

The banner features a stylized illustration of the Parthenon on a hill, with a large sun and clouds in the background. The text 'IASIA 2026 CONFERENCE' is prominently displayed in blue and black.

IASIA 2026 CONFERENCE

12-16 October Athens, Greece

Rethinking Governance
for a Changing World



IIAS GOVERNANCE INDEX

When rankings are **not enough**

Introducing the IIAS Governance Index



Dr. Marco De la Cruz

Principal Investigator, IIAS Governance Index - IIAS and KU Leuven

IASIA 2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE - ATHENS - 15 OCTOBER 2026

How is governance **doing in
your country?**

A crowded field of governance numbers

Many organisations, many indexes, many answers to the same question.

Worldwide Governance Indicators

World Bank

Corruption Perceptions Index

Transparency International

Varieties of Democracy

V-Dem Institute

Transformation Index

Bertelsmann Stiftung

Rule of Law Index

World Justice Project

Government at a Glance

OECD

E-Government Development Index

United Nations

GovTech Maturity Index

World Bank

Global Cybersecurity Index

ITU

Open Budget Survey

International Budget Partnership

Good Government Index

Chandler Institute

Quality of Government

University of Gothenburg

Afrobarometer · AmericasBarometer · Arab Barometer · World Values Survey

and many more

IIAS: a natural focal point

Improving public governance research, education, and practice, since 1930.

A NETWORK

Scholars and practitioners from every region

Member states, schools of administration and individual members, with its regional and specialised entities.

IASIA

EGPA

LAGPA

Research groups

AN ASSOCIATION

Apolitical and trusted

Between academia and government, and a meeting point for the Global North and the Global South.

Accreditation

Conferences

A BATTERY OF EXPERTISE

Knowledge we can capitalise on

Journals, books and conferences that set the governance agenda worldwide.

IRAS

Book series

1,133 participants and 74 papers (2022)

1930

IIAS is founded

2026

The IIAS Governance Index

2030

The IIAS centenary



“My vision for IIAS is to serve as a knowledge institution for academia, governments, civil servants, researchers, and practitioners”

Voruganti Srinivas, President of IIAS · message on iias-iisa.org/about-us

01

“Developing fully digital public institutions that meet citizens’ need in the 21st century”

02

“Strengthening the trust and confidence in good governance models”

03

“Leveraging the transformative role of public administration in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”

(Building on the strong legacy of Director General **Sofiane Sahraoui**

Collaboration without borders

Knowledge without boundaries

Governance without exclusion

How the index connects

The index turns the Institute's priorities into something that can be observed and compared

THE IIAS AGENDA

Fully digital public institutions

Trust in good governance models

Public administration and the SDGs

Dialogue between North and South

Governance without exclusion

IN THE IIAS GOVERNANCE INDEX

→ ■ **A pillar on digital governance**

→ ■ **Institutional integrity, measured transparently**

→ ■ **Service delivery and financial governance**

→ ■ **Each country compared with its regional and income peers**

→ ■ **A pillar on inclusive governance**

TOWARDS AN EQUITABLE VISION OF GOVERNANCE

The IIAS Governance Index

An in-house index that measures how governments perform, and how far they can improve.

