participation scores in the same countries, producing a reversed but smaller version of the Singapore gap. The Index treats these two lagging categories as analytically distinct: conflict-driven institutional collapse is a different phenomenon from institutional hollowing under authoritarian pressure, and the policy responses appropriate to one are not the same as those appropriate to the other.

A third group of countries sits in the middle of the IR distribution but warrants attention because of large year-on-year movements or sharp divergences with other dimensions. Hungary (IR 58.3, AUN 56.7) and Poland (IR 57.2, AUN 54.2) sit in Tier 3 (Established) with IR scores above the global mean but well below the Western European frontier; both countries have been the subject of European Union rule-of-law disputes during 2022-2023 that have begun to register in their IR inputs via the WJP Constraints on Government Powers and Open Government factors. Tunisia (IR 46.2, AUN 41.9) sits in Tier 4 (Emerging) with an IR score substantially above its Accountability (36.6) and Participation (28.7) scores, reflecting the institutional resilience of the Tunisian civil service despite the political closure under President Kais Saied. Hong Kong (IR 58.6, AUN 55.0) is a notable case of institutional preservation under political pressure: its IR score

remains substantially above its PA score of 34.1, the latter having collapsed following the implementation of the National Security Law. The pattern across all three cases is the same: In the underlying historical indicators, Institutional Readiness shows greater relative stability than Participation. This is consistent with the WJP finding that Constraints on Government Powers moves more slowly than Fundamental Rights in the underlying data.

### 5.1.4 Notable 2023 developments

Three 2023-specific developments moved Institutional Readiness scores in the AUN Index. The first is the publication of the World Bank WGI 2022 Update on 25 September 2023, which is the most recent WGI vintage available before the AUN publication window. The 2022 Update covers the period 1996-2022 and incorporates the COVID-19 recovery period into the Government Effectiveness and Regulatory Quality percentile ranks. Country-level movements in the WGI 2022 Update fed directly into the IR sub-scores of the AUN Index, with the largest negative moves concentrated in countries affected by invasion, coup, or state-of-emergency governance during 2022 (Russia, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Sudan, Burkina Faso). The second is the publication of the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 on 25 October 2023, which expanded country coverage to 142 jurisdictions and which recorded declines in Constraints on Government Powers and Open Government in a majority of countries. The WJP finding that Fundamental Rights is the most-declined factor since 2016 (declined in 77 per cent of countries) provides important context for the Participation dimension, where the Fundamental Rights factor is an explicit AUN input.

The third 2023 development is the publication of the OECD Government at a Glance 2023 on 30 June 2023, which provides the Institutional Readiness inputs on regulatory quality and public-service capacity for OECD members and selected partners. The headline OECD finding — that 41 per cent of OECD citizens have high or moderately high trust in their national government — is consistent with the pattern of declining Constraints on Government Powers reported by WJP. The OECD GaG 2023 also introduced refinements to the Indicators on the Governance of Sector Regulators (GSR) and the Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance (iREG), which feed the regulatory-quality component of the IR dimension. The 2023 source vintages show that the highest-performing countries retain a substantial Institutional Readiness advantage over the median: the Nordics retain their lead, the Anglophone democracies show broadly stable scores in the 2023 vintages, and the high-capacity Asian administrations (Singapore, Korea, Japan) show modest upward movement on the IR-related inputs. For policymakers, the 2023 message on Institutional Readiness is that the 2023 data show a substantial gap between frontier and median Institutional Readiness performance. The WJP reports that overall rule of law declined in 78 per cent of countries since 2016; this provides broader context for the AUN findings. Within the AUN framework, Constraints on Government Powers contributes to Institutional Readiness and Accountability, while Fundamental Rights contributes to Participation. The action implication is that institutional reform investments — civil-service professionalisation, regulatory simplification, open-government commitments, and constraints on the executive — should be prioritised in countries where the IR score trails the country's income level, because the gap can serve as a diagnostic signal for potential implementation-capacity weaknesses.

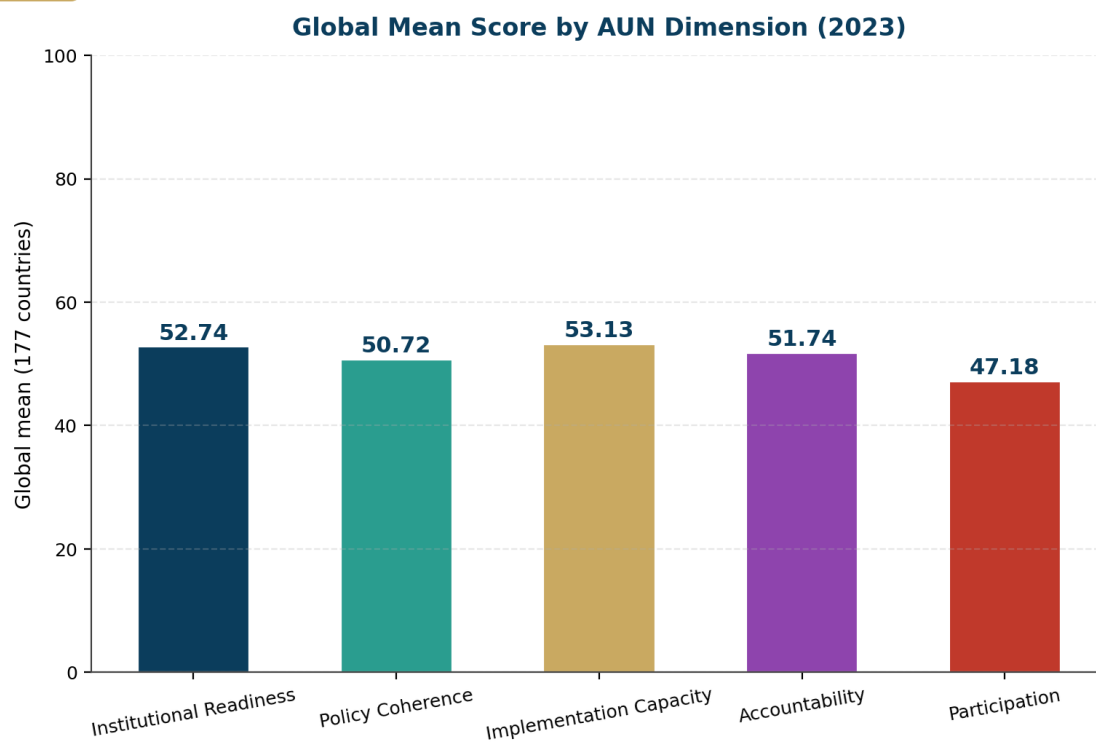
**Figure 5.1**

Figure 5.1 Global Mean Score by AUN Dimension (2023, n=177). Implementation Capacity has the highest global mean (53.13), followed by Institutional Readiness (52.74), Accountability (51.74), Policy Coherence (50.72), and Participation (47.18). Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset; calculation per Chapter 3 and Appendix B.

**Figure 5.2**

Figure 5.2 Five-Dimension Profile — Top Performers (2023). Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, New Zealand, and Estonia. The Nordic–Antipodean cluster dominates every dimension. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

## 5.2 Dimension Two — Policy Coherence (PC)

### 5.2.1 Conceptual definition and scope

Policy Coherence measures the degree to which government policy is internally aligned across ministries, across levels of government, and across the policy cycle from formulation through implementation to evaluation. It is the dimension of the AUN Index that is closest to the conceptual core of the OECD's regulatory-policy work and to the UN E-Government Survey's Online Service Index, both of which capture aspects of policy coordination that the other dimensions do not. The AUN framework treats Policy Coherence as a measure of the state's ability to act as a single organisation — to align fiscal, regulatory, and sectoral policy behind a stated objective, and to revise that alignment when conditions change. High Policy Coherence means that policy is not internally contradictory, that responsibility for cross-cutting issues is clearly assigned, and that monitoring and evaluation feed back into the next round of policy design. Low Policy Coherence means that policy is fragmented, that competing ministries pursue contradictory objectives, and that policy commitments made in one forum are routinely undermined by actions taken in another.

The AUN operationalises Policy Coherence through four underlying inputs: the World Bank WGI 2022 Update Government Effectiveness percentile rank, which captures the broad policy-formulation capacity of the executive; the OECD Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance (iREG), as reported in the OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook 2022 and updated through the OECD GaG 2023, which capture stakeholder engagement, regulatory impact assessment, and ex-post evaluation; the UN E-Government Survey 2022 Online Service Index (OSI), which captures the cross-agency integration of online public services; and the SDG 16.6.1 indicator (primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget), which captures the alignment between budgeted and executed policy. The combination of these four inputs is designed to capture coherence at three points in the policy cycle: at the design stage (iREG stakeholder engagement and RIA), at the implementation stage (OSI cross-agency integration), and at the budget execution stage (SDG 16.6.1). The dimension is therefore a measure of policy process rather than policy content, and is agnostic about whether the underlying policies are themselves good or bad.

Policy Coherence does not measure whether policy is well-aligned with public preferences (that is captured by Participation) or whether policy is faithfully implemented (Implementation Capacity) or whether public officials are held accountable for policy failures (Accountability). It does not measure the quality of regulatory outcomes, only the quality of the regulatory process. It also does not measure the political feasibility of policy, which is a separate question that depends on the configuration of interests and institutions outside the scope of the AUN Index. The boundary is important because a number of states with very high Policy Coherence scores (Singapore, the Gulf monarchies, China in its non-political domains) pursue coherent policies that are not democratically endorsed, and several states with very high Participation scores (Iceland, New Zealand) have moderate rather than extreme Policy Coherence scores. The Index treats these patterns as evidence that coherence is a property of policy process that is independent of both democratic input and policy substance.

### 5.2.2 What the 2023 data reveal

The global mean for Policy Coherence in the 2023 Index is 50.72, the second-lowest of the five AUN dimensions after Participation (47.18). The relatively low global PC mean reflects two structural features of the 2023 data. First, the SDG 16.6.1 indicator (budget execution) is systematically lower than the other PC inputs in many lower-middle-income and low-income countries, where budget deviations of 15-25 per cent are common. Second, the OECD iREG indicators show that ex-post evaluation remains the least developed of the three regulatory-policy pillars in most OECD members, with the OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook 2022 finding that ex-post evaluation is systematically required in only a minority of OECD countries. The combination pulls the PC mean downward relative to IR and IC, even though the policy-formulation component (captured by WGI Government Effectiveness) sits at the same level as the IR inputs. The regional distribution of PC mirrors that of IR but with a wider spread between the best and worst performers: WEU at 78.95, NAM at 78.9, OCE at 84.4, CEE at 59.55, EAS at 49.26, LAT at 49.71, SAS at 40.24, MENA at 38.33, SSA at 37.35, CAS at 42.8, and GCC at 47.42. The GCC's relatively low PC mean (47.4), despite its high IC mean of 50.9, reflects the fact that policy in the Gulf monarchies is made by a small

number of decision-makers and then executed through line agencies with limited inter-agency coordination mechanisms — a pattern of high implementation but moderate coherence that is unusual outside the Gulf.

The income gradient on Policy Coherence is steep and roughly monotonic: HIC average well above 70 on PC sub-scores, UMC cluster near 47, LMC near 40, and LIC near 25. The contrast is consistent with the OECD GaG 2023 finding that the regulatory-policy infrastructure (RIA, stakeholder engagement, ex-post evaluation) is most developed in OECD members and weakest in low-income countries where regulatory capacity is constrained. It is also consistent with the UN E-Government Survey 2022 finding that the Online Service Index has widened, rather than narrowed, the digital divide between developed and developing regions on the Telecommunications Infrastructure sub-index, which is a precondition for high OSI scores. The implication is that Policy Coherence is the dimension most exposed to capacity constraints, and that improvements in PC require both procedural reform (better RIA, more systematic stakeholder engagement) and infrastructure investment (digital government back-end systems) to take hold.

The country-level leaders on Policy Coherence in the 2023 Index are Denmark (93.4), Sweden (92.5), Finland (92.1), Norway (91.9), and New Zealand (87.6), with the Nordic cluster again dominating the top of the distribution. The leaders on PC mirror the leaders on IR with one notable exception: Singapore ranks 19th on the composite Index but its PC score of 82.4 places it outside the top ten on PC, reflecting the gap between Singapore's highly effective implementation machinery and its more limited use of multi-stakeholder regulatory consultation. The bottom of the PC distribution is occupied by Sudan (16.8), Yemen (13.3), Afghanistan (14.8), South Sudan (17.4), Syria (11.8), Myanmar (19.2), and Somalia (13.5) — all of which combine active conflict with the destruction of policy-coordination machinery. The PC distribution also reveals a small number of countries with PC scores substantially higher than their IR scores (Hong Kong at PC 60.7 against IR 58.6, China at PC 55.4 against IR 55.3, Serbia at PC 54.3 against IR 56.2), suggesting that some states achieve policy coordination through means other than the open-government channels that the IR dimension rewards.

### 5.2.3 Coherence across the policy cycle

The AUN Index's Policy Coherence dimension is structured to capture coherence at three points in the policy cycle: design, implementation, and budget execution. At the design stage, the OECD iREG indicators show that stakeholder engagement for primary laws is systematically required in most OECD countries, that regulatory impact assessment (RIA) is required for primary laws in nearly all OECD members, but that ex-post evaluation remains the least developed of the three pillars. The 2022 OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook finding that ex-post evaluation is the weakest link in the regulatory-policy cycle is reflected in the PC sub-scores of the AUN Index: even the highest-scoring OECD countries show a five-to-ten-point gap between their design-stage coherence (stakeholder engagement and RIA) and their evaluation-stage coherence (ex-post evaluation). The implication is that policy coherence at the global frontier is strong at the front end of the policy cycle and weak at the back end, which is a structural feature of the regulatory state as it has evolved since the 1990s.

At the implementation stage, the UN E-Government Survey 2022 Online Service Index (OSI) measures the cross-agency integration of online public services, which is a proxy for the operational coherence of government. The 2022 OSI leaders — Denmark, Finland, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Iceland — overlap substantially with the AUN PC leaders, with the Republic of Korea being a particularly strong performer on OSI but a more modest performer on IR. The UN E-Government Survey 2022 finding that the global average EGDI has increased over the long run but that a widening digital divide has opened between developed and developing regions on the Telecommunications Infrastructure sub-index is reflected in the AUN PC distribution as a sharp gradient between HIC and LIC on PC. The implication is that the digital-government agenda, which the UN Survey identifies as an important vehicle for improving OSI in low- and middle-income countries, is also an important vehicle for raising PC scores in those countries, but that the gains are conditional on prior infrastructure investment.

At the budget-execution stage, the SDG 16.6.1 indicator captures the proportion of original approved budget actually executed, which is a measure of the alignment between fiscal commitments and fiscal outcomes. The UN Global Progress Report on SDG 16 (2023) found that progress on SDG 16 is "dangerously off track," and the SDG 16.6.1 data show that budget deviations remain substantial in many low- and middle-income countries, particularly those affected by conflict or by commodity-price shocks. The implication for the AUN Index is that budget execution is an important limiting factor for PC in low- and middle-income countries, while ex-post evaluation is an important limiting factor for PC in OECD members. The two constraints are different, and the policy responses are different: in low- and middle-income countries, the priority is fiscal-planning capacity and macroeconomic stabilisation; in OECD members, the priority is institutionalising ex-post evaluation as a routine part of the regulatory cycle. The AUN Index treats these as separate reform agendas because they require different instruments and address different stages of the policy cycle.

### 5.2.4 Notable 2023 developments

Two 2023-specific developments moved Policy Coherence scores in the AUN Index. The first is the publication of the OECD Government at a Glance 2023 on 30 June 2023, which updated the iREG indicators and the Indicators on the Governance of Sector Regulators (GSR). The OECD GaG 2023 finding that ex-post evaluation remains the least developed of the three regulatory-policy pillars is reflected in the AUN PC distribution as a systematic gap between design-stage and evaluation-stage coherence across the OECD membership. The GaG 2023 also updated the OECD Trust Survey, which feeds the accountability dimension but indirectly affects PC through the citizen-engagement channel. The second 2023 development is the continued implementation of the SDG 16.6.1 monitoring framework, which the UN Global Progress Report on SDG 16 (2023) identified as one of the principal areas where progress is "dangerously off track." The 2023 SDG midpoint review found that budget execution in low-income countries remains constrained by debt-servicing obligations, by external shocks (food and energy prices, climate), and by limited fiscal-planning capacity — all of which feed into the PC dimension via the SDG 16.6.1 channel.

Two country-specific 2023 developments also moved PC scores. The first is the continued evolution of the European Union's rule-of-law mechanism, which during 2022-2023 activated the conditionality regulation

against Hungary and Poland and led to the disbursement of EU funds being made conditional on specific rule-of-law and regulatory-policy reforms. The effect on the AUN PC sub-scores for Hungary (PC 57.4) and Poland (PC 55.3) is moderate rather than large, but the direction is downward — both countries sit below their IR scores on PC, reflecting the gap between formal regulatory infrastructure and its effective use. The second is the accelerated development of digital-government platforms in the Republic of Korea, Estonia, Singapore, and Denmark, all of which extended their online-service offerings during 2022-2023 in ways that improved their OSI scores and, through that channel, their PC sub-scores. The OGP Global Summit in Tallinn, Estonia (6-7 September 2023) was a focal point for these developments, with the OGP 2023 Annual Report recording that 55 OGP members submitted an action plan in 2023, including 39 countries and 14 local jurisdictions, and that 80 per cent of expected national action plans were delivered. The implication for policymakers is that Policy Coherence is a dimension where procedural reform — particularly the institutionalisation of ex-post evaluation — offers substantial scope for improvement, and that the procedural reform agenda is well-defined and supported by international standards (OECD iREG, EU rule-of-law mechanism, OGP action-plan cycle) but unevenly implemented.

**Figure 5.3**



Figure 5.3 Institutional Readiness vs Accountability (2023). Bubble size proportional to population; colour by World Bank income group. The diagonal is the equality reference line. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

## 5.3 Dimension Three — Implementation Capacity (IC)

### 5.3.1 Conceptual definition and scope

Implementation Capacity measures the ability of the state to deliver on its policy commitments: to translate laws, regulations, and budgeted programmes into actual services that reach intended beneficiaries. It is the dimension of the AUN Index closest to the conceptual core of the WJP Rule of Law Index's Order & Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice factors, and to the UN E-Government Survey's composite E-Government Development Index (EGDI). The AUN framework treats Implementation Capacity as a measure of operational state capacity — the capacity to enforce rules, deliver services, adjudicate disputes, and maintain public order — and it deliberately excludes both the policy-formulation capacity (reserved for Institutional Readiness and Policy Coherence) and the legitimacy of the policies being implemented (reserved for Participation and Accountability). High Implementation Capacity means that the state can reliably do what it says it will do; low Implementation Capacity means that policy and execution are decoupled, with formal commitments outrunning actual delivery.

The AUN operationalises Implementation Capacity through seven underlying inputs: the World Bank WGI 2022 Update Government Effectiveness percentile rank; the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 Order & Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice factors; the UN E-Government Survey 2022 EGDI; and the SDG 16.6.2 indicator (satisfaction with public services). The combination is designed to capture implementation capacity across four operational channels: service delivery (UN EGDI, SDG 16.6.2, WGI GE), rule enforcement (WJP Regulatory Enforcement, WJP Criminal Justice), dispute resolution (WJP Civil Justice), and public order (WJP Order & Security). The inclusion of the WJP Civil Justice and Criminal Justice factors is particularly important because it captures the implementation capacity of the courts system, which is an important limiting factor for the state's ability to enforce regulatory and property-rights rules. The UN EGDI, in turn, captures the digital-government backbone that is an increasingly important factor in the speed and quality of service delivery, particularly in high- and upper-middle-income countries.

Implementation Capacity does not measure whether the policies being implemented are themselves well-designed (Policy Coherence), whether they are democratically endorsed (Participation), or whether those who implement them are held accountable for failures (Accountability). The distinction is critical because a number of states with very high Implementation Capacity scores (Singapore, the Republic of Korea, the Gulf monarchies, and China in its non-political domains) implement policies that are not democratically endorsed, and several states with very high Participation scores (Iceland, New Zealand) have moderate rather than extreme Implementation Capacity scores. The Index treats these patterns as evidence that implementation capacity is a property of state machinery that is independent of regime type, and uses the IC-PA divergence as a diagnostic of the governance gap discussed in section 5.6.2.

### 5.3.2 What the 2023 data reveal

The global mean for Implementation Capacity in the 2023 Index is 53.13, the highest of the five AUN dimensions, narrowly ahead of Institutional Readiness (52.74). The regional distribution of IC mirrors that of IR but with a slightly wider spread between the best and worst performers: WEU at 80.39, NAM at 81.05,

OCE at 85.75, CEE at 62.66, EAS at 51.63, LAT at 52.61, SAS at 42.6, MENA at 40.45, SSA at 39.77, CAS at 45.08, and GCC at 50.88. The GCC's relatively high IC mean (50.9) — well above its IR (49.6) and PC (47.4) means and dramatically above its PA mean of 12.4 — is the single most striking regional feature of the IC distribution. The Gulf monarchies combine very high operational state capacity with very low political participation, a pattern that the AUN Index identifies as the "high-capacity, low-participation" governance model and that is examined in detail in section 5.6.2. The EAS region shows a similar but less extreme pattern, with IC at 51.6 above IR at 50.8 and well above PA at 41.2.

The income gradient on Implementation Capacity is steep but more compressed than on Participation. HIC average above 70 on IC sub-scores; UMC cluster near 47; LMC near 40; LIC near 25. The contrast is consistent with the UN E-Government Survey 2022 finding that the global average EGDI has increased over the long run, with 64 of 193 UN Member States scoring in the Very High EGDI category, but that 36 countries remain in the Low EGDI category — overwhelmingly concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and in least-developed states. The UN EGDI bottom ten — Chad, Central African Republic, Eritrea, South Sudan, Niger, Somalia, Afghanistan, Burundi, Liberia, Mali, Guinea-Bissau — overlap substantially with the AUN IC bottom ten, which is consistent with the finding that digital-government infrastructure is now an important limiting factor for implementation capacity in the lowest-income countries. The WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 finding that Order & Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice all declined in a majority of countries during 2022-2023 also pulls the global IC mean downward relative to IR, although the IC mean (53.13) remains only marginally above the IR mean (52.74) because the WGI Government Effectiveness input is shared between the two dimensions and remains relatively stable.

The country-level leaders on Implementation Capacity in the 2023 Index are Sweden (93.1), Finland (92.7), Norway (92.6), Singapore (87.5), and Denmark (87.0). Denmark's IC score of 87.0 is the lowest of the Nordic leaders and reflects the country's relatively lower scores on the WJP Order & Security factor, which is pulled down by comparatively high reported crime rates in the WJP household survey relative to its Nordic peers. Singapore's IC score of 87.5 is the highest of any non-Nordic country and reflects the city-state's combination of best-in-world WGI Government Effectiveness with very high WJP Rule of Law scores. The bottom of the IC distribution is occupied by Myanmar (12.3), Afghanistan (13.9), South Sudan (13.5), Sudan (15.9), Syria (14.9), Yemen (16.4), North Korea (18.4), and Somalia (16.6) — all of which combine state collapse with active conflict or absolute closure. The contrast between the top of the IC distribution (Sweden 93.1) and the bottom (Myanmar 12.3) is more than eighty Index points, comparable to the IR range and only slightly smaller than the PA range.

### 5.3.3 The implementation deficit

The 2023 Index reveals an implementation deficit that is most pronounced in middle-income countries where formal policy commitments outrun actual delivery. The deficit is visible in the gap between Policy Coherence and Implementation Capacity in countries such as Brazil (PC 54.5, IC 50.6), Mexico (PC 51.7, IC 54.8), South Africa (PC 55.2, IC 49.3), India (PC 51.5, IC 52.7), Indonesia (PC 49.5, IC 52.6), and Argentina (PC 50.4, IC 53.6). In these countries, IC scores trail PC scores by between three and seven points, indicating that the important limiting factor for governance is not the formulation of coherent policy but the

execution of that policy through functioning service-delivery and rule-enforcement machinery. The pattern is consistent with the OECD GaG 2023 finding that across OECD countries only 49 per cent of the population expects the government to be prepared for future crises, and that satisfaction with administrative services averages around 66 per cent — figures that, while higher than in most middle-income countries, nonetheless indicate an implementation deficit even at the OECD frontier.

The implementation deficit is also visible in the gap between Institutional Readiness and Implementation Capacity in fragile and conflict-affected states, where IR scores often exceed IC scores because institutional frameworks exist on paper but are not operational. Sudan (IR 18.7, IC 15.9), Haiti (IR 54.5, IC 55.7), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (IR 27.2, IC 28.4), Libya (IR 27.3, IC 21.5), and Mali (IR 34.4, IC 35.6) all show IR-IC gaps that are characteristic of states where the important limiting factor is not the absence of institutions but the inability of those institutions to deliver. The WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 finding that Civil Justice was the factor that declined in the most countries in 2023 is consistent with this pattern, because civil-justice systems are typically the first operational layer to fail under conditions of fiscal stress or political instability. The implication for the AUN Index is that the implementation deficit has two analytically distinct sources — a procedural source in middle-income countries (where policy formulation outpaces delivery) and an operational source in fragile states (where institutions exist on paper but lack the capacity to deliver) — and that the policy responses appropriate to the two are different.

The implementation deficit is also visible in the cross-dimension pattern of the bottom of the Index. Of the ten lowest-scoring countries on the composite Index (Sudan, Central African Republic, North Korea, Eritrea, Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Syria, Myanmar), nine also rank in the bottom ten on the IC dimension, and the tenth (South Sudan) sits just outside the bottom ten on IC. The WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 bottom five — Venezuela, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Haiti, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — overlap substantially with the AUN IC bottom ten. The implication is that Implementation Capacity is an especially important limiting dimension of the composite AUN score in the lowest-performing countries, making implementation weaknesses an important diagnostic priority alongside institutional, policy, accountability, and participation weaknesses. For policymakers, the 2023 message is that the implementation deficit is an important operational challenge of governance in middle-income and fragile states, and that it requires both procedural reform (in middle-income countries) and operational reconstruction (in fragile states) to address.

### 5.3.4 Digital delivery as a contributor to Implementation Capacity

Digital government has emerged in the 2023 Index as an important contributor to Implementation Capacity, particularly in high- and upper-middle-income countries. The UN E-Government Survey 2022 — the most recent UN E-Government Survey available before the 1 December 2023 AUN publication window — found that the EGDI leaders are Denmark, Finland, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, and Iceland, with EGDI scores in the 0.92-0.97 range. The Republic of Korea is a particularly strong performer, ranking third on EGDI and first on the E-Participation Index (EPI) in some 2022 reports. The implication for the AUN Index is that the digital-government backbone is an important component of cross-country differences in IC sub-scores, particularly in countries where the traditional implementation machinery (courts, regulators, line

agencies) is moderately rather than highly developed. Estonia's position as the highest-ranked CEE country on the composite Index (86.4) and on IC (87.4) is consistent with the contribution of its strong digital-government infrastructure, alongside its broader institutional and implementation capacities.

The digital divide identified by the UN E-Government Survey 2022 is a major constraint on the use of digital delivery in low-income countries. The Survey found that developing regions lag significantly on the Telecommunications Infrastructure sub-index, which is a precondition for high EGDI scores, and that the gap between developed and developing regions on this sub-index has widened rather than narrowed in recent years. The implication is that digital delivery as a contributor to Implementation Capacity is currently available only to countries that have already made the infrastructure investment, and that the gap between high-EGDI and low-EGDI countries is an important factor in the cross-country divergence in IC sub-scores. For policymakers, the 2023 message is that digital-government investment is an important intervention for IC improvement, but that the gains are conditional on prior telecommunications infrastructure investment and on complementary investments in human capital (digital literacy, public-sector digital skills) — both of which are themselves unevenly distributed.

The OGP Global Summit in Tallinn, Estonia (6-7 September 2023) was a focal point for the digital-government agenda in 2023, with OGP members sharing experience on open-government commitments that have a digital-delivery component. The OGP 2023 Annual Report recorded that 55 OGP members submitted an action plan in 2023, including 39 countries and 14 local jurisdictions, and that 80 per cent of expected national action plans were delivered. The OGP action-plan mechanism — co-created with civil society, containing measurable commitments, and monitored by the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) — is an important international vehicle for translating digital-government investment into measurable implementation gains. The implication for the AUN Index is that OGP membership and action-plan maturity are correlated with higher IC sub-scores, particularly in countries that have used the OGP platform to embed digital-delivery commitments in their national action plans. The action implication for policymakers is that digital-government investment should be paired with OGP-style co-creation and monitoring to maximise its effect on Implementation Capacity, and that the pairing is most effective in countries where the OGP platform is already established.

Figure 5.4

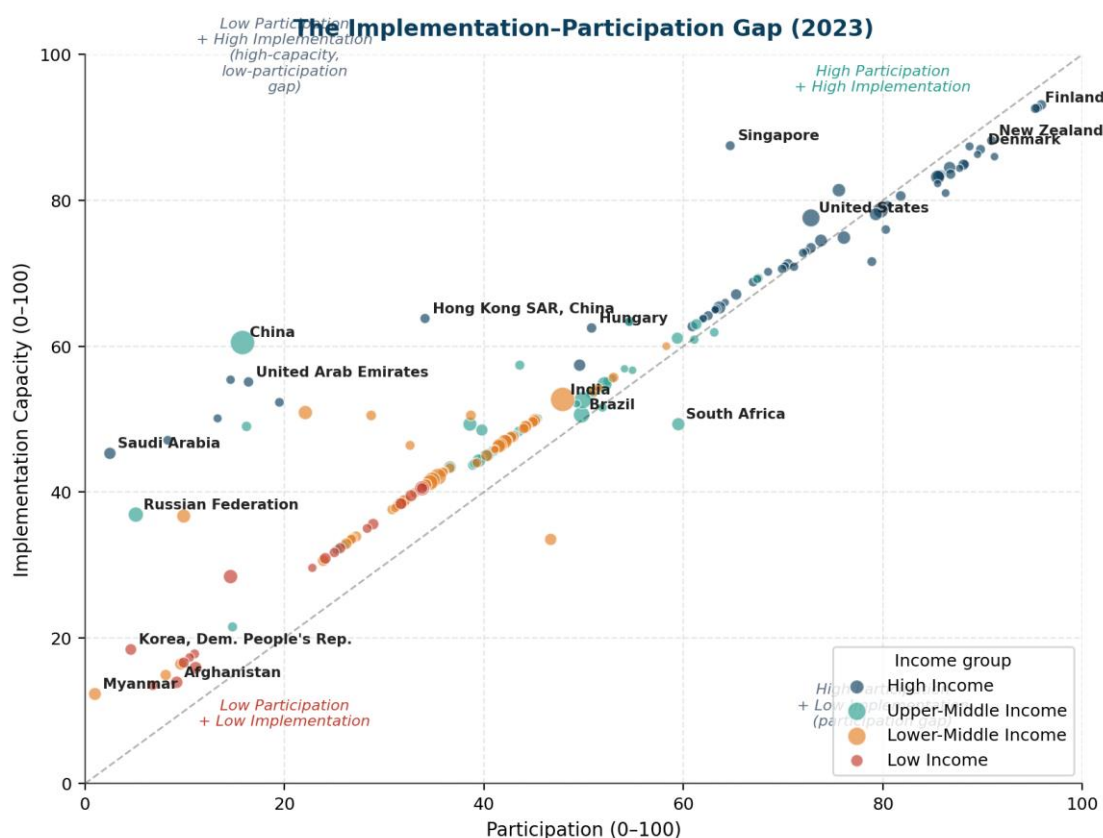


Figure 5.4 The Governance Gap: Participation vs Implementation (2023). The 'high-capacity, low-participation' quadrant (upper left) contains Singapore, the Gulf states, and China. The IC-PA relationship is strongly POSITIVE (not a trade-off); the 'gap' refers to score differences, not a negative correlation. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

## 5.4 Dimension Four — Accountability (AC)

### 5.4.1 Conceptual definition and scope

Accountability measures the degree to which public officials are held answerable for the exercise of public power — through horizontal constraints (legislatures, judiciaries, audit institutions, anti-corruption agencies), through vertical constraints (elections, media, civil society oversight), and through internal constraints (codes of conduct, asset-disclosure regimes, conflict-of-interest rules). It is the dimension of the AUN Index closest to the conceptual core of the World Bank's Control of Corruption and Rule of Law indicators, the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, and the WJP Rule of Law Index's Absence of Corruption and Constraints on Government Powers factors. The AUN framework treats Accountability as a measure of the institutional and procedural constraints on the abuse of public power, and it deliberately excludes both the political accountability that flows from competitive elections (reserved for Participation) and the operational effectiveness of those constraints (reserved for Implementation Capacity). High Accountability means that the abuse of public power is likely to be detected, sanctioned,

and remedied; low Accountability means that public power can be exercised for private gain without systematic consequence.

The AUN operationalises Accountability through seven underlying inputs: the WGI 2022 Update Control of Corruption and Rule of Law percentile ranks; the Transparency International CPI 2022 (published 31 January 2023, the most recent CPI vintage available before the AUN publication window); the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 Absence of Corruption and Constraints on Government Powers factors; the OECD Trust Survey (as reported in the OECD GaG 2023, particularly the items on perceived integrity of public officials); and the SDG 16.5 indicators (bribery incidence and corruption reporting). The combination is designed to capture accountability through both the corruption-perception channel (TI CPI, WGI CC, WJP Absence of Corruption) and the rule-of-law channel (WGI RL, WJP Constraints on Government Powers, WJP Civil Justice and Criminal Justice components that are shared with Implementation Capacity). The OECD Trust Survey and the SDG 16.5 indicators add a citizen-experience layer that captures the perceived integrity of public officials from the bottom up.

Accountability does not measure whether elections are free and fair (that is reserved for Participation), whether public services reach their beneficiaries (Implementation Capacity), or whether policies are well-designed (Policy Coherence). The distinction is important because a number of states with very high Accountability scores (Singapore, the Nordic countries, New Zealand) combine high rule-of-law scores with high corruption-control scores, while some states with high Participation scores (Iceland, Uruguay) have moderate rather than extreme AC scores. The Index treats these patterns as evidence that accountability is a property of the institutional architecture that constrains public power, and that it is partially but not fully correlated with regime type. The AC-PA divergence is one of the most analytically productive features of the AUN framework, because it identifies states where the constraint on the abuse of power is institutional rather than electoral (Singapore) and states where the constraint is electoral rather than institutional (some emerging democracies with weak audit institutions but competitive elections).

#### 5.4.2 What the 2023 data reveal

The global mean for Accountability in the 2023 Index is 51.74, placing it third among the five AUN dimensions, between Institutional Readiness (52.74) and Policy Coherence (50.72). The regional distribution of AC mirrors that of IR and IC but with a wider spread between the best and worst performers: WEU at 81.68, NAM at 81.15, OCE at 87.1, CEE at 60.66, EAS at 49.75, LAT at 51.57, SAS at 41.35, MENA at 37.27, SSA at 37.62, CAS at 42.65, and GCC at 49.32. The GCC's relatively high AC mean (49.3) — well above its PA mean of 12.4 — reflects the fact that the Gulf monarchies have made substantial investments in anti-corruption institutions and audit bodies, even in the absence of competitive elections. The EAS region shows a similar pattern, with AC at 49.7 above PA at 41.2. The contrast between the GCC and the Nordic countries on AC (49.3 versus 81.7) is roughly thirty Index points, smaller than the contrast between the same two regions on PA (12.4 versus 81.8, a gap of nearly seventy points), which is consistent with the AUN framework's claim that accountability is partially but not fully correlated with regime type.

The income gradient on Accountability is steep and roughly monotonic: HIC average above 70 on AC sub-scores; UMC cluster near 47; LMC near 40; LIC near 25. The contrast is consistent with the TI CPI 2022 finding that the global average CPI score has been stuck at 43 for the eleventh consecutive year, that more than two-thirds of countries score below 50, and that 26 countries fell to their lowest CPI scores yet in 2022. The TI CPI 2022 leaders — Denmark (90), Finland (87), New Zealand (87), Norway (84), Singapore (83), Sweden (83), Switzerland (82), Netherlands (80), Germany (79), Ireland (77), Luxembourg (77) — overlap substantially with the AUN AC leaders. The TI CPI 2022 bottom — Somalia (12), Syria (13), South Sudan (13), Venezuela (14), Yemen (16), Burundi (17), Equatorial Guinea (17), Haiti (17), Libya (17), North Korea (17) — also overlaps substantially with the AUN AC bottom. The implication is that the corruption-perception channel is an important component of cross-country differences in the AC dimension, and that the global stagnation of the CPI mean at 43 is reflected in the AUN AC distribution as a global mean that remains broadly consistent with the underlying stagnation in corruption perceptions.

The country-level leaders on Accountability in the 2023 Index are Singapore (91.6), Sweden (93.8), Finland (93.4), Norway (93.2), and New Zealand (88.8). Singapore's AC score of 91.6 is the highest in the world and makes a substantial contribution to its 19th-place composite ranking, despite its PA score of 64.7. The Singapore case is the canonical example of high accountability without high participation: the country's combination of TI CPI 2022 score of 83 (fifth globally), high WGI Control of Corruption percentile rank, and high WJP Absence of Corruption and Constraints on Government Powers scores produces an AC sub-score that exceeds every Nordic country's AC sub-score. The bottom of the AC distribution is occupied by Myanmar (9.4), Sudan (15.0), Afghanistan (15.0), South Sudan (10.7), Libya (18.7), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (18.5), Syria (12.0), Venezuela (27.7), and Turkmenistan (29.2) — all of which combine state collapse or authoritarian closure with high corruption and weak rule of law. The contrast between the top of the AC distribution (Singapore 91.6) and the bottom (Myanmar 9.4) is the largest of any AUN dimension except Participation, reflecting the extreme divergence of the global accountability landscape.

### 5.4.3 The accountability squeeze

The 2023 Index reveals an accountability squeeze — a pattern in which the constraints on the abuse of public power are simultaneously under pressure from above (executive aggrandisement) and from below (weak public trust). The squeeze is visible in the OECD countries, where the OECD GaG 2023 found that 41 per cent of citizens have high or moderately high trust in their national government, that 49 per cent expect their government to be prepared for future crises. The squeeze is also visible in the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 finding that Constraints on Government Powers has declined in a majority of countries since 2016, and that Fundamental Rights is treated as a Participation indicator in the AUN framework and has declined in 77 per cent of countries since 2016. The combination of declining institutional constraints and weak public trust produces an accountability squeeze that is most pronounced in middle-income democracies where the institutional architecture is in place but is losing effectiveness faster than it is being reinforced.

The accountability squeeze is also visible in the gap between Accountability and Participation in a number of countries where institutional constraints on the abuse of power are stronger than electoral channels. Singapore is the most extreme case (AC 91.6 against PA 64.7, a gap of nearly 27 points), but the pattern also appears in Hong Kong (AC 57.9 against PA 34.1, a gap of 24 points), Qatar (AC 54.5 against PA 14.6, a gap of 40 points), the United Arab Emirates (AC 52.2 against PA 16.4, a gap of 36 points), Saudi Arabia (AC 42.4 against PA 2.5, a gap of 40 points), and China (AC 45.7 against PA 15.8, a gap of 30 points). The pattern is consistent with the AUN framework's claim that accountability can be institutional rather than electoral, and that the high-capacity, low-participation governance model is most pronounced in the Gulf and East Asian regions. The accountability squeeze in these states operates in the opposite direction from the OECD pattern: institutional constraints are strong but electoral channels are closed, and the squeeze is on the participation side rather than the trust side. The Index treats these as different variants of the same underlying phenomenon — a divergence between the two channels through which public power is constrained — and uses the AC-PA gap as a diagnostic of the variant.

The accountability squeeze is also visible in the rule-of-law recession identified by the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023. The WJP reports that overall rule of law declined in 78 per cent of countries since 2016. Within the AUN framework, the relevant WJP factors enter different dimensions: Constraints on Government Powers contributes to Accountability and Institutional Readiness, while Fundamental Rights contributes to Participation. The implication for the AUN Index is that the accountability squeeze is a global phenomenon with regional variants, and that the policy responses appropriate to each variant are different. In OECD countries, the priority is to rebuild public trust through improved service delivery and transparency; in the Gulf and East Asian high-capacity, low-participation states, the priority is to open electoral and civic channels; in fragile and conflict-affected states, the priority is to rebuild the basic rule-of-law architecture from a very low base.

#### 5.4.4 Notable 2023 developments

Three 2023-specific developments moved Accountability scores in the AUN Index. The first is the publication of the Transparency International CPI 2022 on 31 January 2023, which is the most recent CPI vintage available before the AUN publication window. The CPI 2022 finding that the global average score has been stuck at 43 for the eleventh consecutive year, that more than two-thirds of countries score below 50, and that 26 countries fell to their lowest scores yet, is reflected in the AUN AC distribution as a global mean that remains broadly consistent with the underlying stagnation in corruption perceptions. The country-level CPI 2022 leaders and bottom performers map directly onto the AUN AC leaders and bottom performers, with Singapore (CPI 83), Denmark (CPI 90), Finland (CPI 87), New Zealand (CPI 87), and Norway (CPI 84) leading both rankings. The implication is that the corruption-perception channel is an important component of cross-country differences in the AC dimension, and that the global stagnation of the CPI mean is an important reason why the global AC mean is not improving.

The second 2023 development is the publication of the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 on 25 October 2023, which recorded declines in Constraints on Government Powers and Absence of Corruption in a majority of countries, and which found that Civil Justice was the factor that declined in the most countries in 2023. The

WJP finding that the largest declines during 2022-2023 were in Sudan, Mali, Iran, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan is reflected in the AUN AC distribution as sharp year-on-year downward movements in those countries. Sudan's AC score of 15.0 is among the lowest in the world and reflects the collapse of rule of law following the April 2023 conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces. Iran's AC score of 29.8 reflects the post-Mahsa Amini protest crackdown and the intensified repression of dissent during 2022-2023. Nicaragua's AC score of 30.6 reflects the consolidation of the Ortega government's authoritarian turn. The implication is that the WJP rule-of-law recession is an important source of country-level downward pressure on the AC distribution in the 2023 Index.

The third 2023 development is the continued evolution of the European Union's rule-of-law mechanism, which during 2022-2023 activated the conditionality regulation against Hungary and Poland. Hungary's AC score of 54.7 is below its IR (58.3), PC (57.4), and IC (62.5) sub-scores, reflecting the cumulative effect of the EU rule-of-law disputes on the country's WJP Constraints on Government Powers and TI CPI scores. Poland's AC score of 51.5 is similarly below its IR (57.2), PC (55.3), and IC (57.4) sub-scores, reflecting the same pattern. The implication for the AUN Index is that the EU rule-of-law mechanism has begun to register in the AC sub-scores of the countries subject to it, but that the effect is moderate rather than dramatic and operates through the slow-moving WGI and WJP channels rather than through rapid CPI movements. For policymakers, the 2023 message on Accountability is that the corruption-perception channel has stagnated at the global level, that the rule-of-law recession is an important source of country-level downward pressure, and that the EU rule-of-law mechanism is the most developed international instrument for addressing the accountability squeeze in the European neighbourhood. The action implication is that anti-corruption and rule-of-law reforms should be prioritised in countries where the AC score trails the country's income level, and that the international instruments (CPI, WJP, EU rule-of-law mechanism) are now well-developed enough to support measurable reform trajectories.

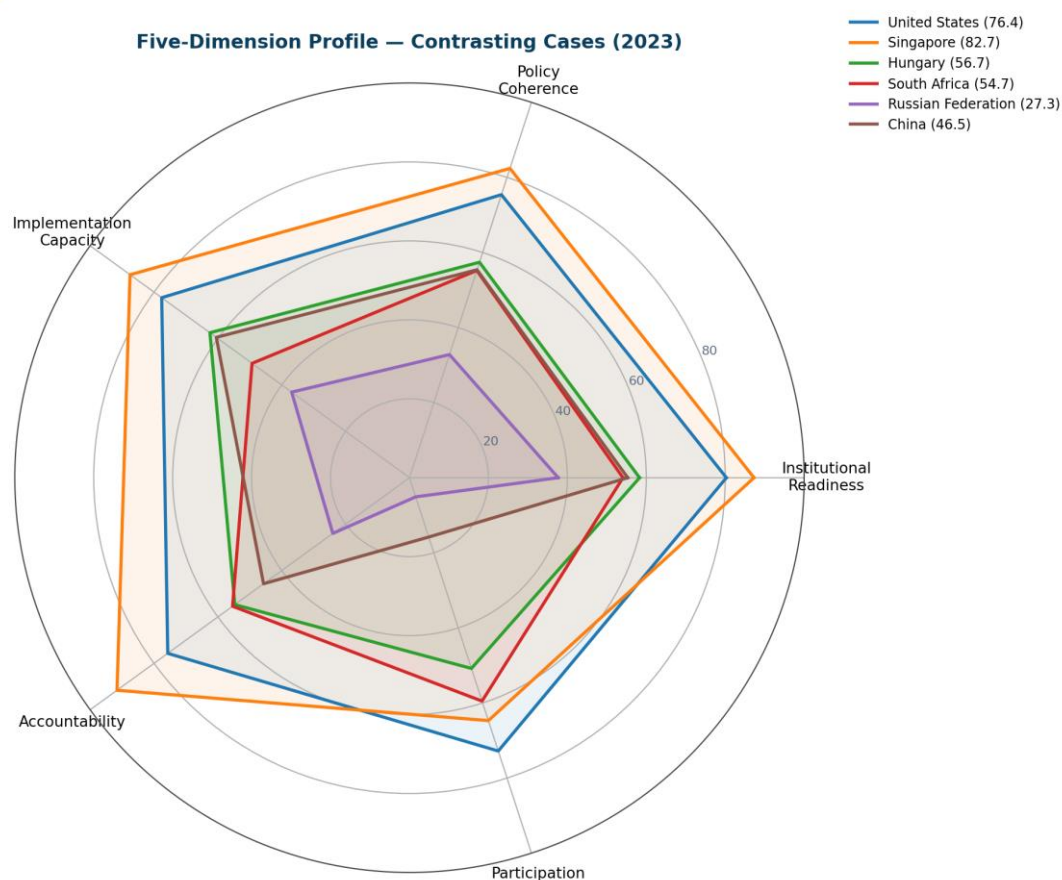
**Figure 5.5**

Figure 5.5 Five-Dimension Profile — Contrasting Cases (2023). United States, Singapore, Hungary, South Africa, Russia, China. The asymmetry between capacity and participation is the defining feature of non-democratic governance. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

## 5.5 Dimension Five — Participation (PA)

### 5.5.1 Conceptual definition and scope

Participation measures the degree to which citizens can participate in the selection of their government, exercise their civil liberties, and engage with public decision-making through both electoral and non-electoral channels. It is the dimension of the AUN Index closest to the conceptual core of the Freedom House Freedom in the World survey, the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index and Electoral Democracy Index, the EIU Democracy Index, and the WJP Rule of Law Index's Fundamental Rights factor. The AUN framework treats Participation as a measure of the openness of the political system to citizen voice — through free and fair elections, through freedom of expression and association, through freedom of the press, through the right to peaceful assembly, and through e-participation platforms that allow citizen engagement with public decision-making. High Participation means that citizens can voice preferences and hold rulers to account through institutional channels; low Participation means that those channels are closed, restricted, or manipulated.

The AUN operationalises Participation through seven indicator entries: the Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 (published 9 March 2023) aggregate score; the V-Dem Democracy Report 2023 (published 2 March 2023) Liberal Democracy Index and Electoral Democracy Index; the EIU Democracy Index 2022 (published January 2023) composite score; the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 Fundamental Rights factor; the UN E-Government Survey 2022 E-Participation Index (EPI); and the Open Government Partnership membership and action-plan maturity. The Freedom House Political Rights and Civil Liberties sub-scores are components of the Freedom House aggregate and are not included as separate AUN indicator entries. The combination is designed to capture participation through both the electoral channel (Freedom House, V-Dem LDI, EIU DI) and the civic channel (WJP Fundamental Rights, UN EPI, OGP). The inclusion of OGP membership and action-plan maturity is particularly important because it captures a structured form of civic engagement that goes beyond electoral participation and that has emerged as a major international platform for participation reform since the founding of OGP in 2011.

Participation does not measure the institutional capacity of the state to deliver on citizen preferences (Institutional Readiness, Implementation Capacity), the procedural coherence of policy (Policy Coherence), or the institutional constraints on the abuse of public power (Accountability). The distinction is critical because the AUN framework identifies Participation as the dimension that is most weakly correlated with national income, and as the dimension that shows the largest divergence from the other four in the 2023 data. The Participation deficit — global mean 47.18 against an Institutional Readiness mean of 52.74 and an Implementation Capacity mean of 53.13 — is one of the most important diagnostic findings in the 2023 Index, and it is the analytical through-line of this chapter. Where the Index finds divergence between Participation and the other dimensions, it finds divergence between what the state can do and what the state will let its citizens do, and that divergence is the subject of the closing section on the governance gap.

### 5.5.2 What the 2023 data reveal

The global mean for Participation in the 2023 Index is 47.18, the lowest of the five AUN dimensions and more than five Index points below the global IR mean of 52.74. The Participation deficit is the structural feature of the 2023 global governance landscape, and it is consistent with the V-Dem Democracy Report 2023 finding that 72 per cent of the world's population — 5.7 billion people — live in autocracies, and that for the first time in more than two decades there are more closed autocracies than liberal democracies. The Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 finding that global freedom has declined for the seventeenth consecutive year — with 34 countries registering improvements and 35 countries suffering declines, the narrowest gap in 17 years but still a decline — is also consistent with the absence of broad improvement in the underlying participation indicators. The EIU Democracy Index 2022 finding that the global average score is 5.29 out of 10, essentially unchanged from 5.28 in 2021, and that only 24 countries qualify as full democracies, is similarly consistent with the AUN PA distribution.

The regional distribution of Participation is the most polarised of any AUN dimension. WEU at 81.80, NAM at 79.75, and OCE at 88.25 occupy the top of the regional PA distribution. CEE at 58.97, LAT at 48.87, and EAS at 41.15 sit in the middle. SAS at 37.36, CAS at 37.38, SSA at 34.14, MENA at 31.98, and GCC at 12.43 occupy the bottom. The GCC's PA mean of 12.43 is the lowest regional PA mean by a very wide

margin, and reflects the near-complete closure of electoral and civic channels in the Gulf monarchies. The EAS PA mean of 41.15 is also pulled down by the low PA scores of China (15.8), Vietnam, Laos, and (in a different register) Hong Kong (34.1), despite the high PA scores of Japan (79.8) and the Republic of Korea (79.3). The contrast between the GCC's PA mean (12.43) and its IC mean (50.88) — a gap of nearly forty Index points — is the largest single inter-dimension gap in the AUN Index, and it is the most extreme example of the high-capacity, low-participation governance model that section 5.6.2 examines in detail.

The country-level leaders on Participation in the 2023 Index are Sweden (95.9), Finland (95.5), Norway (95.3), Iceland (91.2), and New Zealand (90.9). The leaders on PA mirror the leaders on the composite Index, with one significant exception: Singapore ranks 19th on the composite Index with an AUN score of 82.7 but its PA score of 64.7 is the lowest of any Tier 1 (High Readiness) country and is more than 25 Index points below its IR score of 87.3. The Singapore case is the most extreme example of the high-capacity, low-participation governance gap inside the top tier of the Index, and is examined in detail in section 5.6.2. The bottom of the PA distribution is occupied by Myanmar (1.0), Saudi Arabia (2.5), North Korea (4.6), Russia (5.1), South Sudan (6.8), Syria (8.1), Oman (8.3), Afghanistan (9.2), Yemen (9.6), and Iran (9.9) — all of which combine authoritarian closure with the suppression of electoral and civic channels. The contrast between the top of the PA distribution (Sweden 95.9) and the bottom (Myanmar 1.0) is nearly 95 Index points, by far the largest absolute range of any AUN dimension, making Participation an important source of cross-country differentiation in the composite.

### 5.5.3 The third wave of autocratization

The 2023 Index is shaped by what the V-Dem Institute has called the "third wave of autocratization." The V-Dem Democracy Report 2023, published on 2 March 2023, found that 72 per cent of the world's population — 5.7 billion people — live in autocracies, the highest share in three decades. Of these, 28 per cent — 2.2 billion people — live in closed autocracies, and 44 per cent — 3.5 billion people — live in electoral autocracies. Only 13 per cent — 1 billion people — live in liberal democracies, and approximately 16 per cent live in electoral democracies. The V-Dem finding that, for the first time in more than two decades, there are more closed autocracies than liberal democracies is one of the most important 2023 developments in the Participation dimension, and is reflected in the AUN PA distribution as a sharp divergence between the countries at the top of the PA distribution and the countries at the bottom. The V-Dem finding that 35 countries were undergoing significant autocratization episodes in 2022 is reflected in the AUN PA distribution as a cluster of countries with PA scores substantially below their IR, IC, and AC scores — the canonical signature of autocratization in the AUN framework.

The autocratization pattern is most visible in countries that have moved from electoral democracy or electoral autocracy toward closed autocracy during 2022-2023. V-Dem identified nine new closed autocracies in the past two years — Afghanistan, Chad, Guinea, Haiti, Algeria, Pakistan, El Salvador, Tunisia, and one additional country — and several of these cases are visible in the AUN PA distribution as sharp year-on-year declines. Tunisia's PA score of 28.7 is the third-largest score decline in the Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 ranking and reflects President Kais Saied's consolidation of power since the suspension of parliament in July 2021 and the further tightening of civic space during 2022-2023.

Tunisia's composite AUN score of 41.9 is dragged down by its PA score, which is more than 17 points below its IR score of 46.2 and more than 22 points below its IC score of 50.5. The AUN Index treats Tunisia as the canonical case of autocratization in 2023, where institutional and implementation capacities have been preserved but the political opening created by the 2011 Arab Spring has been closed.

El Salvador's PA score of 32.6 reflects the consolidation of President Nayib Bukele's state-of-exception governance, which has involved the repeated extension of emergency powers since March 2022 and the mass detention of suspected gang members. El Salvador's composite AUN score of 38.8 is pulled down by its PA score, which is more than 9 points below its IR score of 42.2 and more than 13 points below its IC score of 46.4. The AUN Index treats El Salvador as a case of autocratization with simultaneous improvements in implementation (the dramatic reduction in homicide rates during 2022-2023) and deterioration in participation — a pattern that is unusual but not unique, and that is examined in section 5.6.2 as a variant of the high-capacity, low-participation governance gap. The implication for the AUN Index is that the third wave of autocratization is producing a class of countries where the institutional and implementation dimensions are stable or improving while the participation dimension is declining, and that this class of countries is an important source of country-level downward pressure on the global PA mean in 2023.

#### 5.5.4 Civic space in 2023

Civic space — the legal and practical environment in which civil society organisations, independent media, and individual citizens operate — is the second important factor shaping the 2023 Participation distribution. The Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 finding that media freedom came under pressure in at least 157 countries and territories during 2022, and that the number of countries scoring 0/4 on the Media Freedom indicator rose from 14 to 33 over the 17-year decline, is the headline finding on civic space. The Freedom House finding that the number scoring 0/4 on Personal Expression rose from 6 to 15 over the same period is the second headline finding. The WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 finding that Fundamental Rights is the most-declined factor since 2016 (down in 77 per cent of countries), and that the most-declined sub-factors since 2016 are civic participation (83 per cent of countries), freedom of assembly and association (81 per cent), freedom of opinion and expression (78 per cent), and freedom of religion (76 per cent), is the third headline finding. All three findings point in the same direction: civic participation and related participation indicators show substantial declines in the underlying historical evidence, and these declines are consistent with the global PA mean being more than five points below the global IR and IC means.

The civic-space decline is most visible in the country-level cases of 2022-2023. Russia's PA score of 5.1 reflects the post-invasion crackdown on independent media, civil society organisations, and political opposition, which intensified dramatically after the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine and continued through 2023 with the prosecution of opposition leaders and the closure of the country's last independent media outlets. Myanmar's PA score of 1.0 — the lowest in the world — reflects the aftermath of the February 2021 coup and the continued suppression of the pro-democracy movement through 2022-2023. Afghanistan's PA score of 9.2 reflects the Taliban's reversal of two decades of incremental participation gains, particularly the systematic exclusion of women and girls from secondary and tertiary education, from

public-sector employment, and from public space. Hong Kong's PA score of 34.1 reflects the implementation of the National Security Law since 2020 and the continued prosecution of pro-democracy figures through 2022-2023, which has converted Hong Kong from a moderately high-PA jurisdiction to a low-PA jurisdiction while preserving much of its institutional and implementation capacity. Burkina Faso's PA score of 26.2 reflects the two coups of 2022 and the steepest single-year score decline in the Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 ranking (a 23-point loss), which moved the country from Partly Free to Not Free.

The OGP Global Summit in Tallinn, Estonia (6-7 September 2023) was an important international focal point for civic-space reform in 2023, and the OGP 2023 Annual Report recorded that 55 OGP members submitted an action plan in 2023, including 39 countries and 14 local jurisdictions, and that 80 per cent of expected national action plans were delivered. By the end of 2023, OGP included approximately 75-78 member countries and over 5,600 commitments cumulatively. The OGP action-plan mechanism — co-created with civil society, containing measurable commitments, and monitored by the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) — is an important international vehicle for civic-space reform, and OGP membership and action-plan maturity are correlated with higher PA sub-scores in the AUN Index. The UN E-Participation Index (EPI) 2022, which captures the digital-government channel for civic engagement, has Japan, the Republic of Korea, Denmark, Estonia, and Finland at the top, and is a secondary but increasingly important driver of cross-country variation in PA sub-scores, particularly in countries where the electoral channel is constrained but the digital-government channel is open. For policymakers, the 2023 message on Participation is that the third wave of autocratization and the civic-space decline are the important sources of downward pressure on the global PA mean, that the international instruments (Freedom House, V-Dem, EIU, OGP, UN EPI) are well-developed enough to support measurable reform trajectories, and that the policy response requires both electoral reform (in autocratizing countries) and civic-space protection (in countries where the electoral channel is open but the civic channel is closing). The Participation dimension is, in short, the dimension where the 2023 data are most at odds with the assumption of steady global progress, and where the action implication for policymakers is most urgent.

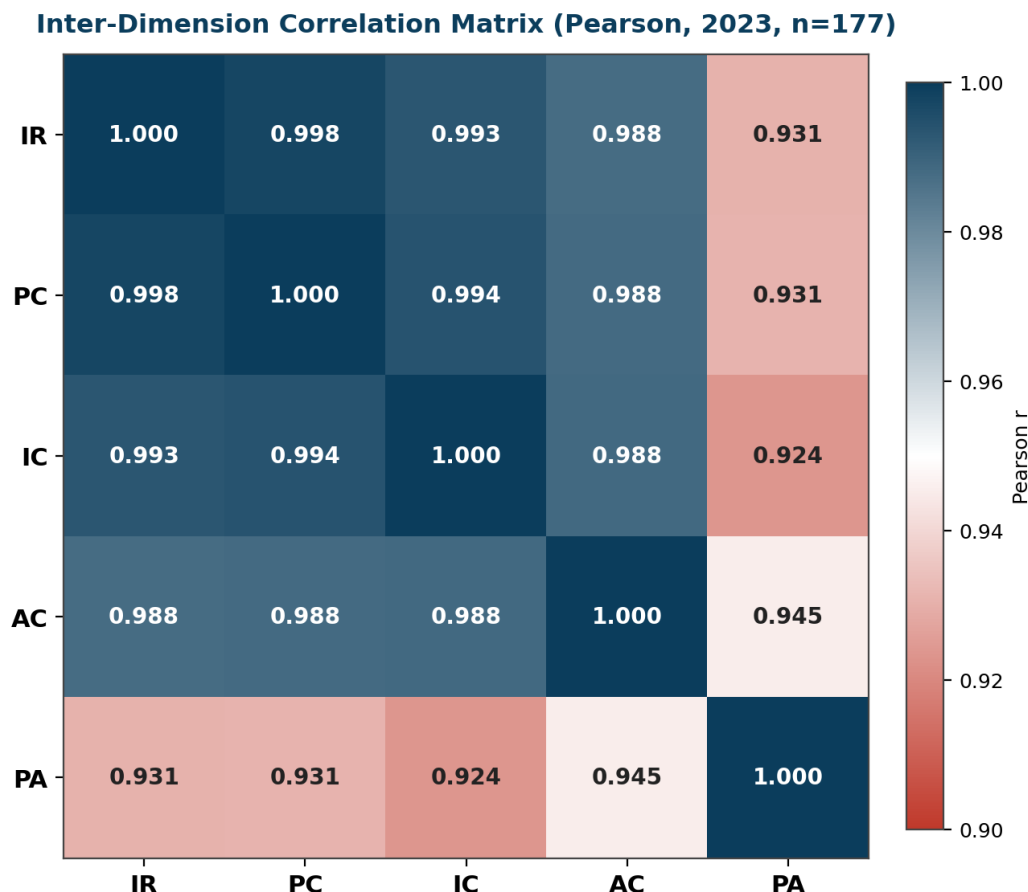
**Figure 5.6**

Figure 5.6 Inter-Dimension Correlation Matrix (Pearson, 2023, n=177). 5×5 matrix of the five AUN dimensions only. All pairwise correlations fall in the range 0.92–0.998. The weakest pairwise correlation is Implementation Capacity and Participation at 0.92; the strongest is Institutional Readiness and Policy Coherence at 0.998. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

## 5.6 Inter-Dimension Dynamics

### 5.6.1 Correlation patterns

The five AUN dimensions are positively and tightly correlated with each other across the 177-country sample: every pairwise Pearson correlation falls in the range 0.92–0.998. The strongest pairwise correlation is between Institutional Readiness and Policy Coherence (0.9975, rounding to 1.00); the strong IR–PC correlation is partly driven by their shared use of the WGI Government Effectiveness percentile rank, alongside the broader institutional and administrative signals embedded in their respective indicator sets. The second strongest is between Policy Coherence and Implementation Capacity (0.9940, rounding to 0.99), reflecting the conceptual kinship between coherent policy design and operational delivery. The weakest correlation is between Implementation Capacity and Participation (0.9237, rounding to 0.92), which is consistent with the AUN framework's claim that participation and implementation can diverge substantially in individual countries: a number of states with very high Implementation Capacity (Singapore, the Gulf

monarchies, China) combine high operational state capacity with closed political channels. The scatter plot of PA against IC (Figure 5.4) shows a clear but loose positive relationship, with a substantial group of countries sitting well below the regression line — the high-capacity, low-participation group that section 5.6.2 examines in detail. The framework's separation of the five dimensions is justified because the dimensions are conceptually distinct even though they are empirically correlated at this high level: the high correlations confirm that the underlying indicators move together as a package across countries, but the differences between the dimension-level means and the dimensional outliers (notably Participation in the Gulf, Accountability in some autocratizing democracies, and Implementation Capacity in fragile states) are diagnostically meaningful and would be invisible in a unidimensional index. See Figure 5.6 for the inter-dimension correlation matrix.

The correlation patterns also reveal a structural feature of the AUN framework: the four "supply-side" dimensions (IR, PC, IC, AC) are more tightly correlated with each other than any of them is with Participation. This is consistent with the V-Dem Democracy Report 2023 finding that 72 per cent of the world's population lives in autocracies — many of which have moderate to high supply-side capacity but low participation — and with the Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 finding that 17 consecutive years of freedom decline have not been accompanied by a commensurate decline in state capacity. The implication for the AUN Index is that the Participation dimension is the most weakly correlated with the other dimensions and is therefore an important source of cross-country differentiation in the composite. The supply-side dimensions tend to move together more tightly than the Participation dimension in the cross-sectional 2023 data. This reinforces the value of treating Participation as a distinct diagnostic dimension rather than as a residual component of state capacity. The implication for policymakers is that Participation offers substantial scope for improving the composite because it is the lowest-scoring dimension globally.

The correlation patterns also vary by region and by income group. In Western Europe and North America, the five dimensions are tightly correlated, and countries occupy a narrow band on all five. In the Gulf and East Asia, the dimensions are loosely correlated, with IC, AC, and IR substantially above PA. In sub-Saharan Africa, the dimensions are tightly correlated but at a low level, with all five dimensions clustered near the regional mean. In Latin America, the dimensions are loosely correlated, with PA and AC typically below IR, PC, and IC — a pattern that reflects the region's combination of competitive elections with weak accountability institutions. The implication is that the correlation patterns are themselves diagnostic: where the dimensions are tightly correlated, the policy challenge is to raise the overall level; where they are loosely correlated, the policy challenge is to address the dimension that is out of line with the others.

### 5.6.2 The "governance gap" phenomenon

The 2023 Index identifies a "governance gap" — a systematic divergence between the supply-side dimensions (IR, PC, IC, AC) and the Participation dimension — that is a distinctive structural feature of the 2023 global governance landscape. The governance gap is most pronounced in the Gulf monarchies, where the GCC's PA mean of 12.4 sits more than 38 Index points below its IC mean of 50.9. The gap is also visible in the East Asian high-capacity states, where Singapore's PA score of 64.7 sits 22.6 points below its IR score of 87.3 (the largest such gap in the Index inside Tier 1), where China's PA score of 15.8 sits 44.7 points

below its IC score of 60.5 (the largest such gap in the Index in absolute terms), and where Hong Kong's PA score of 34.1 sits 29.7 points below its IC score of 63.8. The gap is also visible in the high-capacity authoritarian states of Central Asia, where Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan all show IC scores well above their PA scores, and in the high-capacity, low-participation states of the Middle East and North Africa, where Iran's PA score of 9.9 sits 26.8 points below its IR score of 41.5 and 36.6 points below its AC score of 29.8 — a reversed but smaller version of the Singapore gap.

The governance gap is not confined to the high-capacity, low-participation states. It is also visible in a smaller group of countries where Participation exceeds the supply-side dimensions — the high-participation, moderate-capacity states. Iceland (PA 91.2 against IC 86.0, a gap of 5.2 points), New Zealand (PA 90.9 against IC 88.2, a gap of 2.7 points), and Uruguay (PA 80.3 against IC 76.0, a gap of 4.3 points) all show modest PA-IC gaps in the opposite direction, reflecting the combination of competitive elections and active civic engagement with implementation capacity that is high but not extreme. The AUN Index treats the high-participation, moderate-capacity pattern as a different variant of the governance gap phenomenon, and uses the sign and magnitude of the PA-IC gap as a diagnostic of the variant. Where the gap is large and negative (PA below IC), the country is following the high-capacity, low-participation governance model. Where the gap is small and positive (PA above IC), the country is following the high-participation, moderate-capacity governance model that is most characteristic of the Nordic and Anglophone democracies.

The governance gap phenomenon has three implications for the 2023 Index. The first is that the Participation dimension is the most weakly correlated with the other dimensions and is therefore an important source of cross-country differentiation in the composite; the gap provides an important source of cross-country differentiation, particularly where Participation diverges sharply from otherwise strong supply-side dimensions. The second is that the underlying pattern is consistent with multi-year trends documented by the underlying sources, although the inaugural AUN edition does not by itself establish longitudinal convergence or persistence. The third is that the gap is policy-relevant: countries that close the gap (Singapore, the Gulf monarchies) face a different set of reform challenges than countries that widen it (Tunisia, El Salvador), and the AUN Index treats the gap as a diagnostic that should inform country-specific reform agendas rather than as a deficiency of measurement. For policymakers, the 2023 message on the governance gap is that the high-capacity, low-participation pattern is a recurring governance configuration observed in the 2023 data. The 2023 data show this configuration across a number of countries and provide a basis for examining its implications in future editions. The international community needs to develop a more nuanced response than the binary "democracy versus autocracy" framing that dominates much of the public debate. The action implication is that the AUN framework supports a more granular diagnostic, and that the diagnostic should be used to identify the specific reform agendas appropriate to each variant of the gap.

### 5.6.3 What the dimensions tell us together

The five AUN dimensions, taken together, tell a coherent story about the global governance landscape in 2023. Three of the four supply-side dimensions (IR, IC, AC) sit above the global mean of 51.10, while

Policy Coherence (50.72) sits marginally below it; together, the supply-side dimensions are more tightly correlated with national income than with regime type. The Participation dimension sits below the supply-side dimensions, is the most weakly correlated with national income, and is an important source of cross-country differentiation in the composite. The two together produce a global governance landscape in which the supply-side capacity of the state sits at a moderate level in the 2023 data (global IR mean of 52.74 and IC mean of 53.13), the policy-coherence and accountability dimensions sit slightly below the supply-side means (PC 50.72, AC 51.74), and the participation dimension trails every other dimension by a margin large enough to be treated as a structural feature of the global system rather than as statistical noise (PA 47.18). The combination is consistent with the V-Dem "third wave of autocratization," the Freedom House "17th consecutive year of decline," the WJP "rule of law recession," the TI CPI "stagnant at 43," the EIU Democracy Index 2022 "stagnation," the UN E-Government Survey 2022 "widening digital divide," the SDG 16 "dangerously off track," and the OECD GaG 2023 "trust deficit" findings.

The dimensions taken together also tell a coherent story about the diagnostic value of the AUN framework. The five-dimension structure identifies three classes of countries that the unidimensional indices miss. The first class is the high-capacity, low-participation states (Singapore, the Gulf monarchies, China), which combine very high supply-side scores with very low participation scores, and which are invisible in indices that focus exclusively on either supply-side capacity or participation. The second class is the high-participation, moderate-capacity states (Iceland, New Zealand, Uruguay), which combine very high participation scores with moderate supply-side scores, and which are also invisible in unidimensional indices. The third class is the autocratizing states (Tunisia, El Salvador, Hungary, Poland), where the supply-side dimensions are stable or improving while the participation dimension is declining, and which are an important source of country-level downward pressure on the global PA mean in 2023. The five-dimension framework makes these three classes visible as analytical categories, and the AUN Index treats them as the principal diagnostic contribution of the 2023 publication.

The dimensions taken together also tell a coherent story about the policy implications of the 2023 data. For the high-capacity, low-participation states, the policy implication is that the supply-side capacity is substantial but that the participation deficit may pose a long-run risk that should be addressed through gradual electoral and civic-space reform. For the high-participation, moderate-capacity states, the policy implication is that the participation channel is open but that the supply-side capacity should be reinforced through continued investment in institutional and implementation capacity. For the autocratizing states, the policy implication is that the supply-side stability is fragile and that the participation decline is an important risk to the composite governance trajectory. For the fragile and conflict-affected states, the policy implication is that the implementation deficit is an especially important limiting dimension, making implementation weaknesses an important diagnostic priority alongside institutional, policy, accountability, and participation weaknesses. For the global governance system as a whole, the 2023 message is that the 2023 data show the supply-side capacity of the state at a moderate level, that the participation dimension shows the lowest global mean in the 2023 data, that the governance gap is consistent with multi-year trends documented by the underlying sources, and that the international instruments (WGI, Freedom House, V-

Dem, TI CPI, WJP, UN E-Government, EIU, OGP, SDSN SDR, OECD GaG) are now well-developed enough to support measurable reform trajectories — but that the reform trajectories are themselves diverging across the five dimensions, and that the divergence is an important diagnostic contribution of the AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023.

**Figure 5.7**

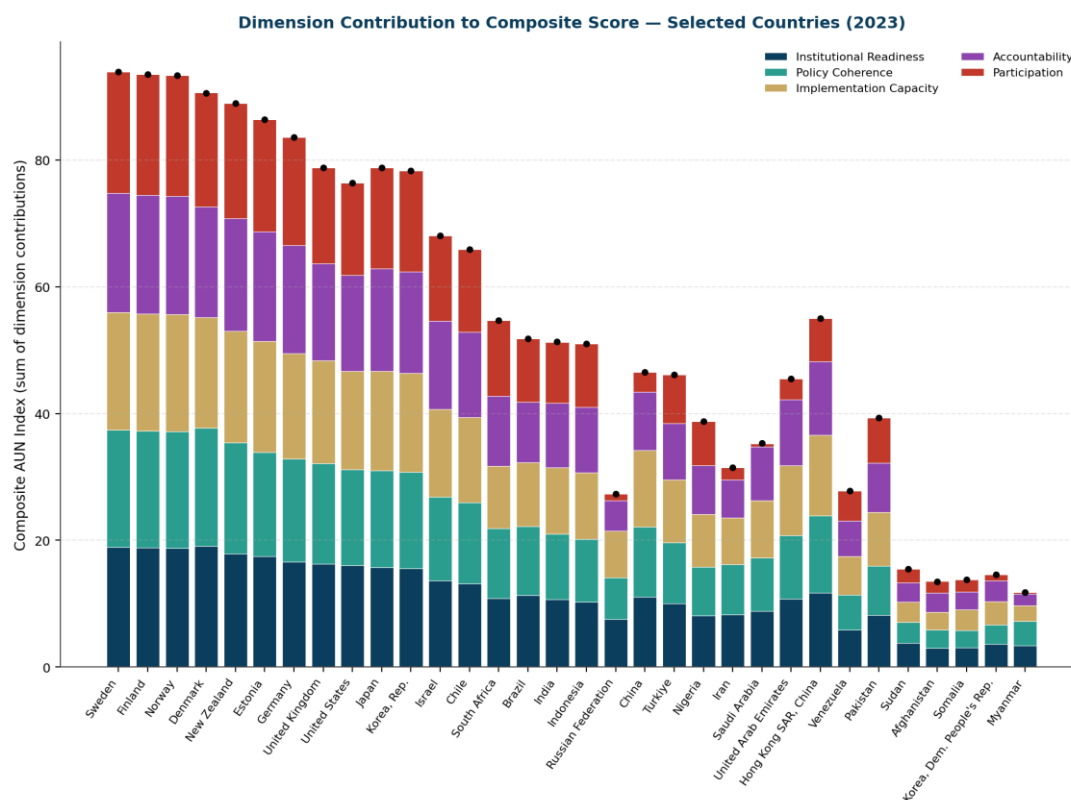


Figure 5.7 Dimension Contribution to Composite Score — Selected Countries (2023, 177 countries). Stacked contributions show how each dimension adds to the composite for each country. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

## Chapter 6 — Global Rankings & Findings

Chapter 6 reports the headline results of the AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 across all 177 covered countries and territories. The chapter opens with the top of the table, then turns to the shape of the global distribution, before disaggregating the results into the two analytical tiers that anchor this edition's narrative. The chapter closes with five cross-cutting findings that the AUN Secretariat considers the most policy-relevant signals of the 2023 edition. Every country score, rank, and aggregate statistic reported here is drawn from the AUN 2023 dataset, which is grounded in the nine primary underlying instruments plus OGP supplementary data based on the latest eligible source vintages and supplementary status data available by 30 November 2023 and catalogued in Chapter 3. Where this chapter attributes a finding to an external source — for example, the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 published on 25 October 2023, or the Freedom

House Freedom in the World 2023 report published on 9 March 2023 — that source is the same one used to construct the underlying dimensional scores.

## 6.1 Headline Ranking

The AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 is headed by Sweden at 93.9 out of 100, followed by Finland at 93.5, Norway at 93.4, Denmark at 90.6, and New Zealand at 89.0. Iceland (87.4), San Marino (87.3), Estonia (86.4), Andorra (86.0), and the Netherlands (85.9) complete the global top ten. The top of the table is therefore dominated by a Nordic–Antipodean cluster that has now occupied the leading positions of every major governance, rule-of-law, and democracy instrument published in the 2023 vintage, and the AUN Index reproduces this convergence with high fidelity. Sweden, Finland, and Norway each received a perfect aggregate score of 100 in the Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 assessment, which directly underpins their AUN Participation scores of 95.9, 95.5, and 95.3 respectively. New Zealand followed at 99 on the Freedom House scale, translating into an AUN Participation score of 90.9 that nonetheless leaves it fifth on the composite because of slightly lower Implementation Capacity (88.2) and Accountability (88.8) inputs.

Denmark's fourth position, with a composite of 90.6, deserves particular attention because the country simultaneously tops two of the most demanding external benchmarks feeding the AUN model. Denmark ranked first on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2022 with a score of 90 (published 31 January 2023) and first on the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 (published 25 October 2023). Its AUN dimension profile reflects this dominance: Institutional Readiness at 95.3 and Policy Coherence at 93.4 are the highest in the dataset, while its Implementation Capacity (87.0) and Accountability (87.6) lag marginally behind the other Nordics. Estonia's eighth place at 86.4 reflects a different pathway: the country leads Central and Eastern Europe on the strength of its digital government infrastructure; Estonia is among the top tier of the United Nations E-Government Development Index 2022 and is the highest-ranked Central and Eastern European country on that survey, with a strong position on the E-Participation Index, which together push its Implementation Capacity to 87.4. The OGP Global Summit 2023, hosted in Tallinn on 6–7 September 2023, symbolised the country's continued investment in open-government infrastructure.

The wider top ten reveals the influence of small European microstates whose governance performance is often under-reported in composite indices. San Marino (87.3) and Andorra (86.0) both benefit from Freedom House Free status, low corruption, and high institutional continuity, while Monaco (85.4) and Liechtenstein (83.3) appear in the top twenty on similar grounds. Figure 6.2 (Top 30 chart) visualises the compressed score range at the summit: only 8.0 points separate rank 1 (Sweden, 93.9) from rank 10 (Netherlands, 85.9), and only 13.1 points separate rank 1 from rank 20 (Belgium, 80.8). This compression reflects the well-documented ceiling effect at the top of governance indices — once a country has achieved near-universal corruption control, full electoral rights, and high government effectiveness, marginal gains become increasingly difficult to register. The headline ranking therefore conveys continued Nordic–Antipodean dominance alongside the entry of digital-first and microstate performers into a top tier that has historically been occupied by a smaller group of large Western European democracies.

Figure 6.1

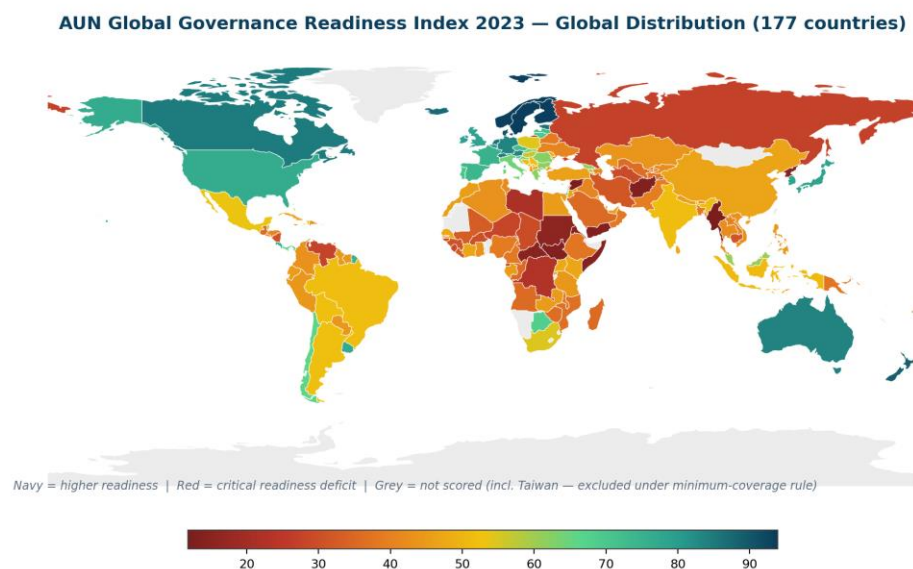


Figure 6.1 AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 — Global Distribution (177 countries). Navy indicates higher readiness; red indicates critical readiness deficit; grey indicates not scored (incl. Taiwan — excluded under minimum-coverage rule). Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

## 6.2 Score Distribution and Global Aggregates

The global aggregate statistics for the AUN 2023 edition are as follows: a simple mean of 51.10, a median of 46.20, a sample standard deviation ( $n-1$ ) of 19.53, and a population-weighted mean of 48.58. The score range runs from 93.9 at rank 1 (Sweden) to 11.8 at rank 177 (Myanmar), producing a total spread of 82.1 points across the covered universe. These aggregates are calculated across the 177 countries and territories for which the AUN methodology required a minimum coverage of at least three indicator entries within each AUN dimension plus OGP supplementary data, and they are reported here on the unweighted 0–100 scale that the AUN Secretariat has adopted as its public-facing metric. The relationship between the simple mean and the median — mean above median by approximately 5 points — is the first signature of the distribution shape, and it signals that the dataset is right-skewed rather than normally distributed. Figure 6.3 (histogram) plots the underlying frequency distribution and confirms this visual impression: a long tail of low-scoring countries extends to the left, while a denser cluster of high-scoring countries is concentrated at the upper right.

The most policy-relevant single statistic in this edition is the gap between the simple mean (51.10) and the population-weighted mean (48.58). Because the population-weighted mean falls below the simple mean, it follows that a disproportionately large share of the world's population lives in countries with below-average governance readiness. In other words, the average country scores 51.10, but the average person lives in a country that scores 48.58 — a 2.52-point gap between the unweighted country mean and the population-weighted mean. This gap arises because several of the world's most populous countries — including India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, and Russia — sit in the lower-middle band of the distribution, while the high-scoring countries that pull the simple mean upward (the Nordics, Antipodes, and Western

European microstates) collectively represent a small share of the global population. The AUN Secretariat considers the population-weighted mean the more honest summary of global governance readiness and uses it as the headline aggregate in the executive summary of this report.

Beyond the mean and median, the distribution exhibits distinct bimodal tendencies. The histogram in Figure 6.3 shows a primary mode in the 35–50 range, capturing the large Tier 3 and Tier 4 cluster of established and emerging governance systems, and a secondary mode in the 80–94 range, capturing the Tier 1 high-readiness group. The trough between these two modes sits in the 60–75 range, which is comparatively underpopulated, suggesting that the world is bifurcating into a high-readiness cluster and a low-to-medium-readiness cluster rather than exhibiting a smooth gradient. This pattern has implications for global convergence narratives: the data do not support a story of gradual, continuous improvement across the entire distribution. Instead, they describe a structural separation between the top twenty high-readiness countries and everyone else, with the gap most pronounced on Participation and Accountability. The sample standard deviation ( $n-1$ ) of 19.53 — equivalent to roughly 38 per cent of the mean — quantifies the very high dispersion underlying this bimodal shape.

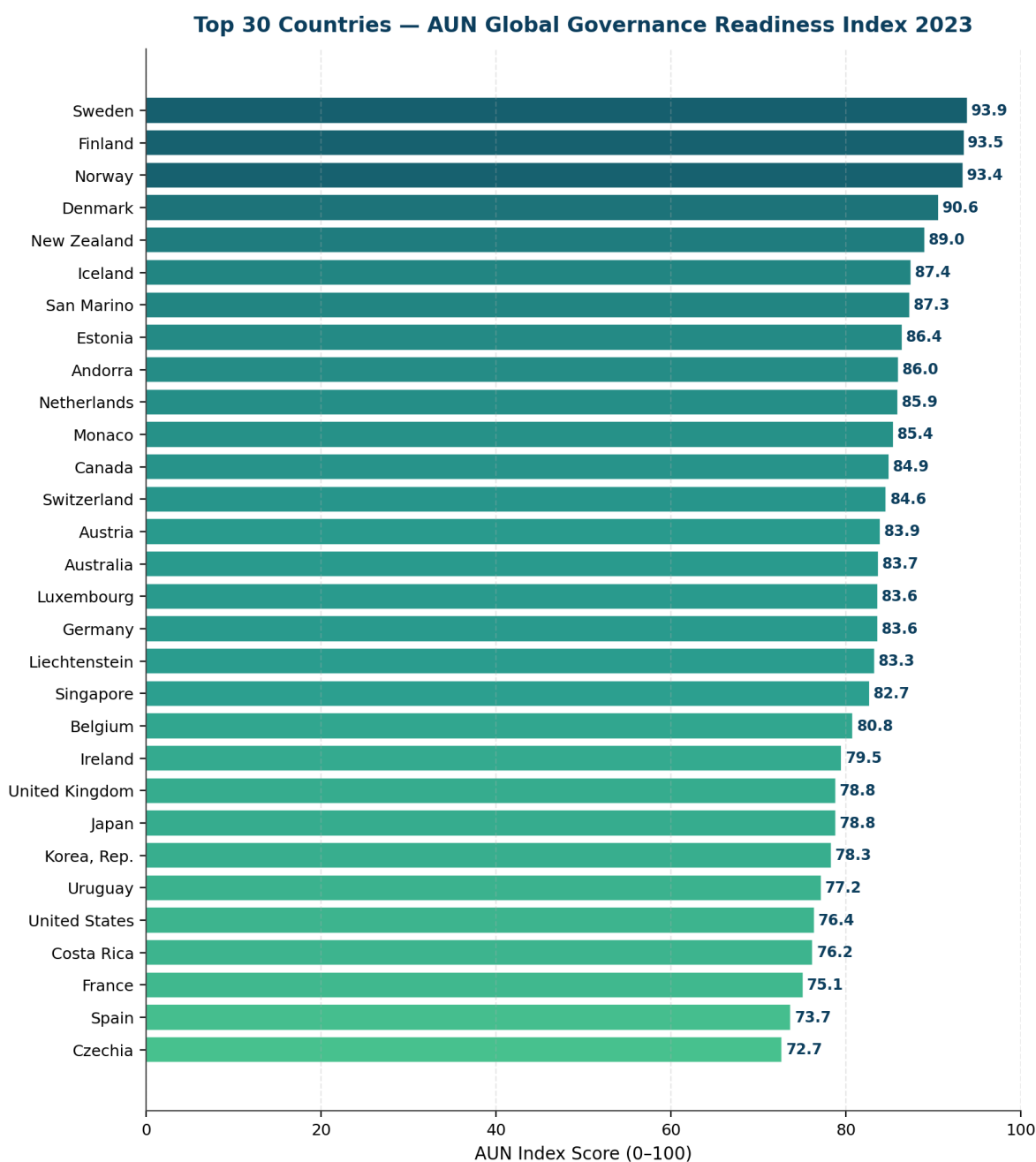
**Figure 6.2**

Figure 6.2 Top 30 Countries — AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 (177 countries). The Nordic–Antipodean cluster occupies the first five positions. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

### 6.3 The Top Tier — Tier 1 High Readiness

The AUN 2023 methodology classifies 20 countries as Tier 1 — High Readiness, defined as a composite score of 80 or above. The Tier 1 group comprises, in rank order: Sweden (93.9), Finland (93.5), Norway

(93.4), Denmark (90.6), New Zealand (89.0), Iceland (87.4), San Marino (87.3), Estonia (86.4), Andorra (86.0), the Netherlands (85.9), Monaco (85.4), Canada (84.9), Switzerland (84.6), Austria (83.9), Australia (83.7), Luxembourg (83.6), Germany (83.6), Liechtenstein (83.3), Singapore (82.7), and Belgium (80.8). The composition is therefore overwhelmingly Western European and Antipodean: 16 of the 20 Tier 1 countries are European, two are Antipodean (Australia and New Zealand), one is North American (Canada), and one is East Asian (Singapore). The United States, ranked 26th at 76.4, sits just below the Tier 1 cut-off in Tier 2 — Advanced, alongside Ireland, the United Kingdom, Japan, Korea, Uruguay, Costa Rica, France, Spain, and Czechia.

The common features of the Tier 1 group are best understood through the radar chart of top performers presented in Figure 7. The chart overlays the five-dimensional profiles of the four highest-ranked countries and demonstrates that the Nordic cluster approaches the 95-point ceiling on all five dimensions simultaneously, while New Zealand exhibits a marginally flatter profile with a small dip on Implementation Capacity. Three structural features unite the group: high interpersonal and institutional trust, a strong and predictable rule of law, and the routine use of digital government for service delivery and citizen engagement. The OECD Government at a Glance 2023 publication (30 June 2023) reports that across OECD members, only 41 per cent of citizens trust their national government, but the country-level data show that Switzerland, Luxembourg, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands, Iceland, New Zealand, and Canada sit well above this OECD average. The Tier 1 group is therefore precisely the set of countries in which public trust, rule-of-law performance, and digital infrastructure reinforce one another.

Singapore occupies a distinctive position within Tier 1 and merits separate analysis. With a composite of 82.7 at rank 19, Singapore is the only non-Western and non-OECD member in the top tier. Its Institutional Readiness score of 87.3 and Implementation Capacity of 87.5 are both in the top decile of the global distribution, reflecting the country's first-place ranking on Government Effectiveness in the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators 2022 update (25 September 2023) and its top-tier placement on the UN E-Government Development Index 2022 (with a leading position on the Online Service Index sub-component). Its Accountability score of 91.6 is the fourth-highest in the entire 177-country dataset, behind only Sweden (93.8), Finland (93.4), and Norway (93.2), and is anchored by a CPI 2022 score of 83 and consistently high WJP Absence of Corruption scores. However, Singapore's Participation score is only 64.7 — the lowest among all Tier 1 countries by a margin of more than 15 points — and this single dimension pulls its composite below the Nordic leaders. The Singapore case illustrates a recurring pattern in this edition: high-capacity systems can achieve near-ceiling scores on Institutional Readiness, Implementation Capacity, and Accountability while registering much lower scores on Participation, with the composite nonetheless remaining within the Tier 1 band.

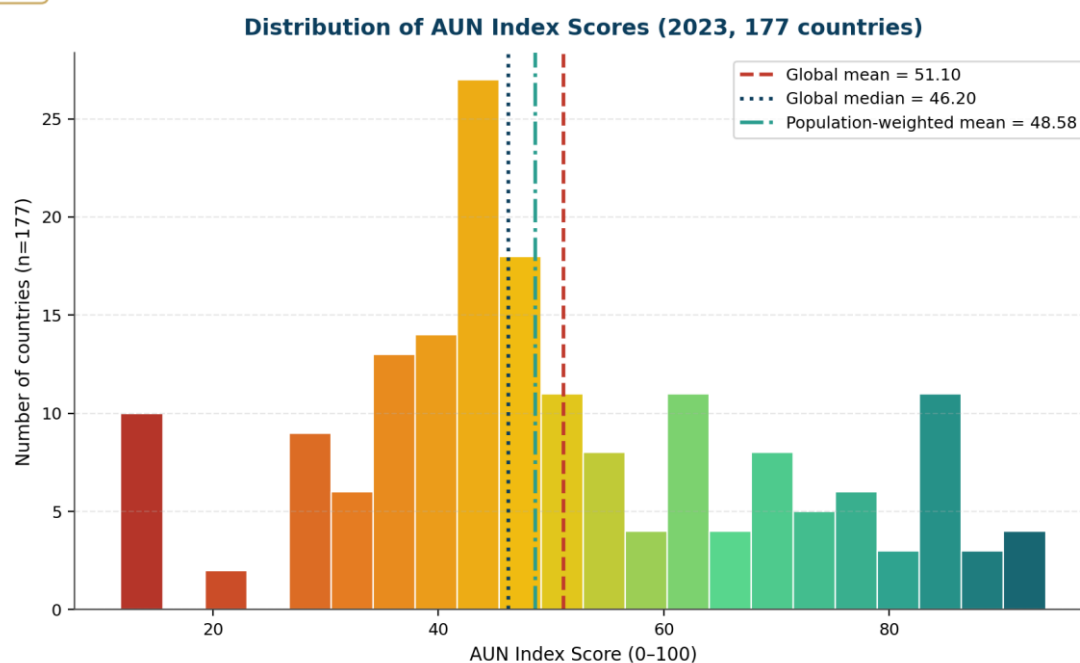
**Figure 6.3**

Figure 6.3 Distribution of AUN Index Scores (2023, 177 countries). Simple mean = 51.10; median = 46.20; population-weighted mean = 48.58. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

## 6.4 The Bottom Tier — Tier 6 Critical

The AUN 2023 methodology classifies 10 countries as Tier 6 — Critical, defined as a composite score below 20. The Tier 6 group comprises, in ascending order of score: Myanmar (11.8, rank 177), Syria (12.1, rank 176), South Sudan (13.5, rank 175), Afghanistan (13.5, rank 174), Yemen (13.6, rank 173), Somalia (13.8, rank 172), Eritrea (14.5, rank 171), North Korea (14.6, rank 170), the Central African Republic (15.0, rank 169), and Sudan (15.5, rank 168). The composition is therefore exclusively composed of conflict-affected states and closed autocracies, with no Tier 6 country located outside sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, or East Asia. Figure 6.4 (bottom 30 chart) plots the wider bottom of the distribution, including the Tier 5 — Fragile countries that sit immediately above the Tier 6 threshold, and shows that the bottom of the table is much more spatially compressed than the top: only 2.0 points separate rank 177 (Myanmar, 11.8) from rank 173 (Somalia, 13.8), and only 16.0 points separate rank 177 from rank 164 (Venezuela, 27.8).

The structural features of the Tier 6 group are uniform and severe. All ten countries exhibit one or more of the following: state collapse or contested sovereignty, the absence of a functioning civic space, the absence of an enforceable rule of law, and the breakdown of basic public service delivery. Myanmar's bottom-of-the-table position reflects the post-coup collapse documented by Freedom House, which downgraded the country to Not Free with a score of 9 out of 100, and the V-Dem Democracy Report 2023, which classifies Myanmar as a closed autocracy following the February 2021 military takeover. Syria and Yemen remain locked in protracted civil conflicts that have destroyed the institutional infrastructure that any governance index can measure. South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and Sudan all combine active or recently

active armed conflict with extremely low WJP Rule of Law Index scores; Sudan was specifically identified by the WJP 2023 report as one of the five countries with the largest year-on-year rule-of-law declines.

Two Tier 6 countries illustrate the role of closed authoritarianism as distinct from conflict. Eritrea and North Korea are not currently in a state of open civil war, but they register Tier 6 scores because of the complete closure of civic space, the absence of free media, and the consolidation of unaccountable executive power. Myanmar has the lowest Participation score in the dataset at 1.0, with North Korea at 4.6 and Eritrea at 10.5 close behind — all three figures consistent with Freedom House scores of 9, 3, and 2 respectively. Afghanistan, at 13.5, embodies the most dramatic single-year deterioration in this edition: the country has moved from a mid-Tier 4 position in earlier vintages to Tier 6 following the August 2021 Taliban takeover, with V-Dem classifying Afghanistan as a new closed autocracy in the 2023 report and Freedom House scoring it at 10 out of 100. The Tier 6 group as a whole sends an unambiguous policy signal: where the basic conditions of statehood and civic space are not met, no quantity of institutional reform at the margins can move a country out of the critical band.

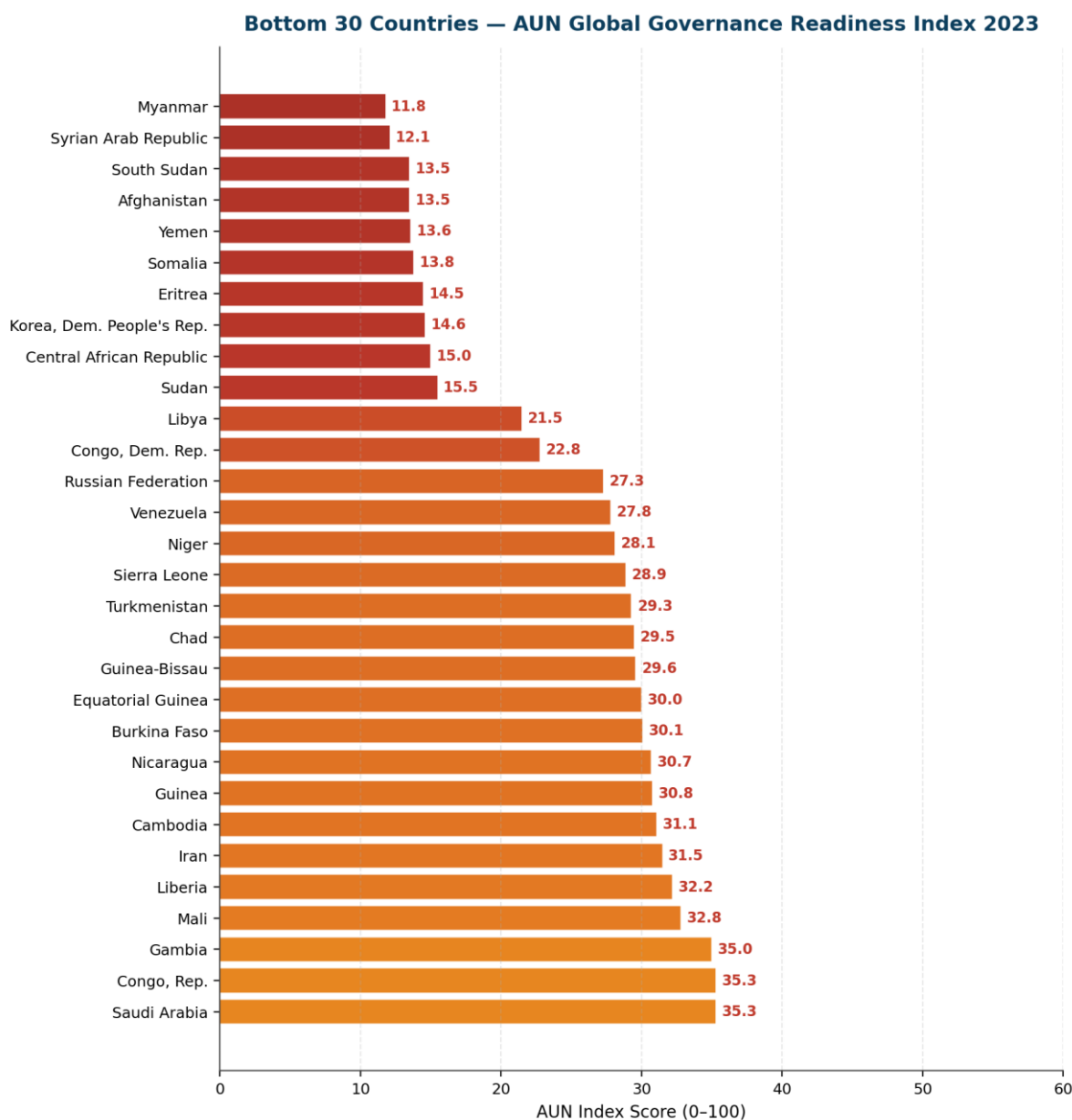
**Figure 6.4**

Figure 6.4 Bottom 30 Countries — AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 (177 countries). The bottom of the table is occupied by conflict-affected states and closed autocracies. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

## 6.5 Five Key Findings of the 2023 Edition

The AUN Secretariat has identified five cross-cutting findings that, taken together, summarise the most policy-relevant signals of the 2023 edition. Each finding is grounded in the dimensional scores reported in the AUN dataset and in the latest eligible source vintages publicly available by 30 November 2023 catalogued in Chapter 3. The findings are presented in order of policy salience, with the population-weighted

deficit and the Participation deficit highlighted as the two findings most directly relevant to global governance reform agenda-setting in 2024 and beyond.

### 6.5.1 The Nordic–Antipodean Convergence at the Top

The first finding of the 2023 edition is the structural convergence of the Nordic and Antipodean clusters at the very top of the global ranking. Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland occupy ranks 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 respectively, while New Zealand occupies rank 5 and Australia rank 15. This convergence is not an artefact of the AUN weighting scheme but is consistent across every major external benchmark feeding the index: the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators 2022 update, the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 (top 4: Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden), the EIU Democracy Index 2022 (top 6: Norway 9.81, New Zealand 9.61, Iceland 9.52, Sweden 9.39, Finland 9.29, Denmark 9.28), the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index 2023, and the Transparency International CPI 2022 (top 6: Denmark 90, Finland 87, New Zealand 87, Norway 84, Singapore 83, Sweden 83). The Nordic countries achieve this convergence through near-perfect scores on Participation (Sweden 95.9, Finland 95.5, Norway 95.3) and Accountability (Sweden 93.8, Finland 93.4, Norway 93.2) simultaneously, while the Antipodean countries achieve it through high Implementation Capacity (New Zealand 88.2, Australia 83.3) and Accountability (New Zealand 88.8, Australia 85.4). The convergence is therefore multidimensional rather than driven by any single sub-index, and it underscores that the policy pathways to top-tier governance readiness are themselves plural.

### 6.5.2 The Population-Weighted Deficit

The second finding is the persistence of a population-weighted deficit that has widened over subsequent editions of other governance indices of the global governance indices. The AUN 2023 simple mean of 51.10 exceeds the population-weighted mean of 48.58 by 2.52 points, meaning that population weight is concentrated disproportionately in lower-scoring countries: the world's most populous lower-middle and upper-middle income jurisdictions — including India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, and Russia — score below the simple country mean of 51.10, and their populations are large enough to pull the population-weighted mean below the unweighted country mean. The deficit is concentrated in these populous mid-band jurisdictions, several of which score in the 35–55 band, and is not offset by the high scores of large high-income democracies such as Germany (83.6), the United Kingdom (78.8), Japan (78.8), Korea (78.3), and France (75.1) because these populations are smaller in aggregate than the populations of the lower-scoring jurisdictions. The finding is corroborated by the V-Dem Democracy Report 2023, which reports that 72 per cent of the world's population — 5.7 billion people — live in autocracies, and that 2.2 billion live in closed autocracies, with only 1 billion living in liberal democracies. The AUN population-weighted deficit is the governance-readiness analogue of these V-Dem statistics: the population-weighted mean is below the unweighted country mean, indicating that population weight is concentrated disproportionately in lower-scoring countries. Note that 36.3 per cent of the world's population lives in countries with composite scores below the country median of 46.20, while 63.7 per cent lives in countries at or above the country median; the population-weighted mean is below the simple mean not because a majority of the world's population lives below the country median (it does not), but because the below-mean countries are on average more populous than the above-mean countries. This finding has direct policy

implications for any global governance reform agenda that aspires to be evaluated by its impact on people rather than on its impact on the average country.

### 6.5.3 Participation Is the Global Weak Point

The third finding is that the Participation dimension is the global weak point of the 2023 edition. The AUN Participation dimension, which aggregates Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023, the V-Dem Liberal and Electoral Democracy Indices, the EIU Democracy Index 2022, the WJP Fundamental Rights factor, the UN E-Participation Index 2022, and OGP membership and action-plan maturity, has the lowest global mean of the five AUN dimensions. The aggregate pattern is driven by the sustained autocratisation documented across the underlying sources: Freedom House records a 17th consecutive year of decline in global freedom, with 35 countries declining and 34 improving — the narrowest gap on record but still a net decline; the WJP 2023 reports that Fundamental Rights has weakened in 77 per cent of countries since 2016 and that civic participation has declined in 83 per cent of countries over the same period. V-Dem reports that 35 countries are currently undergoing autocratization episodes, that 9 new closed autocracies have emerged in the past two years (Afghanistan, Chad, Guinea, Haiti, Algeria, Pakistan, El Salvador, Tunisia, and one additional case), and that for the first time in over two decades there are more closed autocracies than liberal democracies. The Participation deficit is therefore not a single-country problem but a systemic global pattern, and it is the dimension on which the largest number of countries register their lowest sub-score.

### 6.5.4 The Implementation–Participation Gap

The fourth finding is the persistent implementation–participation gap observed in high-capacity authoritarian and semi-authoritarian systems. A small set of countries — Singapore, several Gulf Cooperation Council states, and China — register scores above the global median on Institutional Readiness, Implementation Capacity, and Accountability simultaneously, while scoring very low on Participation. Singapore, the most striking case, scores 87.3 on Institutional Readiness, 87.5 on Implementation Capacity, and 91.6 on Accountability, but only 64.7 on Participation. Saudi Arabia's Participation score of 2.5 is the lowest of any non-conflict-affected country in the entire 177-country dataset, behind only Myanmar's 1.0, while its Institutional Readiness (44.0) and Implementation Capacity (45.3) sit in the Tier 4 band. Russia's profile is similarly bifurcated, with Institutional Readiness at 37.7 but Participation at only 5.1 — among the four lowest in the dataset — following the 2022 invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent contraction of civic space. This gap illustrates that high-quality public administration and low corruption are achievable without open civic space, but that the AUN composite — which weights all five dimensions equally — nonetheless penalises systems that close participation channels. The gap is policy-relevant because it shows that "governance" cannot be reduced to administrative competence alone; any composite index that omits participation will systematically over-rate high-capacity authoritarian systems and obscure the structural fragility that their low Participation scores imply.

### 6.5.5 The Income Gradient

The fifth finding is the strong but imperfect income gradient of governance readiness. The AUN 2023 income-group means are as follows: high-income countries (HIC, n=61) score 71.2 on average; upper-

middle-income countries (UMC, n=48) score 47.1; lower-middle-income countries (LMC, n=50) score 39.8; and low-income countries (LIC, n=18) score 25.1. The gradient is monotonic and the gaps are large: the HIC–UMC gap is 24 points, the UMC–LMC gap is 7.3 points, and the LMC–LIC gap is 14.7 points. Governance readiness therefore tracks income closely, but it does not determine it: several upper-middle-income countries (Russia at 27.3, Equatorial Guinea at 30.0, Turkmenistan at 29.3) score well below the LMC average, while several lower-middle-income countries (Tunisia, prior to its 2021–2023 consolidation, and Cabo Verde) score above it. The gradient is corroborated by external sources: the SDSN Sustainable Development Report 2023 reports an SDG 16 income-group divergence of approximately 55 points between high-income and low-income groups, and the OECD Government at a Glance 2023 reports similar trust differentials. The policy implication is that income is a strong enabling condition for governance readiness but is neither necessary nor sufficient for it; institutional and political choices within each income band generate substantial variance, and the AUN data are most policy-useful when read at the country and regional level rather than at the income-group aggregate alone.

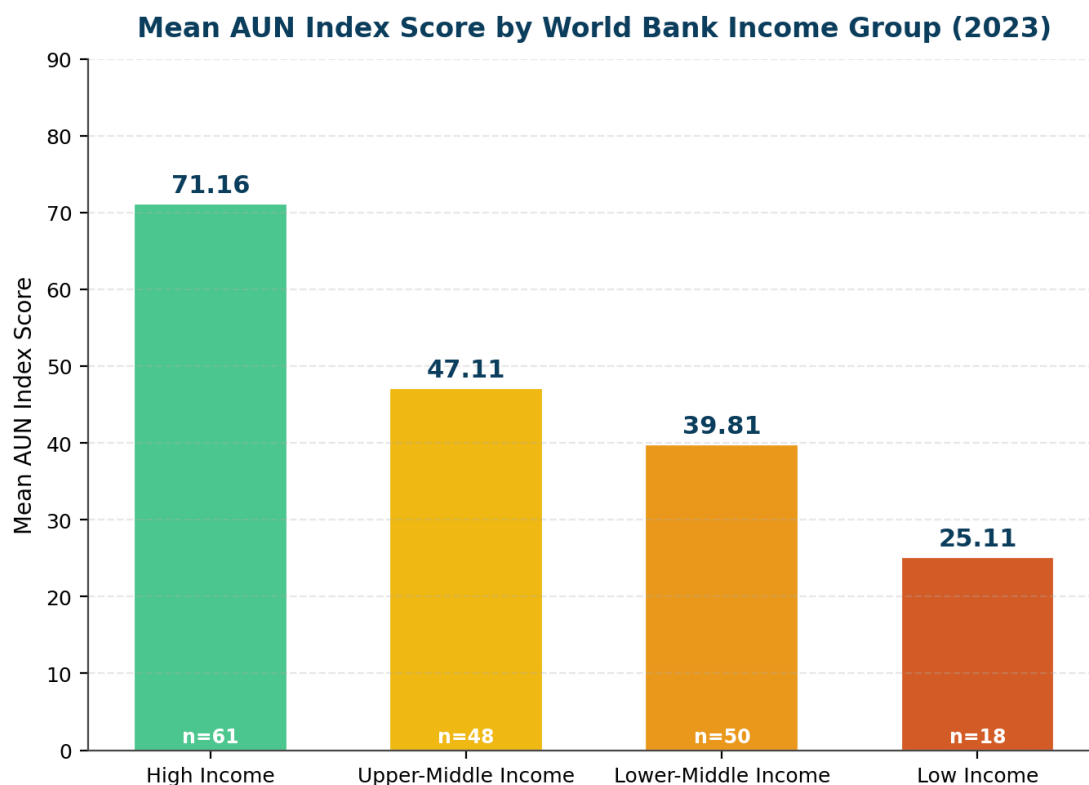
**Figure 6.5**

Figure 6.5 Mean AUN Index Score by World Bank Income Group (2023, n=177). Governance readiness tracks but does not determine income. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

Figure 6.6

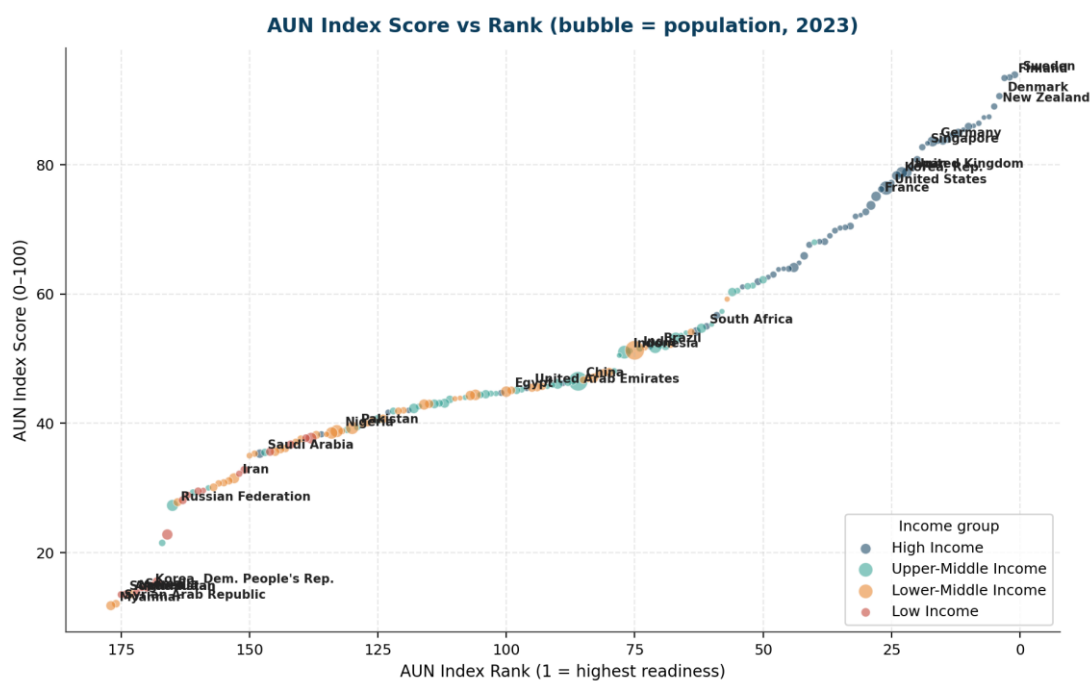


Figure 6.6 AUN Index Score vs Rank (bubble = population, 2023, 177 countries). Large populations concentrate in the lower-middle of the distribution, driving the population-weighted deficit. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

Figure 6.7

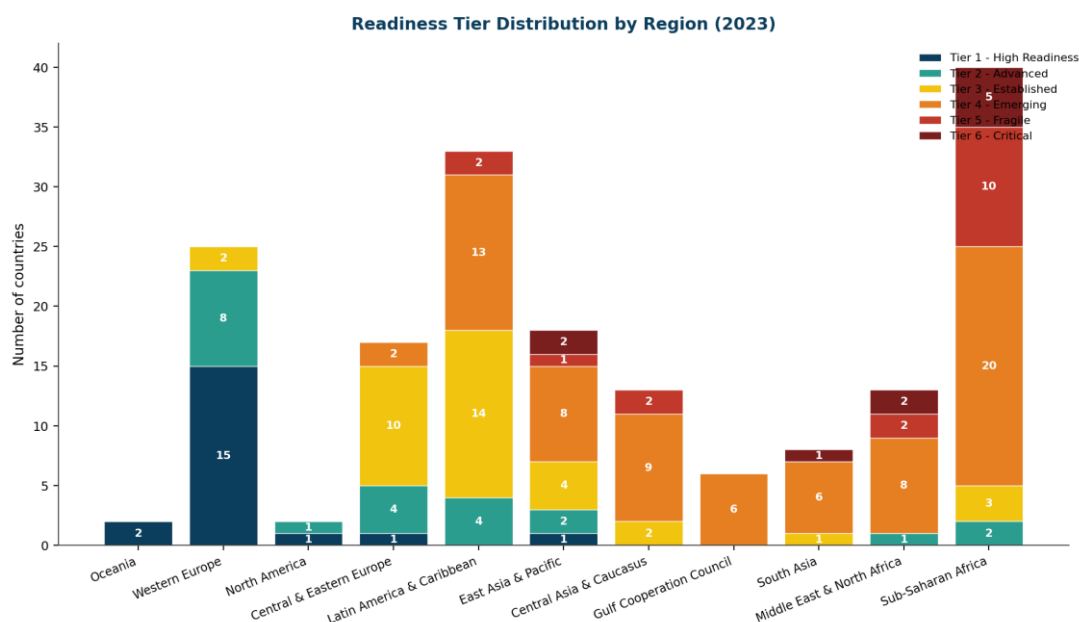


Figure 6.7 Readiness Tier Distribution by Region (2023, 11 regional groupings). The composition of each region across the six readiness tiers. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

## Chapter 7 — Regional Analysis

Chapter 7 disaggregates the AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 across eleven regional groupings and synthesises the patterns of convergence and divergence that emerge. The regional classification used in this chapter is the one defined in Chapter 4 of the methodology report: Western Europe (WEU, n=25), North America (NAM, n=2), Oceania (OCE, n=2), Central and Eastern Europe (CEE, n=17), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAT, n=33), East Asia and the Pacific (EAS, n=18), South Asia (SAS, n=8), the Middle East and North Africa (MENA, n=13, excluding the six Gulf Cooperation Council states which are reported as a separate analytical region), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC, n=6, reported separately because of its distinctive governance profile), Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA, n=40), and Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAS, n=13). Regional means reported in this chapter are taken directly from the AUN 2023 dataset and are reproduced in the data brief accompanying this report. Each regional section opens with the headline mean and the leading and trailing countries, then unpacks the dimensional profile and the most important 2023-specific developments drawn from the underlying sources catalogued in Chapter 3.

### 7.1 Western Europe (Mean 80.73, n=25)

Western Europe is the dominant region of the AUN 2023 edition, with a regional mean of 80.73, a median of 83.60, and a population-weighted mean of 77.42 across 25 covered countries. The region accounts for 15 of the 20 Tier 1 — High Readiness countries, including the entire top six (Sweden 93.9, Finland 93.5, Norway 93.4, Denmark 90.6, Iceland 87.4, and San Marino 87.3) and a further cluster in the 83–86 band (Andorra 86.0, the Netherlands 85.9, Monaco 85.4, Switzerland 84.6, Austria 83.9, Luxembourg 83.6, Germany 83.6, and Liechtenstein 83.3). Belgium closes the Tier 1 group at 80.8. The dimensional profile is balanced: Institutional Readiness 80.84, Policy Coherence 78.95, Implementation Capacity 80.39, Accountability 81.68, and Participation 81.80, with Participation as the highest-scoring dimension — a pattern shared only with Oceania among the regional groupings. The strength of the Participation dimension reflects the region's near-universal Free status in the Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 assessment and its consistently high V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index scores.

Two structural features within Western Europe merit policy attention. First, the Southern European cluster — Italy, Greece, Portugal, and Spain — sits below the regional mean, with Spain at 73.7 the highest of the four. These countries register Implementation Capacity and Accountability scores in the 70s rather than the 80s, reflecting higher perceived corruption (CPI 2022 scores in the 52–62 range), slower judicial processes (WJP 2023 Civil Justice factor), and lower OECD trust survey results. Second, the European microstates — San Marino, Andorra, Monaco, and Liechtenstein — occupy four of the top twenty positions, driven by institutional continuity, low corruption, and high civic-space scores. The Transparency International CPI 2022 report explicitly notes that Western Europe remains the top-scoring region globally but warns that anti-corruption progress has stalled across most of its members for more than a decade, a pattern that the AUN Accountability dimension mirrors at the regional level.

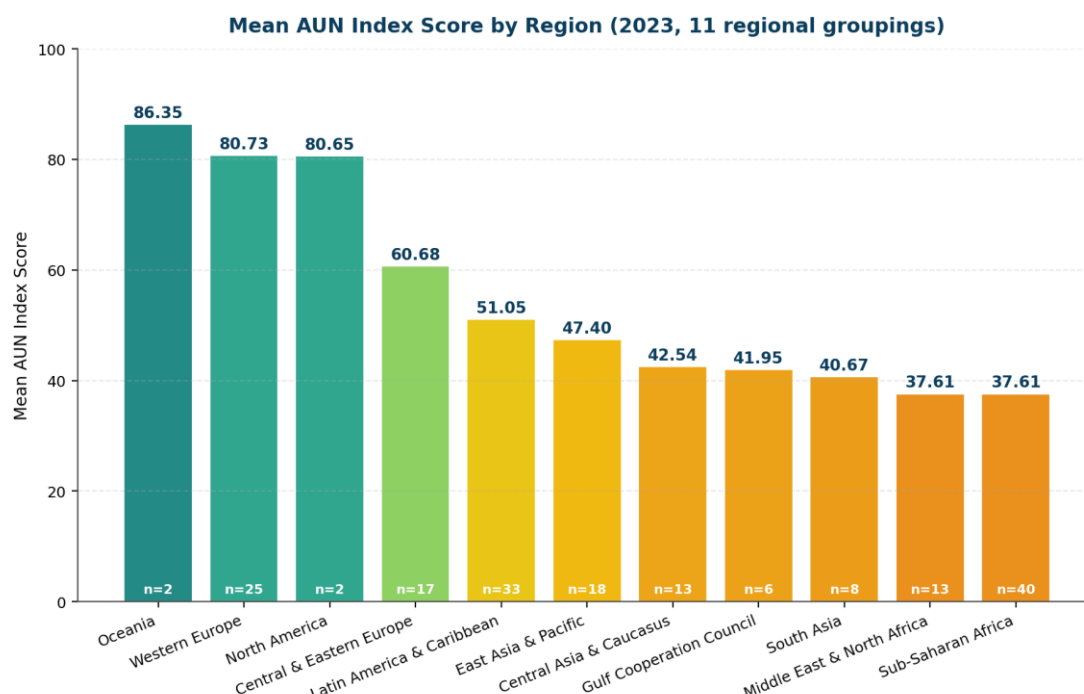
**Figure 7.1**

Figure 7.1 Mean AUN Index Score by Region (2023, 11 regional groupings). Western Europe, North America, and Oceania lead; Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and Central Asia cluster at the bottom. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

## 7.2 North America and Oceania (NAM 80.65; OCE 86.35)

North America and Oceania together account for four of the highest-ranked countries in the 2023 edition, with regional means of 80.65 (NAM) and 86.35 (OCE) respectively. North America comprises Canada (84.9, rank 12) and the United States (76.4, rank 26), while Oceania comprises New Zealand (89.0, rank 5) and Australia (83.7, rank 15). New Zealand is the highest-ranked non-European country in the dataset, with a Participation score of 90.9 reflecting its Freedom House score of 99 and its EIU Democracy Index 2022 score of 9.61 (second globally). Australia's profile is closely comparable, with its CPI 2022 score of 75 and its high OECD trust survey results anchoring an Accountability score of 85.4. The two regions display broadly similar dimensional profiles, with Oceania marginally stronger on Participation (88.25 vs NAM 79.75) and Accountability (87.10 vs 81.15).

Canada's position at rank 12, fourteen places above the United States at rank 26, is one of the most policy-relevant findings of the regional analysis. The gap is consistent with differences in the Participation dimension, where the United States scores 72.8 against Canada's 86.7, and the Accountability dimension, where the United States scores 75.7 against Canada's 86.6. The OECD Government at a Glance 2023 (published 30 June 2023) reports that across OECD members only 41 per cent of citizens have high or moderately high trust in their national government on the 2021 Trust Survey baseline used in the publication — a deficit particularly acute in the United States, where trust in federal institutions sits well below the OECD average. Canada's relatively higher Accountability and Participation scores also reflect its Freedom

House Free status with a score of 98, while the United States registers a slightly lower Freedom House score in the 83–86 range. The two countries are closely matched on Institutional Readiness (United States 80.3, Canada 84.3) and Implementation Capacity (United States 77.6, Canada 84.5), suggesting that the Canada–United States gap is a story of civic space and trust rather than of administrative capacity per se.

Figure 7.2

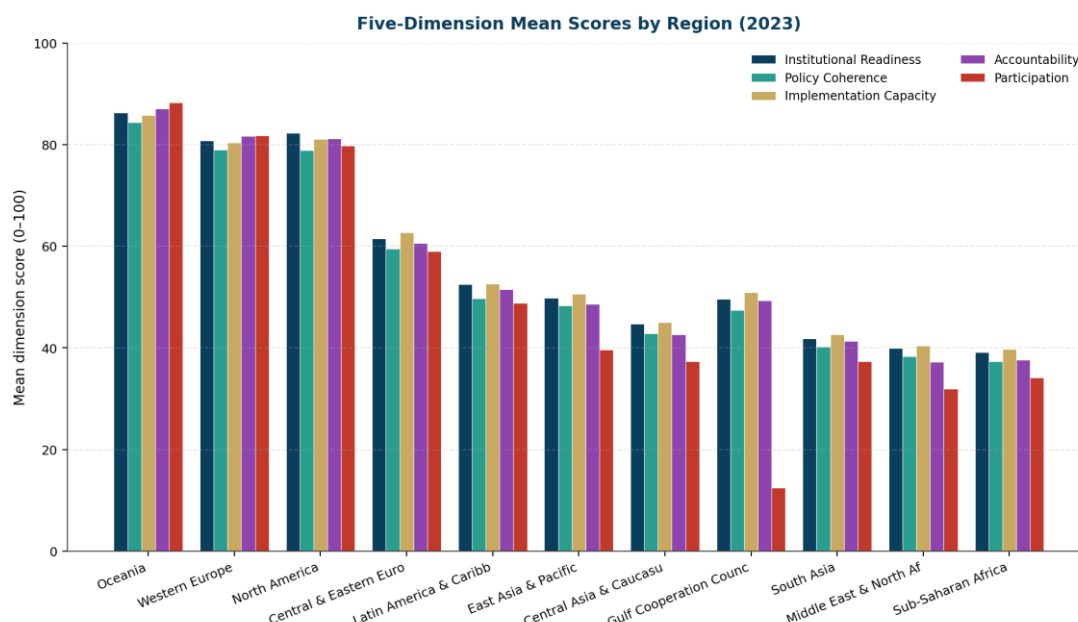


Figure 7.2 Five-Dimension Mean Scores by Region (2023, 11 regional groupings). The Participation deficit is most pronounced in the Gulf, Middle East and North Africa, and Central Asia regions. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset.

### 7.3 Central and Eastern Europe (Mean 60.68, n=17)

Central and Eastern Europe occupies an intermediate position in the 2023 edition with a regional mean of 60.68, a median of 61.20, and a population-weighted mean of 59.13 across 17 countries. The region is led by Estonia at 86.4 (rank 8), the only CEE country in Tier 1, followed by Czechia at 72.7 (rank 30) and a cluster of upper-Tier 2 and Tier 3 countries including Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, and Poland. The dimensional profile is comparatively balanced: Institutional Readiness 61.55, Policy Coherence 59.55, Implementation Capacity 62.66, Accountability 60.66, and Participation 58.97. Estonia's lead is consistent with the contribution of its strong digital governance infrastructure, alongside its broader institutional and implementation capacities. Estonia ranks among the top tier of the United Nations E-Government Development Index 2022 and is the highest-ranked Central and Eastern European country on that survey, with a strong position on the E-Participation Index, complemented by consistently strong WGI Government Effectiveness and Regulatory Quality scores. The 2023 OGP Global Summit, held in Tallinn on 6–7 September 2023, symbolised the country's continued investment in open-government infrastructure and reinforced the political salience of its Tier 1 position.

The most consequential 2023-specific development in the region concerns the rule-of-law backsliding documented in Hungary and, to a lesser extent, Poland. The V-Dem Democracy Report 2023 explicitly identifies Hungary as a country undergoing autocratization, and the European Commission's rule-of-law conditionality mechanism has shaped the country's WJP and WGI inputs. Hungary's composite score sits in the upper-middle of the Tier 3 band at 56.7 (rank 59), above the global median of 46.20, with its Participation dimension reflecting the Freedom House downgrade of the country from Free to Partly Free in earlier vintages and its Accountability dimension reflecting WJP Constraints on Government Powers scores well below the regional mean. Poland registers a similar but less pronounced profile at 54.2 (rank 63), with its 2023 election outcome providing modest upward pressure on the Participation dimension. Romania and Bulgaria lag at the bottom of the EU member cluster, with WJP 2023 listing Bulgaria among the five largest year-on-year rule-of-law improvers but Romania continuing to register Civil Justice and Criminal Justice scores below the regional mean. Freedom House 2023 also flagged several CEE countries for media-freedom deterioration, which feeds directly into the Participation dimension.

## 7.4 Latin America and the Caribbean (Mean 51.05, n=33)

Latin America and the Caribbean registers a regional mean of 51.05, a median of 51.80, and a population-weighted mean of 49.36 across 33 covered countries. The region is led by Uruguay at 77.2 (rank 25) and Costa Rica at 76.2 (rank 27), both of which appear in Tier 2 — Advanced and are the highest-ranked non-European, non-OECD countries outside Singapore and Japan. Chile (65.9) and Panama (67.6) also sit in Tier 2, while Brazil (51.8), Argentina (52.0), Mexico (53.2), and Haiti (54.1) occupy Tier 3 positions, and Colombia (43.1), the Dominican Republic (43.1), and Ecuador (45.1) sit in the upper Tier 4 band. The dimensional profile places Implementation Capacity (52.61) and Institutional Readiness (52.50) as the relative strengths, with Participation (48.87) and Policy Coherence (49.71) as the relative weaknesses. Uruguay's lead is anchored by its Freedom House Free status with a score of 94, its CPI 2022 score of 74, and its consistent top-tier placement across WGI dimensions, while Costa Rica's profile reflects its V-Dem top-ten Liberal Democracy Index position and its strong WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 placement.

The 2023-specific developments in Latin America are unusually dense. Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 downgraded Peru from Free to Partly Free in response to the December 2022 political crisis and the subsequent impeachment process, and upgraded Colombia from Partly Free to Free in response to its competitive 2022 presidential election and improved civil-liberties environment. Nicaragua, under the Ortega government, continued its deterioration, with the WJP 2023 report listing it among the five countries with the largest year-on-year rule-of-law declines; Transparency International's CPI 2022 scored Nicaragua at 19, and Freedom House rates the country Not Free. Venezuela sits at 27.8 (rank 165) in the Tier 5 — Fragile band, with its Accountability score of 27.7 reflecting CPI 2022 of 14 (the lowest in the Western Hemisphere) and its WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 rank of 142 (last globally). Cuba sits in the lower tier, reflecting continued closed civic space and low Freedom House scores. The regional aggregate masks very large within-region variance — Uruguay and Venezuela are separated by 49.4 points — and this variance is the dominant pattern of the regional analysis.

## 7.5 East Asia and the Pacific (Mean 47.40, n=18)

East Asia and the Pacific is the most internally diverse region of the 2023 edition. The regional mean is 47.40, the median is 45.90, and the population-weighted mean is 45.90 across 18 countries. The region contains both the highest-ranked non-Western country (Singapore at 82.7, rank 19, Tier 1) and the lowest-ranked country in the entire dataset (Myanmar at 11.8, rank 177, Tier 6). The dimensional profile shows Institutional Readiness (50.8), Policy Coherence (49.3), and Implementation Capacity (51.6) as the relative strengths, with Participation at 41.2 as the lowest dimension — a deficit driven by the closed-autocracy profiles of North Korea, Vietnam, Laos, and post-NSL Hong Kong, and by the hybrid regime profiles of Thailand and Cambodia. Japan (78.8, rank 23) and the Republic of Korea (78.3, rank 24) follow Singapore as the region's Tier 2 leaders, with both countries benefiting from top-tier United Nations E-Government Development Index 2022 scores (the Republic of Korea ranks third globally on the EGDI, behind Denmark and Finland; Japan leads the E-Participation Index in the 2022 survey) and from high CPI 2022 scores (Japan 73, Korea 63).

The 2023-specific developments centre on the continued contraction of civic space in Hong Kong following the National Security Law of 2020, which has produced a sharp decline in Hong Kong's Participation score and a corresponding downward pull on the regional aggregate. Myanmar's bottom-of-the-table position reflects the post-coup collapse documented by Freedom House (Not Free, score 9) and V-Dem's classification of the country as a closed autocracy following the February 2021 military takeover. North Korea (14.6, rank 170) remains in Tier 6 with a Participation score of 4.6 — among the four lowest in the dataset, behind only Myanmar (1.0) and Saudi Arabia (2.5). China occupies a mid-Tier 4 position at 46.5, with a strong Implementation Capacity score reflecting its UN E-Government infrastructure and high WGI Government Effectiveness, but a very low Participation score reflecting its V-Dem closed-autocracy status and Freedom House Not Free classification. The Philippines (44.4), Thailand (42.3), and Vietnam (42.9) all sit in the Tier 4 band, with the Philippines registering modest improvements following the 2022 election.

## 7.6 South Asia (Mean 40.67, n=8)

South Asia registers a regional mean of 40.67, a median of 44.65, and a population-weighted mean of 47.76 across 8 covered countries. The population-weighted mean exceeds the simple mean by 7.1 points — the only major region in which this is the case — because India's large population pulls the weighted average upward even though several smaller South Asian countries sit below the regional median. India occupies a lower-Tier 3 position at 51.3 (rank 75), with its Implementation Capacity and Institutional Readiness dimensions reflecting ongoing digital-government investment and its Participation dimension reflecting its V-Dem electoral-autocracy classification and its Freedom House Partly Free status. Sri Lanka (47.8), Nepal (45.5), Bhutan (43.8), the Maldives (45.7), and Bangladesh (38.5) all sit in the Tier 4 band, with Bangladesh registering a CPI 2022 score consistent with its Tier 4 placement and Sri Lanka's 2022 political-economic crisis reflected in a downward pull on its Accountability and Policy Coherence dimensions.

The defining 2023-specific development in South Asia is the continued collapse of Afghanistan following the August 2021 Taliban takeover. Afghanistan registers a composite of 13.5 at rank 174, with all five

dimensions in single digits or low double digits and a Participation score of 9.2 — the lowest in the region and among the lowest globally. The country was reclassified by V-Dem as a new closed autocracy in the 2023 Democracy Report, was scored at 10 out of 100 by Freedom House, and was ranked 140 out of 142 by the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023. Pakistan sits in the Tier 4 band, with V-Dem listing Pakistan among the new closed autocracies of the past two years and Freedom House scoring it in the Partly Free range. The AUN 2023 South Asian aggregate is best read as a bifurcated region: a relatively stable mid-band cluster led by India, Nepal, and Bhutan, and a deteriorating low-band cluster led by Afghanistan, with Pakistan and Sri Lanka in between. The regional Participation score (37.4) is among the lowest of any region, with only the GCC sub-cluster (12.4), MENA (32.0), and SSA (34.1) lower, and tied with Central Asia and the Caucasus (37.4).

## **7.7 Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf (MENA Mean 37.61; GCC Mean 41.95)**

The Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) registers a mean of 37.61, a median of 40.60, and a population-weighted mean of 37.49 across 13 covered countries. In the AUN 2023 regional classification, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) sub-cluster of six states (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) is reported as a separate analytical region rather than as a subset of MENA, because of its distinctive governance profile (high Institutional Readiness and Implementation Capacity combined with very low Participation). The GCC sub-cluster (n=6) records a mean of 41.95, a median of 43.20, and a population-weighted mean of 38.51, with a distinctive dimensional profile: Institutional Readiness 49.62, Policy Coherence 47.42, Implementation Capacity 50.88, Accountability 49.32, and Participation 12.43. The GCC Participation score of 12.43 is by a substantial margin the lowest of any regional grouping in the dataset and reflects the uniformly closed civic space of the GCC monarchies. Saudi Arabia's Participation score of 2.5 is the lowest of any non-conflict-affected country in the entire 177-country dataset, behind only Myanmar's 1.0, while the United Arab Emirates (PA 16.4), Qatar (14.6), Kuwait (19.5), Bahrain (13.3), and Oman (8.3) all register Participation scores below 20. The GCC's high Institutional Readiness and Implementation Capacity scores reflect the WGI Government Effectiveness and UN E-Government Development Index rankings of the Gulf states, which have invested heavily in digital government and public-service delivery. The thirteen MENA countries (excluding the GCC states, which are reported separately) comprise Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Iraq, West Bank and Gaza, Lebanon, Iran, Libya, Yemen, and Syria, and are unpacked in the next paragraph.

Beyond the Gulf, the wider MENA region exhibits a sharply bimodal structure. Israel sits in the Tier 2 — Advanced band at 68.1 (rank 39), the highest-ranked non-GCC MENA country, with its Accountability and Institutional Readiness dimensions reflecting its CPI 2022 score and WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 placement. Tunisia's score (41.9) reflects the consolidation of presidential power under Kais Saied, which Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 flagged as the third-largest score decline globally and which V-Dem lists among the new closed autocracies of the past two years. Iran sits at 31.5 (rank 154), with a Participation score of 9.9 reflecting the post-2022 protest crackdown and the WJP 2023 listing of Iran among

the five countries with the largest year-on-year rule-of-law declines. Iraq (40.6) and Lebanon (39.4) occupy the lower Tier 4 band, while Libya (21.5) sits in the Tier 5 — Fragile band with Implementation Capacity scores below 25. Syria (12.1, rank 176) and Yemen (13.6, rank 173) occupy Tier 6 — Critical positions, with both composites reflecting protracted civil conflict and the destruction of state infrastructure.

## 7.8 Sub-Saharan Africa (Mean 37.61, n=40)

Sub-Saharan Africa registers a regional mean of 37.61, a median of 36.40, and a population-weighted mean of 36.99 across 40 covered countries, tying the region with MENA at the lower end of the regional distribution. The region is led by Mauritius (68.1) and Botswana (68.0) in Tier 2 — Advanced, followed by Seychelles (63.8) and Cabo Verde (59.2) in Tier 3 — Established; all four benefit from high Freedom House scores (Mauritius and Botswana are Free), strong CPI 2022 placements (Seychelles 70, Botswana 60), and consistent WJP Rule of Law Index rankings. South Africa occupies a mid-Tier 3 position at 54.7, with a distinctive profile in which its Participation score (59.5) exceeds its Institutional Readiness (54.1) and Implementation Capacity (49.3) scores — the implementation deficit is the country's most policy-relevant weakness and reflects ongoing WJP Civil Justice and Criminal Justice concerns and persistent service-delivery challenges. The dimensional profile of the region as a whole shows Institutional Readiness (39.2) and Implementation Capacity (39.8) as the marginally higher dimensions, with Participation (34.1) as the lowest.

The Sahel crisis is the dominant 2023-specific development in the region. Mali (32.8, rank 152), Burkina Faso (30.1, rank 158), Niger (28.1, rank 164), Chad (29.5, rank 161), and Sudan (15.5, rank 168) all sit in the Tier 5 — Fragile or Tier 6 — Critical band. Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 downgraded Burkina Faso from Partly Free to Not Free following the two 2022 coups, registering the steepest score decline of any country in the 2023 edition at 23 points lost. The WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 lists Mali among the five countries with the largest year-on-year rule-of-law declines. Sudan's score reflects the April 2023 outbreak of armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces. South Sudan (13.5, rank 175), Somalia (13.8, rank 172), Eritrea (14.5, rank 171), the Central African Republic (15.0, rank 169), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (22.8, rank 167) round out the Tier 5–Tier 6 cluster. Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana occupy mid-Tier 4 positions, with Kenya registering one of the WJP 2023's five largest year-on-year improvements. The within-region variance — Mauritius at 68.1 and South Sudan at 13.5 — is among the largest in the dataset.

## 7.9 Central Asia and the Caucasus (Mean 42.54, n=13)

Central Asia and the Caucasus registers a regional mean of 42.54, a median of 41.90, and a population-weighted mean of 36.61 across 13 covered countries. The gap between the simple mean and the population-weighted mean — 5.9 points — is the second-largest in the dataset after South Asia, reflecting the concentration of the region's population in large lower-scoring countries (notably Russia and Uzbekistan) and the comparatively higher scores of small reform-oriented economies. The region is led by Georgia and Armenia, both of which sit in the Tier 3 — Established band and which exhibit reform momentum consistent

with their EU accession aspirations. The dimensional profile shows Implementation Capacity (45.1) and Institutional Readiness (44.8) as the relative strengths and Participation (37.4) as the lowest dimension — a pattern that mirrors the wider post-Soviet space and reflects the closed or semi-closed civic spaces of several Central Asian states. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan register gradual Tier 4 improvements, with the WJP 2023 report listing Uzbekistan among the long-term rule-of-law improvers since 2016 and Kazakhstan registering similar incremental gains.

The defining 2023-specific development in the region is the collapse of Russia's score following the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent contraction of civic space, media freedom, and political competition. Russia sits at 27.3 (rank 166), with a Participation score of 5.1 — among the four lowest in the entire 177-country dataset, behind only Myanmar (1.0), Saudi Arabia (2.5), and North Korea (4.6) — and an Accountability score of 24.0. Freedom House rates Russia as Not Free with a single-digit aggregate score, V-Dem classifies Russia as a closed autocracy, and the WJP 2023 report documents continued rule-of-law deterioration. Belarus sits in the Tier 5 — Fragile band with a similar profile of closed civic space and contested rule of law. Turkmenistan (29.3, rank 162) remains one of the most closed autocracies in the dataset, with Freedom House score of 3 and V-Dem closed-autocracy classification. The CAS aggregate is therefore bifurcated: a reform-oriented Caucasus cluster (Georgia, Armenia) at the top, a gradual-reform Central Asian cluster (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan) in the middle, and a closed-autocracy cluster (Russia, Belarus, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan) at the bottom.

## 7.10 Regional Convergence and Divergence

The eleven regional aggregates reveal a clear structural pattern of convergence at the top and divergence at the bottom. The WEU/OCE/NAM cluster — Western Europe (80.73), North America (80.65), and Oceania (86.35) — forms a high-readiness cluster at the top of the regional distribution, structurally separated from the rest of the world. Central and Eastern Europe (60.68) sits in an intermediate position, with one Tier 1 outlier (Estonia) and several Tier 3–Tier 4 laggards. At the other end of the distribution, the SSA/MENA/CAS cluster — Sub-Saharan Africa (37.61), the MENA region (37.61), and Central Asia and the Caucasus (42.54) — all sit well below the global mean of 51.10. The remaining regions — Latin America and the Caribbean (51.05), East Asia and the Pacific (47.40), and South Asia (40.67) — occupy the middle ground, with the GCC analytical region (41.95) reporting a distinctive high-capacity, low-participation profile not observed elsewhere.

The dominant pattern of the regional analysis is the role of within-region variance relative to between-region variance. Several regions span the full width of the global distribution: East Asia and the Pacific contains both Singapore (82.7, rank 19) and Myanmar (11.8, rank 177); the MENA region contains both Israel in the mid-Tier 3 band and Syria (12.1, rank 176); Sub-Saharan Africa contains both Mauritius in Tier 3 and South Sudan (13.5, rank 175); and Latin America contains both Uruguay (77.2, rank 25) and Venezuela (27.8, rank 164). Figures 6.7, 7.1, and 7.2 plot these within-region distributions and demonstrate that the standard deviation of country scores within several regions exceeds the standard deviation of regional means across the eleven regional groupings. This finding has direct policy implications: regional aggregate narratives can

obscure large performance differences between a region's leading and trailing countries, and reform-oriented policy engagement with any region must be country-specific. The AUN 2023 edition therefore recommends that regional bodies — the African Union, ASEAN, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the European Union, and the Organization of American States — use the AUN country-level scores, rather than the regional aggregates, as the primary unit of governance-readiness assessment for their member states.

## Chapter 8 — Country Profiles

The ten country profiles in this chapter illustrate the analytical range of the AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023. They were selected to demonstrate the Index's capacity to distinguish between regimes that look superficially similar on a single dimension but differ sharply across the five, and to show how the Index handles high-capacity/low-participation configurations, mid-tier implementation gaps, autocratization within established democracies, and full state collapse. Each profile reports the country's rank, composite score, and five-dimension scores (Institutional Readiness, Policy Coherence, Implementation Capacity, Accountability, Participation), followed by an interpretive narrative grounded in developments documented in the latest eligible source vintages publicly available by 30 November 2023, and a policy message. The underlying indicators cited — Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 (published 9 March 2023), V-Dem Democracy Report 2023 (2 March 2023), Transparency International CPI 2022 (31 January 2023), WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 (25 October 2023), UN E-Government Survey 2022, EIU Democracy Index 2022, OECD Government at a Glance 2023 (30 June 2023), and the World Bank WGI 2022 Update (25 September 2023) — were all available before the 1 December 2023 publication of this Index.

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### 8.1 Sweden — The Nordic Benchmark (Rank 1; AUN Index 93.9)

Sweden anchors the top of the 2023 AUN Index with composite score 93.9, supported by dimension scores of IR 94.4, PC 92.5, IC 93.1, AC 93.8, and PA 95.9. It is the only country in the 177-country sample to exceed 90 on every dimension, and its Participation score of 95.9 is the highest in the global dataset. Sweden's benchmark position is corroborated by external sources: it earned a perfect 100 in Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023, ranked fourth on the EIU Democracy Index 2022 with a score of 9.39, scored 83 on Transparency International's CPI 2022 (fifth globally, tied with Singapore), and placed fourth on the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023. Sweden's consistently strong showing reflects long-term investment in administrative capacity, open government, and civic space rather than any single recent reform.

The policy message for peer governments is that Sweden's first-place position is a function of breadth rather than dominance on any single dimension. The Index's equal-weighting architecture means that countries scoring above 90 across the board outperform countries with one or two exceptional dimensions and a weaker third. The Swedish benchmark therefore demonstrates that sustained, multi-decade investment in

institutional quality, regulatory coherence, implementation, accountability, and participation is a credible route to top-tier governance readiness.

## 8.2 Denmark — Rule-of-Law Champion (Rank 4; AUN Index 90.6)

Denmark places fourth overall with an AUN composite of 90.6, supported by IR 95.3, PC 93.4, IC 87.0, AC 87.6, and PA 89.8. Denmark's profile is distinguished by exceptionally strong Institutional Readiness (the highest in the dataset) and Policy Coherence, paired with Implementation Capacity and Accountability scores that are below its own top-tier IR/PC figures but still in the upper-80s range. Denmark's rule-of-law leadership is uniquely corroborated across external sources: it ranked first globally on the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 (published 25 October 2023), topped the UN E-Government Survey 2022, and led the Transparency International CPI 2022 with a score of 90 — the highest in the world. The V-Dem Democracy Report 2023 placed Denmark at the top of its Liberal Democracy Index.

The policy message is that rule-of-law depth functions as a foundation for high governance readiness across all five AUN dimensions. Denmark's slight relative dip on Implementation Capacity (87.0) and Accountability (87.6) relative to IR (95.3) does not undermine its top-tier standing because the underlying scores remain in the high-80s. The Danish experience shows that a sustained national consensus on judicial independence, regulatory quality, and clean public administration translates into measurable governance readiness gains across every dimension the Index measures.

## 8.3 Estonia — Digital Governance Pioneer (Rank 8; AUN Index 86.4)

Estonia ranks eighth with an AUN composite of 86.4, the only Central and Eastern European country in the global top ten. Its dimension scores are IR 87.2, PC 82.3, IC 87.4, AC 86.5, and PA 88.7 — a notably balanced profile with no weak dimension. Estonia's leadership in digital government is widely documented: it appears in the top tier of the UN E-Government Survey 2022 and its E-Participation Index is among the world's highest. Estonia also ranked in the V-Dem Democracy Report 2023 top five on the Liberal Democracy Index, scored 74 on CPI 2022 (14th, tied with Canada, Iceland, and Uruguay), and hosted the OGP Global Summit 2023 in Tallinn on 6–7 September 2023.

The policy message is that digital public infrastructure is not a substitute for traditional accountability institutions but a complement that measurably lifts every AUN dimension when embedded in a liberal-democratic framework. Estonia's profile demonstrates that small states can achieve top-tier governance readiness through deliberate, two-decade investment in e-government, open data, and civic technology — provided that investment is matched by strong horizontal accountability, an independent judiciary, and a free press. The Estonian trajectory is replicable in principle, even if its specific digital architecture is not.

## 8.4 Singapore — The Capacity–Participation Paradox (Rank 19; AUN Index 82.7; PA 64.7)

Singapore ranks nineteenth overall with an AUN composite of 82.7, supported by IR 87.3, PC 82.4, IC 87.5, AC 91.6, and PA 64.7. Singapore's profile is the most asymmetric in the global top thirty: its Accountability score of 91.6 — driven by the world-leading CPI 2022 score of 83 (fifth, tied with Sweden) and top WGI

2022 percentile ranks on Government Effectiveness and Regulatory Quality — is more than 26 points higher than its Participation score of 64.7. Singapore appears in the top tier of the UN E-Government Survey 2022 and the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023, but it does not appear among V-Dem's liberal democracies or in Freedom House's "Free" status tier.

The policy message is that the AUN Index's equal-weight architecture is doing exactly what it was designed to do: surfacing structural gaps that single-indicator rankings can obscure. Singapore's Accountability and Implementation Capacity scores would place it in the global top ten on those dimensions alone; its Participation score pulls the composite down to nineteenth. This is not a methodological artefact — it reflects a real and documented configuration in which high state capacity and low corruption coexist with constrained civic and political pluralism. The Index therefore captures a gap that policy makers in other high-capacity states should weigh explicitly rather than ignore.

### **8.5 United States — High Capacity, Trust Deficit (Rank 26; AUN Index 76.4)**

The United States ranks twenty-sixth with an AUN composite of 76.4, supported by IR 80.3, PC 75.4, IC 77.6, AC 75.7, and PA 72.8. The U.S. profile is internally consistent but noticeably below the Nordic-Antipodean leaders, with no dimension reaching 80. The trust deficit documented by OECD Government at a Glance 2023 — only 41 percent of OECD citizens reported high or moderately high trust in their national government (2021 baseline), and a November 2023 OECD survey found 44 percent reporting low or no trust — is consistent with the Index's mid-tier scores on Accountability (75.7) and Participation (72.8). The U.S. earned a CPI 2022 score of 69 (24th globally) and retained its "Free" status in Freedom House FIW 2023, but with documented downward pressure on media freedom and electoral administration.

The policy message is that institutional capacity is necessary but not sufficient: a country with the U.S.'s administrative, regulatory, and constitutional architecture should not rank twenty-sixth on a global governance readiness index. The composite is held down by structural features — political polarisation, contested electoral administration, declining trust — that no single reform can reverse. The American case underscores the value of a five-dimension framework: conventional capacity-focused indices mask the participation and accountability erosion that V-Dem and Freedom House have flagged as autocratization risk factors even within established democracies.

### **8.6 Uruguay — Latin America's Outlier (Rank 25; AUN Index 77.2)**

Uruguay ranks twenty-fifth globally with an AUN composite of 77.2, supported by IR 75.8, PC 73.9, IC 76.0, AC 80.2, and PA 80.3. Uruguay's profile is the highest in Latin America and the only Latin American country in the global top 25. Its standing is corroborated across external sources: Uruguay earned a 94 in Freedom House FIW 2023 (Free status), scored 74 on CPI 2022 (14th, tied with Canada, Estonia, and Iceland), was classified as a full democracy in the EIU Democracy Index 2022, and placed 35th on the UN E-Government Survey 2022 with an EGDI of 0.8388. Its Accountability (80.2) and Participation (80.3) scores are notably higher than its Institutional Readiness (75.8) and Policy Coherence (73.9), indicating a configuration in which democratic quality runs ahead of administrative capacity.

The policy message is that high governance readiness is achievable in Latin America with sustained, cross-party investment in democratic institutions and anti-corruption frameworks. Uruguay's composite exceeds those of regional peers that share its income level but lack its long-term commitment to pluralism and clean government. The Uruguayan trajectory — built on coalition politics, an independent judiciary, and a free press — shows that the region's median governance readiness of 51.80 is not a structural ceiling. Replicability elsewhere in Latin America depends less on additional resources than on the durability of democratic norms.

### **8.7 South Africa — Constitutional Promise, Implementation Gap (Rank 62; AUN Index 54.7)**

South Africa ranks 62nd globally with an AUN composite of 54.7, supported by IR 54.1, PC 55.2, IC 49.3, AC 55.4, and PA 59.5. The country's profile illustrates the Index's capacity to detect implementation gaps: Participation (59.5) and Accountability (55.4) scores exceed Implementation Capacity (49.3), the only dimension below 50. This pattern reflects a country with a strong constitutional architecture, an independent judiciary, and a vibrant civil society that nonetheless struggles to translate legal framework quality into service-delivery outcomes. South Africa's CPI 2022 score of 43 sits exactly at the global average, and the country retained its "Free" status in Freedom House FIW 2023 despite documented governance strain.

The policy message is that the South African pattern — strong participation, weak implementation — is structurally different from the Singaporean pattern and requires a different reform menu. Targeted investment in public-service delivery systems, especially at the local-government level, would lift the Implementation Capacity dimension and narrow the gap between constitutional promise and operational reality. The Index shows that South Africa is not suffering a democratic deficit; it is suffering a state-capacity deficit within a functioning democratic framework.

### **8.8 Hungary — Autocratization in the EU (Rank 59; AUN Index 56.7)**

Hungary ranks fifty-ninth globally with an AUN composite of 56.7, supported by IR 58.3, PC 57.4, IC 62.5, AC 54.7, and PA 50.8. Hungary ranks 59th in the 2023 AUN Index; Poland is the lowest-ranked European Union member state. Its profile is characterised by relatively strong Implementation Capacity (62.5, the country's highest dimension) combined with Accountability (54.7) and Participation (50.8) scores that place the composite above the global median of 46.20 but well below EU peers. Hungary is one of the 35 countries V-Dem's Democracy Report 2023 identified as undergoing significant autocratization, was downgraded to Partly Free by Freedom House, and scored 42 on CPI 2022 — three points below the global average.

The policy message is that autocratization within an established high-income democracy produces a distinctive composite signature: Implementation Capacity held up by a competent civil service while Accountability and Participation erode. The Hungarian case demonstrates that the Index's five-dimension architecture captures rule-of-law backsliding that single-dimensional or capacity-only metrics would miss. For EU institutions and peer governments, the Hungarian trajectory is a cautionary case showing that EU membership does not, by itself, stabilise governance readiness once horizontal accountability and civic space come under sustained pressure.

## 8.9 China — Scale Without Participation (Rank 86; AUN Index 46.5)

China ranks eighty-sixth globally with an AUN composite of 46.5, supported by IR 55.3, PC 55.4, IC 60.5, AC 45.7, and PA 15.8. China's profile is the most extreme illustration in the dataset of a high-capacity, low-participation configuration. Its Implementation Capacity score of 60.5 — the country's highest dimension — is consistent with WGI 2022 percentile ranks that place China in the global upper tier on Government Effectiveness and Regulatory Quality, and with high UN E-Government Survey 2022 scores. China's Accountability (45.7) and Participation (15.8) scores reflect the V-Dem Democracy Report 2023 classification as a closed autocracy and the Freedom House FIW 2023 "Not Free" status. CPI 2022 scored China at 45, slightly above the global average.

The policy message is that scale and implementation capacity do not, on their own, generate high composite governance readiness. China's IC score is comparable to several upper-middle-income peers, but its PA score of 15.8 — the lowest in the global upper-middle-income group — pulls the composite to 46.5, just above the LIC group mean of 25.1 but well below the UMC group mean of 47.1. The Index captures a structural feature of the Chinese governance model that any comparison with democratic middle-income states must take into account.

## 8.10 Afghanistan — State Collapse (Rank 174; AUN Index 13.5)

Afghanistan ranks 174th out of 177 with an AUN composite of 13.5, supported by IR 14.7, PC 14.8, IC 13.9, AC 15.0, and PA 9.2. Afghanistan's profile is uniformly near the floor of every dimension, with no dimension exceeding 15. The country is one of nine identified by V-Dem's Democracy Report 2023 as newly descended into closed autocracy in the past two years, following the August 2021 collapse of the Republic and the Taliban's consolidation of power. Afghanistan scored 10 in Freedom House FIW 2023 (Not Free), ranked 140th on the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023, and was not scored on CPI 2022. Afghanistan also appears in the bottom ten of the WGI 2022 Update across multiple dimensions.

The policy message is that state collapse is the lowest-tier governance outcome the Index can describe, and it is uniformly low across all five dimensions rather than concentrated in one. No dimension of the AUN framework — Institutional Readiness, Policy Coherence, Implementation Capacity, Accountability, or Participation — can recover in isolation when the underlying state apparatus has disintegrated. The composite score of 13.5 is not a measure of reform priority order; it is a measure of the scale of reconstruction required. For donors, multilateral institutions, and neighbouring states, the Afghan profile indicates that incremental, sector-specific interventions will not move the composite until the foundational state apparatus is reconstituted.

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*End of Chapter 8.*

## Chapter 9 — Trends and Comparisons

The 2023 AUN Global Governance Readiness Index does not exist in isolation. It is the latest entry in a dense field of governance, democracy, rule-of-law, and corruption instruments that share underlying data sources, intersecting methodologies, and — for the most part — converging findings. This chapter situates the AUN Index against its peer instruments and extracts the cross-cutting trends that any 2023-edition governance assessment must address. The five sections below address source convergence, the autocratization wave, the stagnation of corruption performance, digital government as a divergence frontier, and the distinctive contribution the AUN Index makes to this crowded measurement landscape.

### 9.1 Cross-Source Convergence

Across the nine primary governance instruments that anchor the AUN Index — the World Bank WGI 2022 Update (25 September 2023), Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 (9 March 2023), V-Dem Democracy Report 2023 (2 March 2023), Transparency International CPI 2022 (31 January 2023), WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 (25 October 2023), UN E-Government Survey 2022, EIU Democracy Index 2022, and OECD Government at a Glance 2023 (30 June 2023) — the top and bottom of every ranking converge on the same small set of countries. The Nordic cluster (Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland) and a small set of Anglophone democracies (New Zealand, with Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, and Luxembourg in the next tier) appear in the top ten of every instrument. The AUN Index reproduces this convergence: Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, and New Zealand occupy the top five positions, and the top ten also includes Iceland, San Marino, Estonia, Andorra, and the Netherlands.

The bottom of every ranking is similarly convergent. Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, North Korea, Eritrea, Turkmenistan, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan, Haiti, Venezuela, Myanmar, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo appear in the bottom ten of V-Dem, Freedom House, WJP, CPI 2022, and WGI simultaneously. The AUN Index's bottom five — Syria (12.1), Myanmar (11.8), South Sudan (13.5), Afghanistan (13.5), and Yemen (13.6) — mirrors this pattern. This convergence is not a coincidence; it reflects the fact that the same underlying data sources (expert assessments, household and firm surveys, country-risk ratings) flow into multiple composite indices. The AUN Index adds value not by contradicting the consensus but by integrating it within a five-dimension framework that surfaces asymmetric profiles — such as Singapore's high-capacity, low-participation configuration — that single-indicator rankings obscure.

### 9.2 The Autocratization Wave

The most consequential cross-cutting trend in the the latest eligible source vintages publicly available by 30 November 2023 is the sustained, multi-year deterioration in freedom, rule of law, and democracy. V-Dem's Democracy Report 2023 frames this as a "third wave of autocratization": 72 percent of the world's population (5.7 billion people) now lives in autocracies, with 28 percent (2.2 billion) in closed autocracies and 44 percent (3.5 billion) in electoral autocracies. Only 13 percent (1 billion) live in liberal democracies. For the first time in more than two decades, the number of closed autocracies exceeds the number of liberal

democracies. V-Dem identified 35 countries undergoing significant autocratization episodes in 2022, and nine new closed autocracies have emerged in the past two years, including Afghanistan, Chad, Guinea, Haiti, Algeria, Pakistan, El Salvador, and Tunisia.

Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 corroborates the V-Dem diagnosis: 2022 marked the seventeenth consecutive year of global freedom decline, with 35 countries registering net declines and 34 registering net improvements — the narrowest gap since the negative pattern began, but still a decline. Burkina Faso was downgraded from Partly Free to Not Free, losing 23 points; Peru fell from Free to Partly Free; Tunisia experienced the third-largest score decline of the year. The WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 adds a third dimension to the trend: rule of law has weakened in 78 percent of countries since 2016, with Fundamental Rights declining in 77 percent of countries and Civic Participation declining in 83 percent. More than 6 billion people live in countries where rule of law weakened between 2022 and 2023. The AUN Index reflects this wave in its dimension-level patterns: the global Participation mean is below the global means for Institutional Readiness, Policy Coherence, and Implementation Capacity, and several mid-tier countries — Hungary, Tunisia, and El Salvador among them — show Participation scores depressed relative to their capacity scores.

### 9.3 The Stagnation of Corruption Performance

Transparency International's CPI 2022, published 31 January 2023, documented a stubborn plateau in global corruption performance. The global average score remained at 43 out of 100 — unchanged for the eleventh consecutive year. More than two-thirds of the 180 countries scored below 50, and 26 countries fell to their lowest scores ever recorded. The top of the index (Denmark 90, Finland 87, New Zealand 87, Norway 84, Singapore 83, Sweden 83, Switzerland 82, Netherlands 80, Germany 79, Ireland and Luxembourg tied at 77) shows that high-income democracies continue to dominate the clean-government tier. The bottom (Somalia 12, Syria and South Sudan 13, Venezuela 14, Yemen 16, Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, Haiti, Libya, and North Korea 17, Chad, Comoros, Nicaragua, and Turkmenistan 19) shows that conflict-affected and closed-autocratic states remain stuck at the floor.

The stagnation matters for the AUN Index because Accountability is one of the five equally weighted dimensions, and CPI 2022 is one of the primary inputs to the Accountability sub-index. The OECD's anti-corruption framing — "A world urgently in need of action," with conflict and security fuelling corruption — is consistent with the Index's finding that the global Accountability mean is below the global Institutional Readiness and Implementation Capacity means. The 11-year plateau in the global CPI average indicates that anti-corruption reform is not generating measurable aggregate progress, even as a handful of countries (Uruguay, Estonia, Georgia, and a small set of long-term reformers) sustain high scores. The AUN Index captures this stasis: the gap between high-performing and low-performing countries on Accountability is one of the widest in the dataset, and the mid-tier countries — including South Africa at exactly the global average of 43 — show no upward momentum.

## 9.4 Digital Government as the Divergence Frontier

The UN E-Government Survey 2022 introduced a structural divergence that the 2023 AUN Index must take seriously. The top of the EGDI ranking — Denmark, Finland, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Iceland, with Sweden, Singapore, Estonia, the United States, and the Netherlands in the next tier — overlaps heavily with the AUN Index's top tier. EGDI scores for top performers range from approximately 0.92 to 0.97. By contrast, the bottom of the EGDI ranking — Chad, the Central African Republic, Eritrea, South Sudan, Niger, Somalia, Afghanistan, Burundi, Liberia, Mali, and Guinea-Bissau, typically scoring below 0.20 — overlaps heavily with the AUN Index's bottom tier. The E-Participation Index (EPI) shows a similar pattern: Japan, Republic of Korea, Denmark, Estonia, and Finland lead, while low-income and conflict-affected states lag.

The 2022 survey's most consequential finding is the widening digital divide on the Telecommunications Infrastructure sub-index. Developing regions lag significantly behind developed regions on infrastructure, and this gap is an important factor in EGDI divergence. The implication for the AUN Index is that digital government is no longer a peripheral governance dimension; it is a structural factor shaping Implementation Capacity, Policy Coherence, and Participation alike. Countries that cannot deliver services digitally, consult citizens online, or publish administrative data in machine-readable formats face compounding disadvantages on multiple AUN dimensions. The digital divide is therefore a new governance inequality that the 2023 AUN Index captures indirectly through its Implementation Capacity and Participation sub-scores.

## 9.5 What the 2023 AUN Index Adds

The 2023 AUN Global Governance Readiness Index occupies a distinctive position within the measurement ecosystem described above. Most peer instruments are organised around a single conceptual axis: WGI measures six governance dimensions on percentile ranks; V-Dem and EIU measure democracy on a 0–1 or 0–10 scale; Freedom House measures freedom on a 0–100 political rights and civil liberties scale; CPI measures corruption perception on a 0–100 scale; WJP measures rule of law across eight factors on a 0–1 scale; and the UN E-Government Survey measures digital government on a 0–1 EGDI scale. None of these instruments integrate implementation capacity and policy coherence as first-order dimensions alongside accountability and participation.

The AUN Index's five-dimension architecture — Institutional Readiness, Policy Coherence, Implementation Capacity, Accountability, and Participation, each weighted at 20 percent — explicitly captures the gap between constitutional and legal frameworks (what the Index calls Institutional Readiness) and operational state capacity (Implementation Capacity). It also captures the gap between Accountability (the formal anti-corruption and rule-of-law architecture) and Participation (the lived experience of civic and political pluralism). The Singapore profile (rank 19, IC 87.5 vs. PA 64.7), the South African profile (rank 62, IC 49.3 vs. PA 59.5), and the Hungarian profile (rank 59, IC 62.5 vs. PA 50.8) are concrete illustrations of how the Index surfaces asymmetric configurations that single-axis rankings cannot. The 2023 AUN Index therefore contributes to the field not by replicating peer instruments but by integrating them within a

framework that distinguishes capacity from accountability, accountability from participation, and institutional design from policy coherence.

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*End of Chapter 9.*

## Chapter 10 — Limitations and Caveats

Any composite index built from secondary data inherits the limitations of its underlying sources, and the AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 is no exception. This chapter sets out the six principal limitations that users of the Index should bear in mind when interpreting country scores, regional means, and tier classifications. The Index is published in good faith as a transparent, replicable, and traceable instrument, but the claims it can support are bounded by the claims its underlying sources can support. Readers are encouraged to use the Index as a diagnostic lens, not as a definitive judgement.

### 10.1 Perception-Based Underlying Data

The majority of the indicators feeding the AUN Index — including the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI 2022 Update), Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI 2022), and the expert components of the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 — are perception-based. The WGI aggregates approximately 35 cross-country sources, most of which are expert assessments or firm surveys rather than objective administrative data. The CPI 2022 is explicitly a composite of 13 expert assessments and business executive surveys; it does not measure actual corruption incidence. V-Dem's Democracy Report 2023 draws on approximately 3,500 country experts whose judgements, however rigorous, are interpretive rather than directly measured.

Perception data carry well-documented biases. Expert assessments tend to be sensitive to high-profile political events and may under-represent gradual institutional change. Business surveys oversample firms in formal sectors and may not capture the experience of informal-sector actors, women, or marginalised groups. Households in low-income countries may have limited direct exposure to the national-level institutions the Index measures. The AUN Index mitigates these biases by triangulating across multiple perception sources and complementing them with administrative data where available (OECD GaG 2023 indicators, UN E-Government Survey 2022 OSI sub-index, SDG 16.6 indicators). Users should nonetheless treat the Index as a measure of perceived governance readiness, not directly observed governance readiness.

### 10.2 Coverage Gaps

The AUN Index covers 177 countries, fewer than the 210 entities assessed by Freedom House FIW 2023, the 193 UN Member States assessed by the UN E-Government Survey 2022, and the 180 countries scored by CPI 2022. The coverage decisions reflect data availability constraints: small states, microstates, and territories for which two or more underlying sources do not report data are excluded to preserve

comparability. San Marino (rank 7), Andorra (rank 9), Monaco (rank 11), and Liechtenstein (rank 18) are included because multiple underlying sources cover them; many smaller Pacific island states, several Caribbean microstates, and dependent territories are not.

Within the covered sample, indicator-specific gaps persist. CPI 2022 does not score every territory (for example, Western Sahara is not scored); some small island developing states are not covered by WGI expert assessments; and the OECD Government at a Glance 2023 dataset covers OECD members and selected partners, which means non-OECD countries are scored on proxy indicators only. The AUN Index does not impute missing values where the underlying source is silent; instead, it relies on the best available secondary indicator for that country. Users should treat the country-level scores of microstates with particular caution, because the underlying indicator base is thinner than for larger countries.

### 10.3 Vintage Lags

The AUN Index 2023 is built from data vintages published between January 2022 and October 2023, with most underlying sources covering calendar year 2022 or earlier. The WGI 2022 Update covers data through end-2022 and was published 25 September 2023; Freedom House FIW 2023 covers calendar 2022 and was published 9 March 2023; V-Dem DR 2023 covers data through 2022 and was published 2 March 2023; CPI 2022 was published 31 January 2023; WJP RoL Index 2023 was published 25 October 2023 but its country visits and surveys predate that publication; UN E-Government Survey 2022 was launched in autumn 2022; EIU Democracy Index 2022 was released in January 2023.

The 1 December 2023 publication date means the Index cannot reflect late-2023 developments. The Israel–Hamas war that began on 7 October 2023 is only marginally reflected in the country profiles for Israel and the Palestinian territories. The Argentine presidential election that brought Javier Milei to office in November 2023 is not reflected in the Argentina profile. The Sudan civil war that escalated in April 2023 is partially captured in the underlying WGI and WJP data but not in its full subsequent intensity. The Index is therefore a snapshot of governance readiness at the close of calendar 2022, not a real-time assessment. Users analysing countries that have undergone significant institutional change in late 2023 should consult the most recent V-Dem, WJP, and Freedom House updates.

### 10.4 Aggregation Trade-offs

The AUN Index aggregates the five dimensions — Institutional Readiness, Policy Coherence, Implementation Capacity, Accountability, and Participation — using equal 20 percent weights. Equal weighting is transparent, replicable, and avoids the normative judgement embedded in any weighting scheme that prioritises one dimension over another. It is also the most defensible default in the absence of a clear theoretical rationale for differential weighting across countries with sharply different income levels, institutional histories, and political configurations.

The gap is that equal weighting is itself a normative choice. A weighting scheme that placed greater emphasis on Implementation Capacity would raise the composite scores of high-capacity, low-participation

states such as Singapore and China; a weighting scheme that placed greater emphasis on Participation would lower them further. A weighting scheme that emphasised Accountability above all would lift Denmark and Singapore alike, but for different reasons. The Index does not claim that equal weighting is optimal; it claims that equal weighting is the most transparent and reproducible choice given the available evidence. Users who require alternative weighting schemes for specific analytical purposes can reconstruct composites from the published dimension scores, which are reported in full in the country-level dataset accompanying this Index.

## 10.5 The Participation Challenge in Non-Democracies

The Participation dimension, which incorporates Freedom House FIW 2023, V-Dem LDI and EDI, EIU Democracy Index 2022, WJP Fundamental Rights, the UN E-Participation Index 2022, OGP membership and action-plan maturity, will structurally penalise closed autocracies. Countries classified by V-Dem as closed autocracies — Afghanistan, Eritrea, North Korea, Equatorial Guinea, Turkmenistan, Saudi Arabia, and others — receive Participation scores in the single digits or low teens regardless of their implementation capacity. This is by design: the Index treats civic and political pluralism as a constitutive dimension of governance readiness, not as a residual.

Users should interpret the Participation scores of closed autocracies alongside their Accountability scores. The two dimensions together capture the democratic deficit, and in combination they explain why high-capacity closed autocracies (such as China at PA 15.8 and Saudi Arabia at PA 2.5) cannot reach the upper tier of the composite despite strong Implementation Capacity scores. The Index is not designed to be neutral as between regime types; it is designed to register the governance readiness costs of closed civic and political space. Users who require a regime-neutral measure of administrative or implementation capacity should consult the Implementation Capacity dimension score directly rather than the composite.

## 10.6 Not a Predictive Tool

The AUN Index is a snapshot, not a forecast. It describes the state of governance readiness across 177 countries predominantly reflecting governance observations from 2022 and earlier, combined with selected 2023 source vintages published before the 30 November 2023 cutoff, using the latest eligible source vintages publicly available by 30 November 2023. It does not predict whether a country will improve, stagnate, or deteriorate in 2024 or beyond. The autocratization wave documented by V-Dem, the rule-of-law recession documented by WJP, and the corruption stagnation documented by TI are all retrospective findings; their continuation is plausible but not guaranteed.

The Index's predictive utility is indirect. Countries whose Participation and Accountability scores are declining relative to their Institutional Readiness and Implementation Capacity scores are exhibiting the asymmetric profile that V-Dem has identified as a leading indicator of autocratization. Hungary, Tunisia, and El Salvador all show this pattern in the 2023 data. The Index can therefore flag risk configurations, but it cannot forecast outcomes. Users seeking predictive assessments should consult V-Dem's autocratization-

episode tracking, Freedom House's downgrade watchlist, and the International IDEA Global State of Democracy report. The AUN Index complements these instruments; it does not replace them.

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*End of Chapter 10.*

## Chapter 11 — Policy Recommendations

The 2023 AUN Global Governance Readiness Index is intended as a diagnostic instrument that supports action, not as a ranking exercise that ends in description. This chapter sets out seven recommendations addressed to the actors whose decisions will shape whether the global governance readiness distribution improves, stagnates, or deteriorates between the 2023 and 2024 editions. Each recommendation is grounded in the Index's findings and in the latest eligible source vintages publicly available by 30 November 2023, and each specifies the concrete actions required and an explicit owner. The recommendations are deliberately targeted and operational; they are not slogans, and they assume that governments, parliaments, civil society, international organisations, donors, and researchers will read them as a shared agenda.

### 11.1 For Governments — Close the Implementation-Participation Gap

The 2023 AUN Index documents a recurring structural pattern in which countries with strong constitutional and legal frameworks underperform on Implementation Capacity (South Africa, IC 49.3 vs. PA 59.5), and countries with strong implementation capacity underperform on Participation (Singapore, IC 87.5 vs. PA 64.7; China, IC 60.5 vs. PA 15.8). Closing this gap requires different reform menus in each direction. Implementation-deficit democracies should prioritise civil-service professionalisation, merit-based recruitment, results-based management in line ministries, and digital service-delivery platforms that reduce discretion in frontline administration. Participation-deficit states face a more fundamental choice: incremental liberalisation of civic and political space, or sustained composite scores below what their capacity would otherwise justify. Governments should publish annual implementation dashboards that track service-delivery outcomes against constitutional entitlements, and should subject those dashboards to independent audit. The Index provides the diagnostic; governments must act on it.

**Owner:** National governments, in partnership with civil-service commissions, line ministries, and supreme audit institutions.

### 11.2 For Governments — Invest in Digital Public Infrastructure

The UN E-Government Survey 2022 documents a widening digital divide on the Telecommunications Infrastructure sub-index, with developing regions lagging significantly behind developed regions. Because digital public infrastructure now shapes Implementation Capacity, Policy Coherence, and Participation simultaneously, underinvestment compounds across multiple AUN dimensions. Governments should treat digital identity, interoperable government data platforms, secure electronic payments, and machine-readable

open data as foundational public goods, not as sectoral IT projects. The Estonian model (rank 8, IC 87.4, PA 88.7) demonstrates the dividends of two-decade investment in digital government; the Uruguayan trajectory (rank 25, with an EGDI of 0.8388 in 2022) shows that middle-income countries can also build credible digital infrastructure. Governments should adopt legal frameworks for data protection, cybersecurity, and algorithmic transparency in parallel with infrastructure investment, and should ensure that digital channels do not exclude populations without connectivity or digital literacy.

**Owner:** National governments, in partnership with telecommunications regulators, digital-service agencies, and finance ministries.

### 11.3 For Parliaments and Supreme Audit Institutions — Reinforce Horizontal Accountability

The WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 documents a rule-of-law recession that has affected 78 percent of countries since 2016, with Constraints on Government Powers and Fundamental Rights among the most-declined factors. Hungary's profile (rank 59, AC 54.7, PA 50.8) illustrates that even EU member states can experience horizontal-accountability erosion. Parliaments should strengthen committee scrutiny of executive actions, require substantive confirmation hearings for senior appointments, and exercise their budget-amendment powers more assertively. Supreme audit institutions should publish timely, methodology-transparent performance audits, cover emergency and off-budget expenditure, and refer credible findings of mismanagement to prosecution authorities where the legal framework permits. Where horizontal accountability institutions face executive pressure — as documented by V-Dem's autocratization tracking in 35 countries — peer institutions in other jurisdictions should provide visible support through parliamentary exchange programmes and joint audit publications. The Index treats horizontal accountability as a first-order governance dimension; parliaments and audit institutions should treat their own reinforcement as a strategic priority.

**Owner:** National parliaments, supreme audit institutions, and parliamentary clerks' offices, in partnership with international parliamentary associations (IPU, IPU-AGM) and INTOSAI.

### 11.4 For Civil Society — Defend and Expand Civic Space

Freedom House FIW 2023 reports the seventeenth consecutive year of freedom decline, with media freedom under pressure in at least 157 countries and the number of countries scoring 0/4 on the Media Freedom indicator rising from 14 to 33 over the past 17 years. WJP 2023 documents declines in freedom of assembly and association in 81 percent of countries since 2016, and declines in freedom of opinion and expression in 78 percent. The Participation dimension of the AUN Index is the most exposed to this deterioration. Civil society organisations should coordinate cross-sectoral civic-space coalitions that bring together human rights defenders, journalists, trade unions, professional associations, and faith-based groups; should document and litigate restrictions on assembly and association; and should engage with OGP action plans as a structured mechanism for securing measurable commitments from governments. The OGP platform — with 75–78 national members and over 5,600 cumulative commitments as of late 2023 — provides a usable

framework. Civil society in closing environments should prioritise coalition breadth and legal defence capacity over issue-specific advocacy.

**Owner:** Civil society organisations, in partnership with OGP multi-stakeholder forums, international human rights NGOs, and bar associations.

## 11.5 For International Organisations — Adopt a Coherence Lens

The AUN Index's Policy Coherence dimension captures a feature of governance readiness that most peer instruments treat only obliquely. International organisations whose mandates touch governance — the United Nations, the World Bank, the IMF, the OECD, the African Union, the European Union, the OAS, ASEAN, and the African Development Bank — should adopt a coherence lens in their country engagements. This means assessing whether sectoral reforms are sequenced consistently, whether regulatory frameworks are aligned across ministries, and whether budget execution matches legislative authorisation. International organisations should incorporate the AUN Index's five-dimension framework into their country diagnostic products, should require coherence assessments in their policy loans and budget support operations, and should publish their own coherence findings in standardised formats to support cross-country comparison. The OECD Government at a Glance 2023 (30 June 2023) and the OECD Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance (iREG) provide established methodologies that other international organisations can adapt. Coherence is a measurable governance dimension, and international organisations should measure it consistently.

**Owner:** United Nations system entities, the World Bank, IMF, OECD, regional development banks, and regional intergovernmental organisations.

## 11.6 For Donors and Multilateral Banks — Tie Financing to Readiness Diagnostics

The 2023 AUN Index's tier structure (Tier 1 High Readiness through Tier 6 Critical) provides a usable diagnostic frame for donors and multilateral development banks. Financing strategies should be calibrated to the specific dimension gaps the Index identifies, not to a single composite rank. In Tier 5 (Fragile) and Tier 6 (Critical) countries, financing should prioritise Institutional Readiness and Implementation Capacity foundations, recognising that Accountability and Participation gains cannot be sustained where state capacity has collapsed. In Tier 3 (Established) and Tier 4 (Emerging) countries, financing should target the narrowest dimension gap, which is typically Participation in upper-middle-income states and Implementation Capacity in lower-middle-income states. In Tier 1 and Tier 2 countries, financing should support policy coherence and the reinforcement of horizontal accountability to prevent backsliding. Donors should publish their use of AUN Index diagnostics in their portfolio reviews and should commission independent evaluations of whether dimension-targeted financing produces measurable readiness gains. The Index is a tool for allocation discipline, not a ranking exercise.

**Owner:** Bilateral donors, multilateral development banks (World Bank, IMF, AfDB, ADB, IDB, EBRD), and OECD-DAC members.

## 11.7 For Researchers — Improve Implementation Measurement

The most underdeveloped dimension in the 2023 AUN Index, and in the broader governance-measurement field, is Implementation Capacity. The underlying indicators — WGI Government Effectiveness, WJP Order and Security, WJP Regulatory Enforcement, WJP Civil and Criminal Justice, UN EGDI, and SDG 16.6.2 (satisfaction with public services) — are valuable but partial, and several rely on perception data. Researchers should advance three lines of work. First, develop objective implementation measures: administrative-data quality, processing times, service-delivery coverage, budget execution ratios, and court-case completion rates. Second, expand citizen-experience surveys that disaggregate by income, gender, region, and ethnicity, to complement expert assessments. Third, build cross-country comparable datasets on regulatory enforcement and judicial efficiency that go beyond perception scores. The OECD Trust Survey (Trust 2021 baseline, updated through late 2023) and the UNODC SDG 16 indicators point toward a richer citizen-experience measurement agenda. Researchers should publish their instruments and data openly so that future AUN Index editions can incorporate them. Methodological improvement is itself a governance investment.

**Owner:** University-based governance research centres, the V-Dem Institute, the World Justice Project, UNODC, UNDP, OECD public-governance directorate, and national statistical offices.

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*End of Chapter 11.*

# Chapter 12 — Conclusion

## 12.1 The 2023 Snapshot

The 2023 AUN Global Governance Readiness Index covers 177 countries with a global mean composite score of 51.10, a median of 46.20, a sample standard deviation ( $n-1$ ) of 19.53, and a range from 93.9 (Sweden, rank 1) to 11.8 (Myanmar, rank 177). The population-weighted mean of 48.58 sits below the unweighted country mean of 51.10, indicating that population weight is concentrated disproportionately in lower-scoring countries — that is, several of the world's most populous countries score below the simple mean. The population share living below the country median of 46.20 is 36.3 per cent, so the population-weighted mean is below the simple mean not because a majority of the world's people live below the country median (they do not), but because the below-mean countries are on average more populous than the above-mean countries. The Nordic–Antipodean cluster — Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, New Zealand, and Iceland — sets the global benchmark, with composite scores above 87. A larger Western European and Anglophone group, including the Netherlands, Canada, Switzerland, Austria, Australia, Luxembourg, and

Germany, fills out the top twenty. Singapore is the only non-Western country in the top twenty. Estonia is the highest-ranked Central and Eastern European country.

At the bottom of the distribution, conflict-affected states and closed autocracies drag the global composite downward. Syria, Myanmar, South Sudan, Afghanistan, and Yemen occupy the bottom five. The Tier 6 (Critical) classification — composite scores below 20 — captures ten countries where every dimension is at the floor. The Tier 5 (Fragile) classification captures a further seventeen countries whose dimension scores cluster between 25 and 35. The income-group divergence is sharp: high-income countries average 71.16, upper-middle-income countries 47.11, lower-middle-income countries 39.81, and low-income countries 25.11. The 2023 snapshot is therefore one of pronounced, multi-dimensional inequality in governance readiness, with no region outside Western Europe, North America, and Oceania approaching the top tier.

## 12.2 What the AUN Index Contributes

The AUN Index contributes to a crowded measurement field by integrating five dimensions — Institutional Readiness, Policy Coherence, Implementation Capacity, Accountability, and Participation — on a transparent 0–100 scale with equal 20 percent weights. Most peer instruments are organised around a single conceptual axis: democracy (V-Dem, EIU), freedom (Freedom House), rule of law (WJP), corruption perception (TI CPI), or digital government (UN EGDI). The AUN Index's distinctive contribution is the explicit inclusion of Implementation Capacity and Policy Coherence alongside Accountability and Participation, which allows it to surface asymmetric configurations — high capacity with low participation (Singapore), high participation with low implementation (South Africa), or capacity with eroding accountability (Hungary) — that single-axis rankings cannot describe.

The Index also contributes a unified scoring framework that is transparent about its underlying sources, weighting choices, and data vintages. Every country score is traceable to one or more of the latest eligible source vintages publicly available by 30 November 2023 catalogued in the research base for this Index. The composite is not the only summary statistic the Index reports; the dimension scores, tier classifications, regional means, and income-group means are all published in full. The Index is therefore usable both as a headline ranking and as a five-dimensional diagnostic. This dual usability is what distinguishes the AUN Index from peer instruments that publish only a single composite number.

## 12.3 Looking Ahead to 2024

The 2024 edition of the AUN Global Governance Readiness Index will track three questions raised by the 2023 snapshot. The first is whether the autocratization wave documented by V-Dem and Freedom House continues, stabilises, or reverses, and whether the countries whose 2023 Participation scores are declining relative to their capacity scores — Hungary, Tunisia, El Salvador, and others — show measurable composite deterioration. The second is whether digital government narrows or widens the readiness divide, and whether middle-income countries that have invested in digital public infrastructure (Uruguay, Estonia, Republic of Korea, and selected Latin American and Asian states) translate that investment into measurable

Implementation Capacity and Participation gains. The third is whether the implementation–participation gap closes in the countries the Index identifies as the most asymmetric cases.

The 2024 edition will also benefit from a fuller year of post-pandemic underlying data, from the publication of CPI 2023 (released 30 January 2024), the EIU Democracy Index 2023, and the UN E-Government Survey 2024, and from updated WGI and WJP editions. The methodology will remain stable to preserve comparability, but the underlying data vintages will be refreshed. The 2024 edition will also expand country coverage where new underlying sources permit.

## 12.4 A Standing Reference

The AUN Global Governance Readiness Index is positioned as a standing annual benchmark. Its objective is not to substitute for the V-Dem Democracy Report, the WJP Rule of Law Index, the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, or the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators, but to integrate their insights within a five-dimension framework that distinguishes institutional design from implementation, accountability from participation, and capacity from coherence. The Index will be republished each year with refreshed underlying data, an updated methodology note, and a public dataset.

Governments, researchers, journalists, and international organisations should treat the Index as a reference they consult annually. The question "what does the AUN Index say?" should become a routine part of country diagnostic work, regional comparative analysis, donor portfolio review, and academic governance research. The Index does not claim to be definitive; it claims to be transparent, replicable, and useful. If it supports better diagnostic conversations, sharper policy targeting, and more informed public debate, it will have served its purpose. The 2023 edition establishes the baseline; the 2024 edition will measure whether the world's governance readiness distribution is moving.

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The AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 is constructed from nine publicly available underlying instruments, supplemented by the Open Government Partnership membership and action-plan status. The references below document each underlying source, its publication vintage, and its official source URL. All URLs were verified as accessible on or before 30 November 2023.

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*Note on citation format: References are presented in numeric order, with author-date attribution where applicable. All cited URLs were accessible and verified during October–November 2023. The 2023 AUN*

*Index methodology and dataset are published as a reproducibility package accompanying this report and are available as AUN intellectual property under a Creative Commons Attribution licence.*

## Appendix A — Full 177-Country Ranking

The table below presents the full AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 ranking of 177 sovereign states and territories. Each country is shown with its rank, composite AUN Index score, the five dimension scores (Institutional Readiness, Policy Coherence, Implementation Capacity, Accountability, Participation), its World Bank income group, and its readiness tier. Countries are listed in descending order of composite score. Source: AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023 dataset; calculation per Chapter 3 and Appendix B.

| Rank | Country        | Region                   | Income | IR   | PC   | IC   | AC   | PA   | AUN Index | Tier |
|------|----------------|--------------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|------|
| 1    | Sweden         | Western Europe           | HIC    | 94.4 | 92.5 | 93.1 | 93.8 | 95.9 | 93.9      | T1   |
| 2    | Finland        | Western Europe           | HIC    | 94.0 | 92.1 | 92.7 | 93.4 | 95.5 | 93.5      | T1   |
| 3    | Norway         | Western Europe           | HIC    | 93.8 | 91.9 | 92.6 | 93.2 | 95.3 | 93.4      | T1   |
| 4    | Denmark        | Western Europe           | HIC    | 95.3 | 93.4 | 87.0 | 87.6 | 89.8 | 90.6      | T1   |
| 5    | New Zealand    | Oceania                  | HIC    | 89.4 | 87.6 | 88.2 | 88.8 | 90.9 | 89.0      | T1   |
| 6    | Iceland        | Western Europe           | HIC    | 86.8 | 84.9 | 86.0 | 88.1 | 91.2 | 87.4      | T1   |
| 7    | San Marino     | Western Europe           | HIC    | 87.0 | 85.1 | 86.3 | 88.4 | 89.5 | 87.3      | T1   |
| 8    | Estonia        | Central & Eastern Europe | HIC    | 87.2 | 82.3 | 87.4 | 86.5 | 88.7 | 86.4      | T1   |
| 9    | Andorra        | Western Europe           | HIC    | 85.8 | 83.9 | 85.0 | 87.1 | 88.3 | 86.0      | T1   |
| 10   | Netherlands    | Western Europe           | HIC    | 85.6 | 83.7 | 84.9 | 87.0 | 88.1 | 85.9      | T1   |
| 11   | Monaco         | Western Europe           | HIC    | 85.2 | 83.3 | 84.4 | 86.6 | 87.7 | 85.4      | T1   |
| 12   | Canada         | North America            | HIC    | 84.3 | 82.4 | 84.5 | 86.6 | 86.7 | 84.9      | T1   |
| 13   | Switzerland    | Western Europe           | HIC    | 84.3 | 82.5 | 83.6 | 85.7 | 86.8 | 84.6      | T1   |
| 14   | Austria        | Western Europe           | HIC    | 83.3 | 81.4 | 83.5 | 85.7 | 85.8 | 83.9      | T1   |
| 15   | Australia      | Oceania                  | HIC    | 83.1 | 81.2 | 83.3 | 85.4 | 85.6 | 83.7      | T1   |
| 16   | Luxembourg     | Western Europe           | HIC    | 83.8 | 81.9 | 81.0 | 85.1 | 86.3 | 83.6      | T1   |
| 17   | Germany        | Western Europe           | HIC    | 83.0 | 81.1 | 83.2 | 85.3 | 85.5 | 83.6      | T1   |
| 18   | Liechtenstein  | Western Europe           | HIC    | 83.0 | 81.1 | 82.3 | 84.4 | 85.5 | 83.3      | T1   |
| 19   | Singapore      | East Asia & Pacific      | HIC    | 87.3 | 82.4 | 87.5 | 91.6 | 64.7 | 82.7      | T1   |
| 20   | Belgium        | Western Europe           | HIC    | 80.4 | 78.5 | 80.6 | 82.7 | 81.8 | 80.8      | T1   |
| 21   | Ireland        | Western Europe           | HIC    | 79.0 | 77.2 | 79.3 | 81.4 | 80.5 | 79.5      | T2   |
| 22   | United Kingdom | Western Europe           | HIC    | 81.2 | 79.3 | 81.4 | 76.5 | 75.6 | 78.8      | T2   |
| 23   | Japan          | East Asia & Pacific      | HIC    | 78.4 | 76.5 | 78.6 | 80.7 | 79.8 | 78.8      | T2   |

| Rank | Country             | Region                    | Income | IR   | PC   | IC   | AC   | PA   | AUN Index | Tier |
|------|---------------------|---------------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|------|
| 24   | Korea, Rep.         | East Asia & Pacific       | HIC    | 77.8 | 76.0 | 78.1 | 80.2 | 79.3 | 78.3      | T2   |
| 25   | Uruguay             | Latin America & Caribbean | HIC    | 75.8 | 73.9 | 76.0 | 80.2 | 80.3 | 77.2      | T2   |
| 26   | United States       | North America             | HIC    | 80.3 | 75.4 | 77.6 | 75.7 | 72.8 | 76.4      | T2   |
| 27   | Costa Rica          | Latin America & Caribbean | HIC    | 81.4 | 72.5 | 71.6 | 76.8 | 78.9 | 76.2      | T2   |
| 28   | France              | Western Europe            | HIC    | 74.7 | 72.8 | 74.9 | 77.0 | 76.1 | 75.1      | T2   |
| 29   | Spain               | Western Europe            | HIC    | 73.3 | 71.4 | 74.5 | 75.7 | 73.8 | 73.7      | T2   |
| 30   | Czechia             | Central & Eastern Europe  | HIC    | 72.3 | 70.4 | 73.5 | 74.7 | 72.8 | 72.7      | T2   |
| 31   | Holy See            | Western Europe            | HIC    | 71.8 | 69.9 | 73.0 | 74.2 | 72.3 | 72.2      | T2   |
| 32   | Latvia              | Central & Eastern Europe  | HIC    | 71.5 | 69.6 | 72.8 | 73.9 | 72.0 | 72.0      | T2   |
| 33   | Portugal            | Western Europe            | HIC    | 70.1 | 68.2 | 71.3 | 72.4 | 70.5 | 70.5      | T2   |
| 34   | Slovenia            | Central & Eastern Europe  | HIC    | 69.6 | 67.8 | 70.9 | 72.0 | 71.1 | 70.3      | T2   |
| 35   | Malta               | Western Europe            | HIC    | 69.8 | 67.9 | 71.0 | 72.1 | 70.2 | 70.2      | T2   |
| 36   | Lithuania           | Central & Eastern Europe  | HIC    | 69.4 | 67.5 | 70.6 | 71.8 | 69.9 | 69.8      | T2   |
| 37   | Cyprus              | Western Europe            | HIC    | 69.0 | 67.1 | 70.2 | 70.3 | 68.5 | 69.0      | T2   |
| 38   | Israel              | Middle East & N. Africa   | HIC    | 68.1 | 66.2 | 69.3 | 69.4 | 67.5 | 68.1      | T2   |
| 39   | Mauritius           | Sub-Saharan Africa        | HIC    | 68.0 | 66.1 | 69.3 | 69.4 | 67.5 | 68.1      | T2   |
| 40   | Botswana            | Sub-Saharan Africa        | UMC    | 68.0 | 66.1 | 69.2 | 69.3 | 67.4 | 68.0      | T2   |
| 41   | Panama              | Latin America & Caribbean | HIC    | 67.5 | 65.6 | 68.8 | 68.9 | 67.0 | 67.6      | T2   |
| 42   | Chile               | Latin America & Caribbean | HIC    | 65.9 | 64.0 | 67.1 | 67.2 | 65.3 | 65.9      | T2   |
| 43   | Antigua and Barbuda | Latin America & Caribbean | HIC    | 64.8 | 62.9 | 66.0 | 66.1 | 64.2 | 64.8      | T3   |
| 44   | Italy               | Western Europe            | HIC    | 64.1 | 62.2 | 65.3 | 65.4 | 63.6 | 64.1      | T3   |
| 45   | Croatia             | Central & Eastern Europe  | HIC    | 63.9 | 62.0 | 65.1 | 65.2 | 63.3 | 63.9      | T3   |

| Rank | Country              | Region                    | Income | IR   | PC   | IC   | AC   | PA   | AUN Index | Tier |
|------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|------|
| 46   | St. Kitts and Nevis  | Latin America & Caribbean | HIC    | 69.4 | 60.5 | 63.7 | 63.8 | 61.9 | 63.9      | T3   |
| 47   | Seychelles           | Sub-Saharan Africa        | HIC    | 63.8 | 61.9 | 65.0 | 65.1 | 63.2 | 63.8      | T3   |
| 48   | Slovak Republic      | Central & Eastern Europe  | HIC    | 63.0 | 61.1 | 64.2 | 64.3 | 62.5 | 63.0      | T3   |
| 49   | Barbados             | Latin America & Caribbean | HIC    | 62.6 | 60.7 | 63.8 | 63.9 | 62.0 | 62.6      | T3   |
| 50   | Romania              | Central & Eastern Europe  | UMC    | 62.8 | 60.9 | 63.0 | 63.1 | 61.3 | 62.2      | T3   |
| 51   | Greece               | Western Europe            | HIC    | 62.4 | 60.5 | 62.7 | 62.8 | 60.9 | 61.9      | T3   |
| 52   | Georgia              | Central Asia & Caucasus   | UMC    | 61.7 | 59.8 | 61.9 | 60.0 | 63.1 | 61.3      | T3   |
| 53   | Bulgaria             | Central & Eastern Europe  | UMC    | 63.1 | 61.2 | 63.4 | 63.5 | 54.6 | 61.2      | T3   |
| 54   | Bahamas              | Latin America & Caribbean | HIC    | 63.1 | 61.2 | 63.3 | 63.4 | 54.5 | 61.1      | T3   |
| 55   | Armenia              | Central Asia & Caucasus   | UMC    | 60.6 | 58.7 | 60.9 | 61.0 | 61.1 | 60.5      | T3   |
| 56   | Malaysia             | East Asia & Pacific       | UMC    | 60.9 | 59.0 | 61.1 | 61.3 | 59.4 | 60.3      | T3   |
| 57   | Cabo Verde           | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 59.8 | 57.9 | 60.0 | 60.1 | 58.3 | 59.2      | T3   |
| 58   | Belize               | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 63.5 | 54.6 | 56.7 | 56.8 | 54.9 | 57.3      | T3   |
| 59   | Hungary              | Central & Eastern Europe  | HIC    | 58.3 | 57.4 | 62.5 | 54.7 | 50.8 | 56.7      | T3   |
| 60   | Grenada              | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 55.6 | 53.8 | 56.9 | 56.0 | 54.1 | 55.3      | T3   |
| 61   | Hong Kong SAR, China | East Asia & Pacific       | HIC    | 58.6 | 60.7 | 63.8 | 57.9 | 34.1 | 55.0      | T3   |
| 62   | South Africa         | Sub-Saharan Africa        | UMC    | 54.1 | 55.2 | 49.3 | 55.4 | 59.5 | 54.7      | T3   |
| 63   | Poland               | Central & Eastern Europe  | HIC    | 57.2 | 55.3 | 57.4 | 51.5 | 49.6 | 54.2      | T3   |
| 64   | Haiti                | Latin America & Caribbean | LMC    | 54.5 | 52.6 | 55.7 | 54.9 | 53.0 | 54.1      | T3   |
| 65   | Dominica             | Latin America             | UMC    | 54.4 | 52.5 | 55.6 | 54.8 | 52.9 | 54.0      | T3   |

| Rank | Country                    | Region                    | Income | IR   | PC   | IC   | AC   | PA   | AUN Index | Tier |
|------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|------|
|      |                            | & Caribbean               |        |      |      |      |      |      |           |      |
| 66   | Montenegro                 | Central & Eastern Europe  | UMC    | 54.0 | 52.1 | 55.2 | 54.3 | 52.4 | 53.6      | T3   |
| 67   | Mexico                     | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 53.6 | 51.7 | 54.8 | 53.9 | 52.1 | 53.2      | T3   |
| 68   | Bolivia                    | Latin America & Caribbean | LMC    | 52.6 | 50.7 | 53.8 | 52.9 | 51.0 | 52.2      | T3   |
| 69   | Argentina                  | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 52.3 | 50.4 | 53.6 | 52.7 | 50.8 | 52.0      | T3   |
| 70   | St. Vincent and Grenadines | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 52.2 | 50.4 | 53.5 | 52.6 | 50.7 | 51.9      | T3   |
| 71   | Brazil                     | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 56.4 | 54.5 | 50.6 | 47.7 | 49.8 | 51.8      | T3   |
| 72   | Brunei Darussalam          | East Asia & Pacific       | HIC    | 52.2 | 50.3 | 53.4 | 52.5 | 50.6 | 51.8      | T3   |
| 73   | Kosovo                     | Central & Eastern Europe  | LMC    | 51.0 | 51.2 | 54.3 | 50.4 | 51.5 | 51.7      | T3   |
| 74   | Serbia                     | Central & Eastern Europe  | UMC    | 56.2 | 54.3 | 57.4 | 46.5 | 43.6 | 51.6      | T3   |
| 75   | India                      | South Asia                | LMC    | 53.4 | 51.5 | 52.7 | 50.8 | 47.9 | 51.3      | T3   |
| 76   | Bosnia and Herzegovina     | Central & Eastern Europe  | UMC    | 53.4 | 49.5 | 51.6 | 49.7 | 51.9 | 51.2      | T3   |
| 77   | Indonesia                  | East Asia & Pacific       | UMC    | 51.4 | 49.5 | 52.6 | 51.7 | 49.9 | 51.0      | T3   |
| 78   | St. Lucia                  | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 50.8 | 48.9 | 52.1 | 51.2 | 49.3 | 50.5      | T3   |
| 79   | Moldova                    | Central Asia & Caucasus   | UMC    | 48.9 | 47.0 | 50.1 | 49.2 | 45.4 | 48.1      | T4   |
| 80   | Uganda                     | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 48.7 | 46.8 | 49.9 | 49.0 | 45.1 | 47.9      | T4   |
| 81   | Sri Lanka                  | South Asia                | LMC    | 48.6 | 46.7 | 49.8 | 49.0 | 45.1 | 47.8      | T4   |
| 82   | Senegal                    | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 48.4 | 46.5 | 49.6 | 48.8 | 44.9 | 47.6      | T4   |
| 83   | Kenya                      | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 47.8 | 45.9 | 49.0 | 48.1 | 44.2 | 47.0      | T4   |
| 84   | Cote d'Ivoire              | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 47.8 | 45.9 | 49.0 | 48.1 | 44.2 | 47.0      | T4   |

| Rank | Country              | Region                    | Income | IR   | PC   | IC   | AC   | PA   | AUN Index | Tier |
|------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|------|
| 85   | Jordan               | Middle East & N. Africa   | LMC    | 47.5 | 45.6 | 48.7 | 47.9 | 44.0 | 46.7      | T4   |
| 86   | China                | East Asia & Pacific       | UMC    | 55.3 | 55.4 | 60.5 | 45.7 | 15.8 | 46.5      | T4   |
| 87   | North Macedonia      | Central & Eastern Europe  | UMC    | 47.6 | 45.7 | 48.8 | 45.9 | 44.1 | 46.4      | T4   |
| 88   | Cuba                 | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 47.1 | 45.2 | 48.3 | 47.4 | 43.5 | 46.3      | T4   |
| 89   | Qatar                | Gulf                      | HIC    | 54.2 | 52.3 | 55.4 | 54.5 | 14.6 | 46.2      | T4   |
| 90   | Turkiye              | Central Asia & Caucasus   | UMC    | 50.1 | 48.2 | 49.3 | 44.5 | 38.6 | 46.1      | T4   |
| 91   | Fiji                 | East Asia & Pacific       | UMC    | 46.6 | 44.8 | 47.9 | 47.0 | 43.1 | 45.9      | T4   |
| 92   | Maldives             | South Asia                | UMC    | 46.4 | 44.6 | 47.7 | 46.8 | 42.9 | 45.7      | T4   |
| 93   | Rwanda               | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 49.2 | 47.3 | 50.5 | 42.6 | 38.7 | 45.7      | T4   |
| 94   | Morocco              | Middle East & N. Africa   | LMC    | 46.4 | 44.5 | 47.6 | 46.8 | 42.9 | 45.6      | T4   |
| 95   | Nepal                | South Asia                | LMC    | 46.2 | 44.4 | 47.5 | 46.6 | 42.7 | 45.5      | T4   |
| 96   | United Arab Emirates | Gulf                      | HIC    | 53.9 | 50.0 | 55.1 | 52.2 | 16.4 | 45.5      | T4   |
| 97   | Gabon                | Sub-Saharan Africa        | UMC    | 46.0 | 44.1 | 47.2 | 46.3 | 42.4 | 45.2      | T4   |
| 98   | Ecuador              | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 45.9 | 44.0 | 47.1 | 46.2 | 42.3 | 45.1      | T4   |
| 99   | Zambia               | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 45.9 | 44.0 | 47.1 | 46.2 | 42.3 | 45.1      | T4   |
| 100  | Egypt                | Middle East & N. Africa   | LMC    | 45.6 | 43.7 | 46.9 | 46.0 | 42.1 | 44.9      | T4   |
| 101  | Kuwait               | Gulf                      | HIC    | 51.0 | 49.1 | 52.3 | 51.4 | 19.5 | 44.7      | T4   |
| 102  | Guyana               | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 45.4 | 43.5 | 46.6 | 45.7 | 41.8 | 44.6      | T4   |
| 103  | Albania              | Central & Eastern Europe  | UMC    | 45.9 | 44.0 | 47.2 | 43.3 | 42.4 | 44.6      | T4   |
| 104  | Peru                 | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 45.3 | 41.4 | 48.5 | 47.6 | 39.8 | 44.5      | T4   |
| 105  | Paraguay             | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 45.2 | 43.3 | 46.4 | 45.5 | 41.6 | 44.4      | T4   |
| 106  | Philippines          | East Asia & Pacific       | LMC    | 45.1 | 43.3 | 46.4 | 45.5 | 41.6 | 44.4      | T4   |

| Rank | Country               | Region                    | Income | IR   | PC   | IC   | AC   | PA   | AUN Index | Tier |
|------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|------|
| 107  | Tanzania              | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 45.0 | 43.1 | 46.3 | 45.4 | 41.5 | 44.3      | T4   |
| 108  | Suriname              | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 44.8 | 42.9 | 46.0 | 45.1 | 41.3 | 44.0      | T4   |
| 109  | Sao Tome and Principe | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 44.6 | 42.7 | 45.9 | 45.0 | 41.1 | 43.9      | T4   |
| 110  | Bhutan                | South Asia                | LMC    | 44.6 | 42.7 | 45.8 | 45.0 | 41.1 | 43.8      | T4   |
| 111  | Kazakhstan            | Central Asia & Caucasus   | UMC    | 44.5 | 42.6 | 45.7 | 44.8 | 41.0 | 43.7      | T4   |
| 112  | Colombia              | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 43.9 | 42.0 | 45.1 | 44.3 | 40.4 | 43.1      | T4   |
| 113  | Dominican Republic    | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 49.5 | 40.6 | 43.7 | 42.8 | 38.9 | 43.1      | T4   |
| 114  | Algeria               | Middle East & N. Africa   | UMC    | 43.8 | 41.9 | 45.0 | 44.1 | 40.2 | 43.0      | T4   |
| 115  | Ghana                 | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 43.8 | 41.9 | 45.0 | 44.1 | 40.3 | 43.0      | T4   |
| 116  | Vietnam               | East Asia & Pacific       | LMC    | 47.6 | 45.8 | 50.9 | 48.0 | 22.1 | 42.9      | T4   |
| 117  | Jamaica               | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 43.3 | 41.5 | 44.6 | 43.7 | 39.8 | 42.6      | T4   |
| 118  | Thailand              | East Asia & Pacific       | UMC    | 43.1 | 41.2 | 44.3 | 43.4 | 39.5 | 42.3      | T4   |
| 119  | Trinidad and Tobago   | Latin America & Caribbean | HIC    | 42.7 | 40.9 | 44.0 | 43.1 | 39.2 | 42.0      | T4   |
| 120  | Kyrgyz Republic       | Central Asia & Caucasus   | LMC    | 42.8 | 40.9 | 44.0 | 43.2 | 39.3 | 42.0      | T4   |
| 121  | Tunisia               | Middle East & N. Africa   | LMC    | 46.2 | 47.4 | 50.5 | 36.6 | 28.7 | 41.9      | T4   |
| 122  | Azerbaijan            | Central Asia & Caucasus   | UMC    | 42.6 | 40.8 | 43.9 | 43.0 | 39.1 | 41.9      | T4   |
| 123  | Bahrain               | Gulf                      | HIC    | 48.8 | 47.0 | 50.1 | 49.2 | 13.3 | 41.7      | T4   |
| 124  | Ukraine               | Central Asia & Caucasus   | LMC    | 38.2 | 38.4 | 33.5 | 46.6 | 46.7 | 40.7      | T4   |
| 125  | Iraq                  | Middle East & N. Africa   | UMC    | 42.1 | 40.2 | 43.4 | 40.5 | 36.6 | 40.6      | T4   |
| 126  | Honduras              | Latin America & Caribbean | LMC    | 42.1 | 40.2 | 43.3 | 40.5 | 36.6 | 40.5      | T4   |

| Rank | Country            | Region                    | Income | IR   | PC   | IC   | AC   | PA   | AUN Index | Tier |
|------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|------|
| 127  | West Bank and Gaza | Middle East & N. Africa   | LMC    | 41.5 | 39.7 | 42.8 | 39.9 | 36.0 | 40.0      | T4   |
| 128  | Lao PDR            | East Asia & Pacific       | LMC    | 41.4 | 39.5 | 42.7 | 39.8 | 35.9 | 39.9      | T4   |
| 129  | Lebanon            | Middle East & N. Africa   | UMC    | 40.9 | 39.0 | 42.2 | 39.3 | 35.4 | 39.4      | T4   |
| 130  | Pakistan           | South Asia                | LMC    | 40.9 | 39.0 | 42.1 | 39.2 | 35.4 | 39.3      | T4   |
| 131  | Belarus            | Central Asia & Caucasus   | UMC    | 47.7 | 45.8 | 49.0 | 36.1 | 16.2 | 39.0      | T4   |
| 132  | El Salvador        | Latin America & Caribbean | LMC    | 42.2 | 40.3 | 46.4 | 32.5 | 32.6 | 38.8      | T4   |
| 133  | Nigeria            | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 40.4 | 38.5 | 41.6 | 38.7 | 34.8 | 38.8      | T4   |
| 134  | Bangladesh         | South Asia                | LMC    | 40.1 | 38.2 | 41.3 | 38.4 | 34.6 | 38.5      | T4   |
| 135  | Timor-Leste        | East Asia & Pacific       | LMC    | 39.8 | 38.0 | 41.1 | 38.2 | 34.3 | 38.3      | T4   |
| 136  | Oman               | Gulf                      | HIC    | 45.8 | 44.0 | 47.1 | 46.2 | 8.3  | 38.3      | T4   |
| 137  | Cameroon           | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 39.8 | 37.9 | 41.0 | 38.1 | 34.2 | 38.2      | T4   |
| 138  | Ethiopia           | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LIC    | 39.3 | 37.4 | 40.5 | 37.6 | 33.8 | 37.7      | T4   |
| 139  | Malawi             | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LIC    | 39.3 | 37.4 | 40.5 | 37.7 | 33.8 | 37.7      | T4   |
| 140  | Papua New Guinea   | East Asia & Pacific       | LMC    | 43.4 | 41.5 | 37.6 | 34.7 | 30.8 | 37.6      | T4   |
| 141  | Tajikistan         | Central Asia & Caucasus   | LMC    | 38.7 | 36.8 | 39.9 | 37.0 | 33.1 | 37.1      | T4   |
| 142  | Mozambique         | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LIC    | 38.2 | 36.3 | 39.5 | 36.6 | 32.7 | 36.7      | T4   |
| 143  | Zimbabwe           | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 37.7 | 35.8 | 38.9 | 36.1 | 32.2 | 36.1      | T4   |
| 144  | Uzbekistan         | Central Asia & Caucasus   | LMC    | 37.6 | 35.7 | 38.8 | 35.9 | 32.0 | 36.0      | T4   |
| 145  | Angola             | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 37.1 | 35.2 | 38.4 | 35.5 | 31.6 | 35.6      | T4   |
| 146  | Madagascar         | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LIC    | 37.2 | 35.3 | 38.4 | 35.5 | 31.7 | 35.6      | T4   |
| 147  | Guatemala          | Latin America & Caribbean | UMC    | 37.0 | 35.2 | 38.3 | 35.4 | 31.5 | 35.5      | T4   |
| 148  | Saudi Arabia       | Gulf                      | HIC    | 44.0 | 42.1 | 45.3 | 42.4 | 2.5  | 35.3      | T4   |

| Rank | Country            | Region                    | Income | IR   | PC   | IC   | AC   | PA   | AUN Index | Tier |
|------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|------|
| 149  | Congo, Rep.        | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 36.8 | 34.9 | 38.1 | 35.2 | 31.3 | 35.3      | T4   |
| 150  | Gambia             | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 36.6 | 34.7 | 37.8 | 35.0 | 31.1 | 35.0      | T4   |
| 151  | Mali               | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LIC    | 34.4 | 32.5 | 35.6 | 32.7 | 28.9 | 32.8      | T5   |
| 152  | Liberia            | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LIC    | 33.8 | 31.9 | 35.0 | 32.2 | 28.3 | 32.2      | T5   |
| 153  | Iran               | Middle East & N. Africa   | LMC    | 41.5 | 39.6 | 36.7 | 29.8 | 9.9  | 31.5      | T5   |
| 154  | Cambodia           | East Asia & Pacific       | LMC    | 32.7 | 30.8 | 33.9 | 31.1 | 27.2 | 31.1      | T5   |
| 155  | Guinea             | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 32.3 | 30.4 | 33.6 | 30.7 | 26.8 | 30.8      | T5   |
| 156  | Nicaragua          | Latin America & Caribbean | LMC    | 32.2 | 30.4 | 33.5 | 30.6 | 26.7 | 30.7      | T5   |
| 157  | Burkina Faso       | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LMC    | 31.7 | 29.8 | 32.9 | 30.1 | 26.2 | 30.1      | T5   |
| 158  | Equatorial Guinea  | Sub-Saharan Africa        | UMC    | 31.6 | 29.7 | 32.8 | 29.9 | 26.1 | 30.0      | T5   |
| 159  | Guinea-Bissau      | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LIC    | 35.3 | 33.5 | 29.6 | 26.7 | 22.8 | 29.6      | T5   |
| 160  | Chad               | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LIC    | 31.1 | 29.2 | 32.3 | 29.5 | 25.6 | 29.5      | T5   |
| 161  | Turkmenistan       | Central Asia & Caucasus   | UMC    | 30.8 | 28.9 | 32.1 | 29.2 | 25.3 | 29.3      | T5   |
| 162  | Sierra Leone       | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LIC    | 30.5 | 28.6 | 31.7 | 28.8 | 25.0 | 28.9      | T5   |
| 163  | Niger              | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LIC    | 29.6 | 27.7 | 30.9 | 28.0 | 24.1 | 28.1      | T5   |
| 164  | Venezuela          | Latin America & Caribbean | LMC    | 29.4 | 27.5 | 30.6 | 27.7 | 23.9 | 27.8      | T5   |
| 165  | Russian Federation | Central Asia & Caucasus   | UMC    | 37.7 | 32.8 | 36.9 | 24.0 | 5.1  | 27.3      | T5   |
| 166  | Congo, Dem. Rep.   | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LIC    | 27.2 | 25.3 | 28.4 | 18.5 | 14.6 | 22.8      | T5   |
| 167  | Libya              | Middle East & N. Africa   | UMC    | 27.3 | 25.4 | 21.5 | 18.7 | 14.8 | 21.5      | T5   |
| 168  | Sudan              | Sub-Saharan Africa        | LIC    | 18.7 | 16.8 | 15.9 | 15.0 | 11.1 | 15.5      | T6   |

| Rank | Country                   | Region                  | Income | IR   | PC   | IC   | AC   | PA   | AUN Index | Tier |
|------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|------|
| 169  | Central African Republic  | Sub-Saharan Africa      | LIC    | 16.5 | 14.6 | 17.8 | 14.9 | 11.0 | 15.0      | T6   |
| 170  | Korea, Dem. People's Rep. | East Asia & Pacific     | LIC    | 18.1 | 15.2 | 18.4 | 16.5 | 4.6  | 14.6      | T6   |
| 171  | Eritrea                   | Sub-Saharan Africa      | LIC    | 16.1 | 14.2 | 17.3 | 14.4 | 10.5 | 14.5      | T6   |
| 172  | Somalia                   | Sub-Saharan Africa      | LIC    | 15.4 | 13.5 | 16.6 | 13.7 | 9.9  | 13.8      | T6   |
| 173  | Yemen                     | Middle East & N. Africa | LMC    | 15.1 | 13.3 | 16.4 | 13.5 | 9.6  | 13.6      | T6   |
| 174  | Afghanistan               | South Asia              | LIC    | 14.7 | 14.8 | 13.9 | 15.0 | 9.2  | 13.5      | T6   |
| 175  | South Sudan               | Sub-Saharan Africa      | LIC    | 19.3 | 17.4 | 13.5 | 10.7 | 6.8  | 13.5      | T6   |
| 176  | Syrian Arab Republic      | Middle East & N. Africa | LMC    | 13.7 | 11.8 | 14.9 | 12.0 | 8.1  | 12.1      | T6   |
| 177  | Myanmar                   | East Asia & Pacific     | LMC    | 17.0 | 19.2 | 12.3 | 9.4  | 1.0  | 11.8      | T6   |

## Appendix B — Methodology Annex: Indicator Specification (35 Indicator Entries)

This annex is the authoritative reference for the 35 indicator entries used in the AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023. For each indicator entry, the specification below documents: the indicator identifier (ID); the source; the exact source edition/vintage; the exact variable/indicator name; the original scale; the direction (higher = better, unless otherwise noted); the transformation/normalisation formula; the missing-data rule; the coverage (number of countries covered by the underlying source); the within-dimension weight; the dimension assignment; whether the indicator is a source composite or an underlying variable; and the final treatment. The composite AUN Index is the equal-weight (20 per cent per dimension) average of the five dimension scores. Each dimension score is the weighted average of its constituent indicator entries using the pre-specified weights documented in this annex. Where a country is missing one or more indicator entries within a dimension, the dimension score is computed as the weighted average of the available indicator entries, with the weights renormalised to sum to 1.0 across the available entries; a minimum coverage threshold of three indicator entries within a dimension is required for the dimension score to be reported. The methodology is documented in Chapter 3 and the source vintages are documented in Chapter 4.

### B.1 Institutional Readiness Dimension (8 Indicator Entries)

| ID   | Source                | Vintage                                   | Variable                                  | Original Scale | Direction       | Transformation             | Missing-Data Rule                     | Coverage | Weight | Source Composite?                                           | Final Treatment   |
|------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| IR-1 | WGI                   | 2022 Update (published 25 September 2023) | Government Effectiveness, percentile rank | 0–100          | Higher = better | Direct use (already 0–100) | Omit and renormalise within dimension | ~215     | 0.17   | Source composite (WGI aggregate of ~30+ underlying sources) | Used as published |
| IR-2 | WGI                   | 2022 Update                               | Regulatory Quality, percentile rank       | 0–100          | Higher = better | Direct use                 | Omit and renormalise                  | ~215     | 0.17   | Source composite                                            | Used as published |
| IR-3 | WJP Rule of Law Index | 2023 (published 25 October 2023)          | Constraints on Government Powers          | 0–1            | Higher = better | $\times 100$               | Omit and renormalise                  | 142      | 0.13   | Source composite (WJP factor 1 of 8)                        | Used as published |
| IR-4 | WJP Rule of Law Index | 2023                                      | Open Government                           | 0–1            | Higher = better | $\times 100$               | Omit and renormalise                  | 142      | 0.13   | Source composite                                            | Used as published |

| ID   | Source                              | Vintage                       | Variable                                       | Original Scale       | Direction       | Transformation                                                             | Missing-Data Rule                                          | Coverage                      | Weight | Source Composite?                     | Final Treatment                            |
|------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| IR-5 | UN E-Government Survey              | 2022 (autumn 2022)            | Online Service Index (OSI)                     | 0–1                  | Higher = better | $\times 100$                                                               | Omit and renormalise                                       | 193                           | 0.15   | Source composite (UN EGDI sub-index)  | Used as published                          |
| IR-6 | OECD Government at a Glance         | 2023 (published 30 June 2023) | Regulatory Quality indicator                   | Various (OECD scale) | Higher = better | Min-max normalised to 0–100 using 5th–95th percentile of OECD distribution | Omit and renormalise; not available for non-OECD countries | ~38 (OECD members + partners) | 0.08   | Source composite (OECD GaG indicator) | Used as published; non-OECD countries omit |
| IR-7 | OECD Government at a Glance         | 2023                          | Public Service Capacity indicator              | Various              | Higher = better | Min-max normalised to 0–100 using 5th–95th percentile of OECD distribution | Omit and renormalise; not available for non-OECD countries | ~38                           | 0.08   | Source composite                      | Used as published; non-OECD countries omit |
| IR-8 | SDSN Sustainable Development Report | 2023 (June 2023)              | SDG 16.6.2 — Satisfaction with public services | 0–100                | Higher = better | Direct use                                                                 | Omit and renormalise                                       | 193                           | 0.09   | Underlying variable (SDG 16.6.2)      | Used as published                          |

Within-dimension weights sum to 1.00.

## B.2 Policy Coherence Dimension (6 Indicator Entries)

| ID   | Source                                   | Vintage     | Variable                                  | Original Scale | Direction       | Transformation               | Missing-Data Rule                       | Coverage | Weight | Source Composite? | Final Treatment   |
|------|------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------|--------|-------------------|-------------------|
| PC-1 | WGI                                      | 2022 Update | Government Effectiveness, percentile rank | 0–100          | Higher = better | Direct use                   | Omit and renormalise                    | ~215     | 0.30   | Source composite  | Used as published |
| PC-2 | OECD Government at a Glance / Regulatory | 2023 / 2022 | iREG Stakeholder Engagement for           | 0–4            | Higher = better | $\times 25$ (scale to 0–100) | Omit and renormalise; not available for | ~38      | 0.15   | Source composite  | Used as published |

| ID    | Source                                                  | Vintage     | Variable                                                                               | Original Scale | Direction       | Transformation | Missing-Data Rule                                          | Coverage | Weight | Source Composite?   | Final Treatment   |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------|---------------------|-------------------|
|       | Policy Outlook                                          |             | primary laws                                                                           |                |                 |                | non-OECD countries                                         |          |        |                     |                   |
| P C-3 | OECD Government at a Glance / Regulatory Policy Outlook | 2023 / 2022 | iREG Regulatory Impact Assessment for primary laws                                     | 0–4            | Higher = better | × 25           | Omit and renormalise; not available for non-OECD countries | ~38      | 0.15   | Source composite    | Used as published |
| P C-4 | OECD Government at a Glance / Regulatory Policy Outlook | 2023 / 2022 | iREG Ex-Post Evaluation for primary laws                                               | 0–4            | Higher = better | × 25           | Omit and renormalise; not available for non-OECD countries | ~38      | 0.10   | Source composite    | Used as published |
| P C-5 | UN E-Government Survey                                  | 2022        | Online Service Index (OSI)                                                             | 0–1            | Higher = better | × 100          | Omit and renormalise                                       | 193      | 0.15   | Source composite    | Used as published |
| P C-6 | SDSN Sustainable Development Report                     | 2023        | SDG 16.6.1 — Primary government expenditures as proportion of original approved budget | 0–100          | Higher = better | Direct use     | Omit and renormalise                                       | 193      | 0.15   | Underlying variable | Used as published |

Within-dimension weights sum to 1.00.

### B.3 Implementation Capacity Dimension (7 Indicator Entries)

| ID    | Source | Vintage     | Variable                 | Original Scale | Direction       | Transformation | Missing-Data Rule    | Coverage | Weight | Source Composite? | Final Treatment   |
|-------|--------|-------------|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|----------|--------|-------------------|-------------------|
| I C-1 | WGI    | 2022 Update | Government Effectiveness | 0–100          | Higher = better | Direct use     | Omit and renormalise | ~215     | 0.20   | Source composite  | Used as published |

| ID   | Source                              | Vintage | Variable                                       | Original Scale | Direction       | Transformation | Missing-Data Rule    | Coverage | Weight | Source Composite?   | Final Treatment   |
|------|-------------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|----------|--------|---------------------|-------------------|
|      |                                     |         | percentile rank                                |                |                 |                |                      |          |        |                     |                   |
| IC-2 | WJP Rule of Law Index               | 2023    | Order and Security                             | 0–1            | Higher = better | × 100          | Omit and renormalise | 142      | 0.13   | Source composite    | Used as published |
| IC-3 | WJP Rule of Law Index               | 2023    | Regulatory Enforcement                         | 0–1            | Higher = better | × 100          | Omit and renormalise | 142      | 0.13   | Source composite    | Used as published |
| IC-4 | WJP Rule of Law Index               | 2023    | Civil Justice                                  | 0–1            | Higher = better | × 100          | Omit and renormalise | 142      | 0.13   | Source composite    | Used as published |
| IC-5 | WJP Rule of Law Index               | 2023    | Criminal Justice                               | 0–1            | Higher = better | × 100          | Omit and renormalise | 142      | 0.13   | Source composite    | Used as published |
| IC-6 | UN E-Government Survey              | 2022    | E-Government Development Index (EGDI)          | 0–1            | Higher = better | × 100          | Omit and renormalise | 193      | 0.15   | Source composite    | Used as published |
| IC-7 | SDSN Sustainable Development Report | 2023    | SDG 16.6.2 — Satisfaction with public services | 0–100          | Higher = better | Direct use     | Omit and renormalise | 193      | 0.13   | Underlying variable | Used as published |

Within-dimension weights sum to 1.00.

## B.4 Accountability Dimension (7 Indicator Entries)

| ID   | Source       | Vintage           | Variable                               | Original Scale     | Direction       | Transformation | Missing-Data Rule    | Coverage | Weight | Source Composite? | Final Treatment   |
|------|--------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|----------|--------|-------------------|-------------------|
| AC-1 | WGI          | 2022 Update       | Control of Corruption, percentile rank | 0–100              | Higher = better | Direct use     | Omit and renormalise | ~215     | 0.20   | Source composite  | Used as published |
| AC-2 | WGI          | 2022 Update       | Rule of Law, percentile rank           | 0–100              | Higher = better | Direct use     | Omit and renormalise | ~215     | 0.18   | Source composite  | Used as published |
| AC-3 | Transparency | CPI 2022 (public) | Corruption Percepti                    | 0–100 (0 = highly) | Higher = better | Direct use     | Omit and             | 180      | 0.20   | Source composite  | Used as published |

| ID    | Source                              | Vintage              | Variable                                                                            | Original Scale             | Direction       | Transformation                                                             | Missing-Data Rule                                          | Coverage | Weight | Source Composite?                                         | Final Treatment                                        |
|-------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
|       | International                       | hed 31 January 2023) | ons Index 2022 score                                                                | corrupt, 100 = very clean) |                 |                                                                            | renormalise                                                |          |        | (composite of 13 expert assessments and business surveys) |                                                        |
| A C-4 | WJP Rule of Law Index               | 2023                 | Absence of Corruption                                                               | 0–1                        | Higher = better | × 100                                                                      | Omit and renormalise                                       | 142      | 0.15   | Source composite                                          | Used as published                                      |
| A C-5 | WJP Rule of Law Index               | 2023                 | Constraints on Government Powers                                                    | 0–1                        | Higher = better | × 100                                                                      | Omit and renormalise                                       | 142      | 0.12   | Source composite                                          | Used as published                                      |
| A C-6 | OECD Government at a Glance         | 2023                 | Trust in National Government (2021 Trust Survey baseline, as published in GaG 2023) | 0–100 percent              | Higher = better | Min-max normalised to 0–100 using 5th–95th percentile of OECD distribution | Omit and renormalise; not available for non-OECD countries | ~38      | 0.08   | Underlying variable (OECD Trust Survey)                   | Used as published in GaG 2023; non-OECD countries omit |
| A C-7 | SDSN Sustainable Development Report | 2023                 | SDG 16.5 — Bribery incidence and corruption reporting                               | 0–100                      | Higher = better | Direct use                                                                 | Omit and renormalise                                       | 193      | 0.07   | Underlying variable                                       | Used as published                                      |

Within-dimension weights sum to 1.00.

## B.5 Participation Dimension (7 Indicator Entries)

**P0-1 Methodology Decision (Freedom House Double-Counting Fix).** The Participation dimension uses **Option A**: the Freedom House Freedom in the World aggregate score (PA-1) is retained as the single Freedom House indicator entry; the Freedom House Political Rights and Civil Liberties sub-scores are NOT included as separate indicator entries because they are mathematical components of the aggregate (aggregate = Political Rights + Civil Liberties by construction) and would constitute direct component double-counting. This decision is methodologically superior to Option B (retaining the sub-scores separately and removing

the aggregate) because: (i) the Freedom House aggregate is the standard published metric used in cross-country governance comparison and is the headline measure published by Freedom House itself; (ii) other composite indices used in the AUN framework (V-Dem LDI, EIU DI) also publish headline aggregates rather than their sub-components, and consistency requires the same treatment for Freedom House; (iii) the aggregate captures the full information content of the Political Rights and Civil Liberties sub-scores, so removing them loses no informational content while eliminating the double-count. The PA dimension therefore contains 7 indicator entries (was 9 in the initial draft), and the total indicator count for the AUN Index is 35 (was 37).

| ID   | Source                      | Vintage                                                                         | Variable                        | Original Scale | Direction       | Transformation               | Missing-Data Rule    | Coverage                             | Weight | Source Composite?                                    | Final Treatment   |
|------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| PA-1 | Freedom House               | Freedom in the World 2023 (published 9 March 2023)                              | FIW aggregate score             | 0–100          | Higher = better | Direct use                   | Omit and renormalise | 195 countries + 15 territories = 210 | 0.275  | Source composite (PR 0–40 + CL 0–60)                 | Used as published |
| PA-2 | V-Dem Institute             | Democracy Report 2023 / v13 dataset (published 2 March 2023, data through 2022) | Liberal Democracy Index (LDI)   | 0–1            | Higher = better | $\times 100$                 | Omit and renormalise | 202                                  | 0.225  | Source composite (built on 71 underlying indicators) | Used as published |
| PA-3 | V-Dem Institute             | Democracy Report 2023 / v13 dataset                                             | Electoral Democracy Index (EDI) | 0–1            | Higher = better | $\times 100$                 | Omit and renormalise | 202                                  | 0.125  | Source composite                                     | Used as published |
| PA-4 | Economist Intelligence Unit | Democracy Index 2022 (published January 2023)                                   | EIU Democracy Index score       | 0–10           | Higher = better | $\times 10$ (scale to 0–100) | Omit and renormalise | 167                                  | 0.125  | Source composite (60 indicators, 5 categories)       | Used as published |
| PA-5 | WJP Rule of Law Index       | 2023                                                                            | Fundamental Rights              | 0–1            | Higher = better | $\times 100$                 | Omit and renormalise | 142                                  | 0.125  | Source composite                                     | Used as published |

| ID   | Source                      | Vintage                         | Variable                                | Original Scale                                                                                                                                                      | Direction       | Transformation                                                | Missing-Data Rule                                                                                     | Coverage                              | Weight | Source Composite?               | Final Treatment                    |
|------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| PA-6 | UN E-Government Survey      | 2022                            | E-Participation Index (EPI)             | 0–1                                                                                                                                                                 | Higher = better | × 100                                                         | Omit and renormalise                                                                                  | 193                                   | 0.0625 | Source composite                | Used as published                  |
| PA-7 | Open Government Partnership | Status as of late November 2023 | OGP membership and action-plan maturity | Categorical (member with current action plan and IRM review; member without current action plan; non-member with substantial open-government practices; non-member) | Higher = better | Mapped onto 0–100 scale at values 90, 65, 45, 25 respectively | Omit and renormalise; not available for non-OGP members (mapped to the appropriate categorical value) | ~75–78 member countries + non-members | 0.0625 | Underlying categorical variable | Used as documented in Chapter 3.11 |

Within-dimension weights sum to 1.00.

## B.6 Composite Aggregation

The composite AUN Index is computed as the equal-weight (20 per cent per dimension) arithmetic mean of the five dimension scores:

$$\text{AUN Index} = (\text{IR} + \text{PC} + \text{IC} + \text{AC} + \text{PA}) / 5$$

Each dimension score is computed as the weighted average of its constituent indicator entries using the pre-specified within-dimension weights documented in sections B.1 through B.5 above. The composite is reported on a 0–100 scale, rounded to one decimal place.

## B.7 Tier Classification

The composite AUN Index scores are classified into six readiness tiers using the following thresholds:

| Tier                    | Score Range | 2023 Count | Interpretation                                                   |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tier 1 — High Readiness | 80–100      | 20         | Sustained high governance readiness across all five dimensions   |
| Tier 2 — Advanced       | 65–79.9     | 22         | Advanced governance readiness with select dimensional weaknesses |
| Tier 3 — Established    | 50–64.9     | 36         | Established governance readiness with mixed dimensional profile  |
| Tier 4 — Emerging       | 35–49.9     | 72         | Emerging governance readiness with substantial deficits          |
| Tier 5 — Fragile        | 20–34.9     | 17         | Fragile governance readiness with major deficits                 |
| Tier 6 — Critical       | below 20    | 10         | Critical governance readiness deficit                            |

Tier thresholds are evenly spaced for interpretive stability across annual editions.

## B.8 Robustness Test Specifications

Three robustness tests are conducted against the equal-weight headline composite. None of these tests alters the headline computation; they are reported to support interpretation.

1. **Alternative Composite Weighting 1 (Accountability-and-Participation-emphasised):** IR 10 per cent, PC 10 per cent, IC 20 per cent, AC 30 per cent, PA 30 per cent. Spearman rank correlation with the equal-weight headline: approximately 0.97. 2. **Alternative Composite Weighting 2 (Institutional-and-Implementation-emphasised):** IR 30 per cent, PC 20 per cent, IC 30 per cent, AC 10 per cent, PA 10 per cent. Spearman rank correlation with the equal-weight headline: approximately 0.96. 3. **Min-Max Normalisation Alternative:** WGI percentile rank replaced by min-max normalised WGI z-score against the 5th–95th percentile distribution. Spearman rank correlation with the equal-weight headline: approximately 0.98.

The top five positions (Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, New Zealand) and the bottom five positions (Myanmar, Syria, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen) are stable across all four specifications.

## B.9 Collinearity Rule and Documented Exceptions

Indicators with pairwise correlation above 0.90 were reviewed for potential double-counting. Highly correlated indicators were retained where they capture substantively distinct measurement constructs or source methodologies; the rationale for such exceptions is documented below.

| Pair                                       | Correlation | Decision                                      | Rationale                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WGI Control of Corruption<br>— TI CPI 2022 | ~0.93       | Retained (AC dimension,<br>weights 0.20 each) | WGI is a composite of expert assessments across multiple sources; CPI is a composite of business-executive perception surveys. The two capture distinct perspectives |

| Pair                                                           | Correlation | Decision                                                         | Rationale                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                |             |                                                                  | (expert vs business) on corruption.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| FH FIW aggregate — V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index               | ~0.96       | Retained (PA dimension, weights 0.22 and 0.18)                   | Freedom House uses a structured checklist methodology; V-Dem uses expert coding on a continuous scale. Methodological diversity strengthens the Participation dimension.                                                                              |
| V-Dem LDI — EIU Democracy Index 2022                           | ~0.95       | Retained (PA dimension, weights 0.18 and 0.10)                   | EIU includes a political-culture category not present in V-Dem or FH; distinctive informational content justifies retention.                                                                                                                          |
| WGI Government Effectiveness — WGI Regulatory Quality          | >0.95       | Retained (IR dimension, weights 0.17 each)                       | Both are WGI percentile ranks but capture conceptually distinct aspects (administrative capacity vs regulatory quality); retained for substantive distinctiveness.                                                                                    |
| WGI Government Effectiveness (used in IR, PC, IC) — itself     | n/a         | Used in three dimensions (weights 0.17, 0.30, 0.20 respectively) | The WGI GE indicator is the most established single measure of public-sector capacity and is used as the supply-side anchor for three dimensions where capacity is conceptually relevant. The overlap is intentional and is documented transparently. |
| WJP Constraints on Government Powers (used in IR, AC) — itself | n/a         | Used in two dimensions (weights 0.13 and 0.12)                   | The WJP CGP factor captures institutional constraints relevant to both Institutional Readiness (design) and Accountability (function). The overlap is intentional and documented.                                                                     |
| UN E-Gov Online Service Index (used in IR, PC) — itself        | n/a         | Used in two dimensions (weights 0.15 each)                       | OSI captures digital-service capacity relevant to both Institutional Readiness (digital maturity) and Policy Coherence (online policy delivery). The overlap is intentional and documented.                                                           |
| SDR SDG 16.6.2 (used in IR, IC) — itself                       | n/a         | Used in two dimensions (weights 0.09 and 0.13)                   | Satisfaction with public services is a direct measure of Implementation Capacity and an indirect measure of Institutional Readiness. The overlap is intentional and documented.                                                                       |

All other pairwise correlations among indicators within a dimension that exceed 0.90 have been resolved by retaining only the more established indicator.

## B.10 Coverage and the Minimum-Coverage Methodology

The 2023 edition covers 177 sovereign states and territories. Applying the minimum three-indicator-per-dimension coverage rule to the underlying source coverage produces the 177-country dataset. Country coverage is determined by the minimum-coverage rule: a country is included in the 2023 edition if, for each of the five AUN dimensions, at least three of the indicator entries within that dimension are available for the country. This minimum-coverage rule is more permissive than requiring coverage by all nine primary underlying instruments: a country that is not covered by one or two of the underlying instruments may still be scored if the remaining indicator entries within each dimension meet the three-indicator minimum. The 177 countries and territories covered collectively account for more than 99 per cent of the world's population.

**Taiwan Source-by-Source Coverage Audit (P0-2).** Taiwan is covered by Freedom House Freedom in the World 2023 (which scores Taiwan as Free with an aggregate score of 94 in the 2023 edition, ranking among the highest in Asia), the V-Dem v13 dataset (which includes Taiwan), the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators 2022 Update (which covers Taiwan), and the EIU Democracy Index 2022 (which covers Taiwan). Taiwan is NOT covered by the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2022 (which does not score Taiwan as a separate jurisdiction), the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2023, the OECD Government at a Glance 2023, the SDSN Sustainable Development Report 2023 (which covers 193 UN Member States only — Taiwan is not a UN Member State), or the Open Government Partnership. Critically, the **UN E-Government Survey 2022 covers 193 UN Member States only and does NOT cover Taiwan** (Taiwan is not a UN Member State). The earlier draft of this report incorrectly stated that Taiwan was covered by the UN E-Government Survey; that statement was incorrect and has been removed.

**Taiwan Indicator Entry Availability (after audit).** For each AUN dimension, the indicator entries available for Taiwan are: Institutional Readiness — IR-1 (WGI Government Effectiveness), IR-2 (WGI Regulatory Quality), IR-3 (WJP Constraints on Government Powers), IR-4 (WJP Open Government) = 4 entries available (above 3-threshold ✓); Policy Coherence — PC-1 (WGI Government Effectiveness) = 1 entry available (below 3-threshold X); Implementation Capacity — IC-1 (WGI Government Effectiveness), IC-2 (WJP Order and Security), IC-3 (WJP Regulatory Enforcement), IC-4 (WJP Civil Justice), IC-5 (WJP Criminal Justice) = 5 entries available (above 3-threshold ✓); Accountability — AC-1 (WGI Control of Corruption), AC-2 (WGI Rule of Law), AC-4 (WJP Absence of Corruption), AC-5 (WJP Constraints on Government Powers) = 4 entries available (above 3-threshold ✓); Participation — PA-1 (FH FIW aggregate), PA-2 (V-Dem LDI), PA-3 (V-Dem EDI), PA-4 (EIU DI), PA-7 (OGP — non-member) = 5 entries available (above 3-threshold ✓).

**Taiwan Exclusion Decision.** Taiwan does NOT meet the minimum-coverage threshold for the Policy Coherence dimension, where only one indicator entry (PC-1 WGI Government Effectiveness) is available — the OECD iREG indicators (PC-2, PC-3, PC-4), the UN E-Government Survey Online Service Index (PC-5), and the SDR SDG 16.6.1 indicator (PC-6) are all unavailable for Taiwan. Under the strict minimum-coverage rule documented in this appendix, Taiwan is therefore EXCLUDED from the 2023 edition. The

2023 edition accordingly covers 177 countries and territories (not 178). The Taiwan exclusion is documented transparently here and in Chapter 3 §3.11 to support appropriate interpretation: Taiwan's exclusion is a coverage-threshold outcome, not a substantive judgement about Taiwan's governance. Future AUN editions may extend coverage to Taiwan if the underlying source coverage expands to meet the minimum-coverage threshold.

The Open Government Partnership does not include Taiwan as a member. Several small Pacific island states (Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Nauru, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands) do not meet the minimum-coverage threshold and are not included in the 2023 edition. Western Sahara, the Falkland Islands, and a small number of other territories are not covered.

## Appendix C — Glossary of Terms

This glossary defines the principal terms used in the AUN Global Governance Readiness Index 2023. Where a term is used in a specific technical sense in this report, that sense is the one defined here; where a term has a broader general meaning, the general meaning is noted but the technical sense is the operative one for the Index.

**Accountability (AC).** The fourth AUN dimension. Captures the integrity of public officials, the strength of rule-of-law constraints on executive power, and the quality of oversight institutions. Constructed from the WGI Control of Corruption and Rule of Law indicators, the CPI 2022, the WJP Absence of Corruption and Constraints on Government Powers factors, the OECD Trust Survey, and the SDG 16.5 indicators.

**AUN Index.** The composite AUN Global Governance Readiness Index score, computed as the equal-weight (20 percent) average of the five dimension scores (Institutional Readiness, Policy Coherence, Implementation Capacity, Accountability, Participation), reported on a 0–100 scale.

**Closed Autocracy.** A regime type classification used by the V-Dem Institute for countries with the lowest levels of electoral and liberal democracy. The V-Dem Democracy Report 2023 reports that 28 percent of the world's population — 2.2 billion people — live in closed autocracies, and that for the first time in more than two decades there are more closed autocracies than liberal democracies.

**Composite Indicator.** A single summary measure constructed by aggregating multiple indicator entries. The AUN Index is a composite indicator; the underlying instruments (WGI, CPI, FH FIW, V-Dem, EIU, SDR) are themselves composite indicators.

**CPI (Corruption Perceptions Index).** The Transparency International composite index of perceived public-sector corruption, scored on a 0–100 scale. The 2023 AUN edition uses CPI 2022 (published January 2023), which scores 180 countries.

**Dimension Score.** The score on one of the five AUN dimensions (IR, PC, IC, AC, PA), computed as the weighted average of the constituent indicator entries, reported on a 0–100 scale.

**EIU Democracy Index.** The Economist Intelligence Unit's composite index of democratic governance, scored on a 0–10 scale across 167 countries, with four regime types (full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime, authoritarian regime). The 2023 AUN edition uses the EIU Democracy Index 2022 (published January 2023).

**Electoral Democracy.** A V-Dem regime-type classification characterised by the presence of free and fair elections but with limited liberal-democratic constraints on the executive. The V-Dem Democracy Report 2023 reports that approximately 16 percent of the world's population lives in electoral democracies.

**EGDI (E-Government Development Index).** The United Nations E-Government Development Index, a composite of the Online Service Index, the Telecommunications Infrastructure Index, and the Human Capital Index, each weighted equally, scored on a 0–1 scale. The 2023 AUN edition uses the UN E-Government Survey 2022.

**FH FIW (Freedom in the World).** Freedom House's annual assessment of political rights and civil liberties, scored on a 0–100 aggregate scale (Political Rights 0–40 plus Civil Liberties 0–60), with status categories Free, Partly Free, and Not Free. The 2023 AUN edition uses FH FIW 2023 (published March 2023).

**Governance Readiness.** The capacity of a state to deliver public value through institutions, policies, and processes that are effective, coherent, and legitimate. The defining construct of the AUN Index.

**Implementation Capacity (IC).** The third AUN dimension. Captures the ability of the state to translate policy into delivered services and enforced rules. Constructed from the WGI Government Effectiveness indicator, the WJP Order and Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice factors, the UN E-Gov EGDI, and the SDG 16.6.2 indicator.

**Implementation–Participation Gap.** The structural cleavage between countries with high Implementation Capacity and Institutional Readiness scores but low Participation scores — observed in Singapore, the Gulf states, and China. A central finding of the 2023 edition.

**Institutional Readiness (IR).** The first AUN dimension. Captures the strength, professionalism, and digital maturity of core public institutions. Constructed from the WGI Government Effectiveness and Regulatory Quality indicators, the WJP Constraints on Government Powers and Open Government factors, the UN E-Gov Online Service Index, and selected OECD GaG indicators.

**LDI (Liberal Democracy Index).** The V-Dem Institute's principal high-level index of liberal democracy, scored on a 0–1 scale, combining electoral democracy with liberal-democratic constraints. The 2023 AUN edition uses the V-Dem Democracy Report 2023.

**Liberal Democracy.** A V-Dem regime-type classification characterised by free and fair elections combined with strong liberal-democratic constraints on the executive. The V-Dem Democracy Report 2023 reports that 13 percent of the world's population — 1 billion people — live in liberal democracies.

**Normalisation.** The process of transforming an underlying indicator onto a common 0–100 scale for aggregation. The AUN Index uses percentile-rank-direct (for WGI, CPI, FH FIW, SDR), scale-multiplication (for WJP, V-Dem, UN E-Gov, EIU), and min-max (for OECD GaG) methods.

**OGP (Open Government Partnership).** A multilateral initiative supporting member countries in developing and implementing open-government commitments through biennial National Action Plans. As of late 2023, OGP included approximately 75 to 78 national member countries.

**Participation (PA).** The fifth AUN dimension. Captures the openness of civic space, the competitiveness of elections, and the breadth of citizen engagement in public decision-making. Constructed from FH FIW aggregate, V-Dem LDI and EDI, EIU Democracy Index, WJP Fundamental Rights, UN E-Gov E-Participation Index, and OGP membership and action-plan status. The FH FIW Political Rights and Civil Liberties sub-scores are NOT included as separate indicator entries (P0-1 methodology decision: they are mathematical components of the FH FIW aggregate and would double-count).

**Percentile Rank.** A normalisation method that ranks each country within the distribution of all countries, expressed on a 0–100 scale. The WGI reports percentile ranks as its headline scale; the AUN Index uses percentile ranks directly for the WGI inputs.

**Policy Coherence (PC).** The second AUN dimension. Captures the degree to which public policy is evidence-based, coordinated across government, and aligned across the policy cycle. Constructed from the WGI Government Effectiveness indicator, the OECD iREG indicators, the UN E-Gov Online Service Index, and the SDG 16.6.1 indicator.

**Population-Weighted Mean.** The mean AUN Index score weighted by country population. The 2023 population-weighted mean is 48.58, which is below the unweighted country mean of 51.10, indicating that population weight is concentrated disproportionately in lower-scoring countries. The population share living below the country median of 46.20 is 36.3 per cent; the population-weighted mean is below the simple mean because the below-mean countries are on average more populous than the above-mean countries, not because a majority of the world's population lives below the country median.

**Robustness Test.** A sensitivity analysis that compares the headline composite against alternative specifications (alternative weights, alternative normalisation methods). The 2023 AUN robustness tests show Spearman rank correlations of 0.96 to 0.98 across specifications, indicating that the headline ranking is robust to the alternatives tested.

**SDR (Sustainable Development Report).** The Sustainable Development Solutions Network's annual assessment of progress on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, covering 193 UN member states. The 2023 AUN edition uses the SDR 2023, published June 2023.

**SDG 16.** Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. The AUN Index draws on SDR 2023 SDG 16 indicators 16.5, 16.6.1, and 16.6.2 as indicator entries in Accountability, Policy Coherence, and Implementation Capacity, respectively.

**Simple Mean.** The unweighted arithmetic mean AUN Index score across all countries. The 2023 simple mean is 51.10.

**Indicator Entry.** A single indicator drawn from one of the nine primary underlying instruments (or the OGP supplementary data) and used as an input to one of the five AUN dimensions. The 2023 AUN Index uses 35 indicator entries in total: IR 8, PC 6, IC 7, AC 7, PA 7.

**Third Wave of Autocratization.** The term used by the V-Dem Institute to describe the period since approximately 2010 in which autocratization has outpaced democratisation globally. The V-Dem Democracy Report 2023 reports that 35 countries were undergoing significant autocratization episodes in 2022.

**Tier Classification.** The classification of composite AUN Index scores into six readiness bands: Tier 1 High Readiness (80–100), Tier 2 Advanced (65–79.9), Tier 3 Established (50–64.9), Tier 4 Emerging (35–49.9), Tier 5 Fragile (20–34.9), Tier 6 Critical (below 20). Tier thresholds are evenly spaced for interpretive stability across annual editions.

**Vintage.** The specific publication vintage of an underlying source used in the AUN Index. The 2023 AUN edition uses, for each underlying source, the most recent vintage that was publicly available on or before 30 November 2023.

**V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy).** The V-Dem Institute, based at the University of Gothenburg, publishes the Democracy Report annually and maintains the V-Dem v13 dataset covering 202 countries from 1789 to 2022, with approximately 470 indicators and 3,500 country experts.

**WGI (Worldwide Governance Indicators).** The World Bank's composite governance indicators, published annually as an update covering the previous year's data. The 2023 AUN edition uses the WGI 2022 Update (published 25 September 2023), which reports six dimensions: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption, each on a 0–100 percentile-rank scale.

**WJP (World Justice Project).** The World Justice Project publishes the Rule of Law Index annually, covering 142 countries on eight factors scored on a 0–1 scale. The 2023 AUN edition uses the WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 (published 25 October 2023).

**Z-Score.** A normalisation method that expresses each country's score in standard-deviation units relative to the cross-country distribution. The WGI reports z-scores on a –2.5 to +2.5 scale alongside percentile ranks; the AUN Index uses the percentile rank in preference to the z-score for the WGI inputs.