International Institute of Administrative Sciences

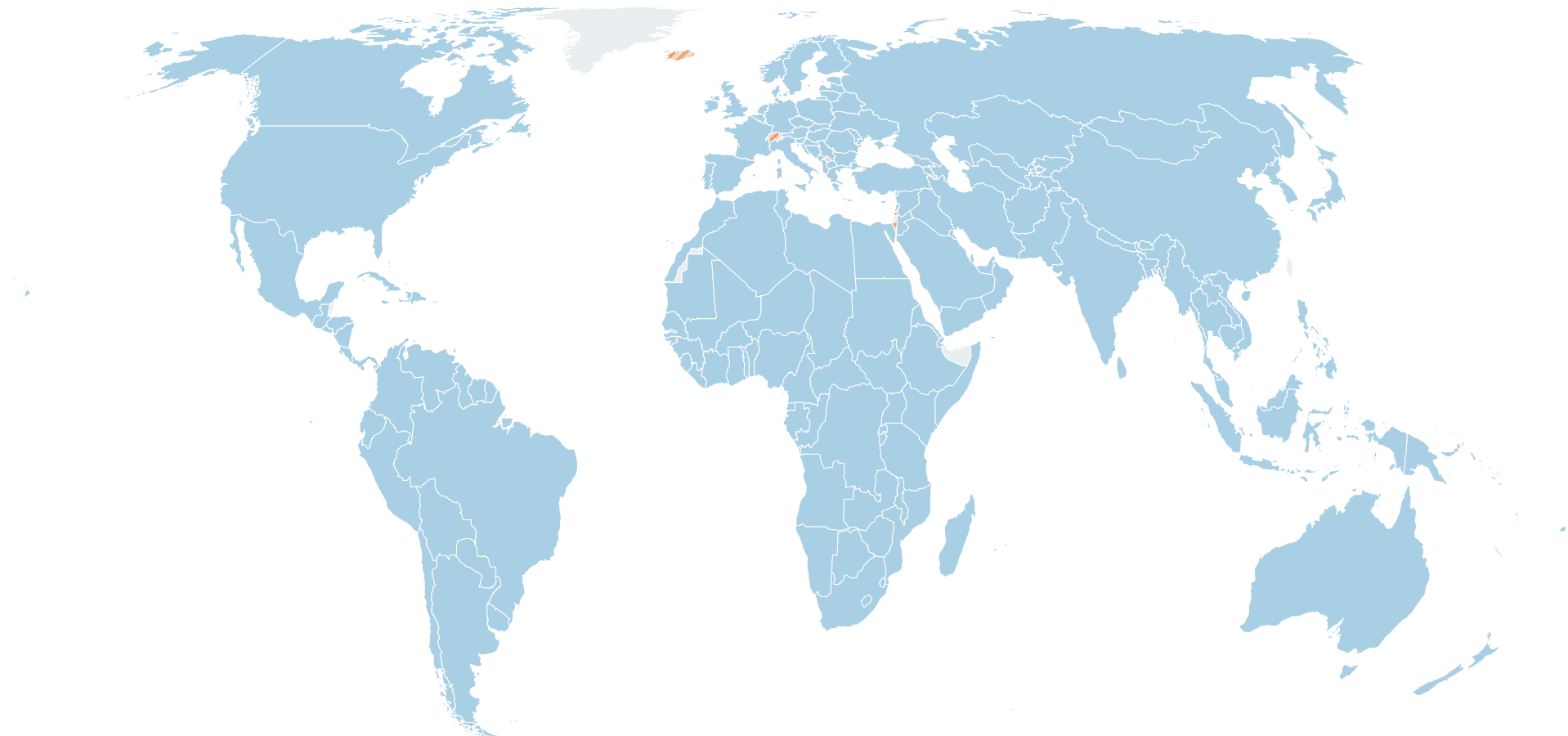
IIAS GOVERNANCE INDEX

Coming soon

► Video (90 s), played during the talk: introduction to the IIAS Governance Index

A global index

Every UN member state with enough evidence, in six world regions.



■ **164** fully assessed ■ **+11** one pillar missing: reported as a range ■ not assessed: too little evidence

Six pillars of governance

Each pillar asks one question about how government works.



I

Institutional integrity



II

Strategic capacity



III

Service delivery



IV

Digital governance



V

Inclusive governance



VI

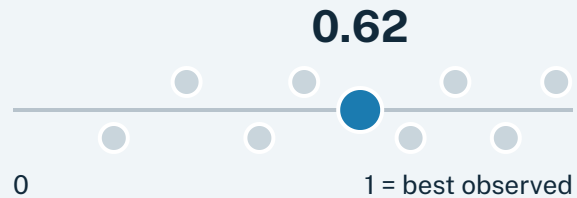
Financial governance

Is public money managed well and open to scrutiny?

Fiscal stability, regulatory enforcement and budget transparency.

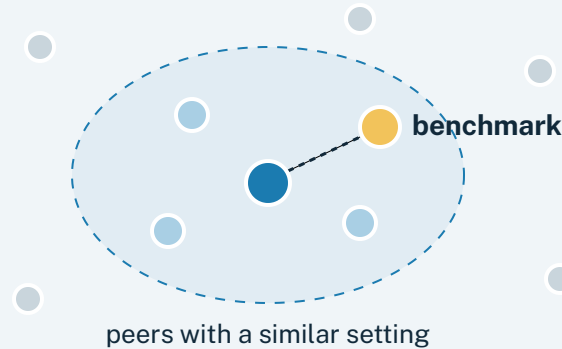
From a rank to a route

The index answers three questions for every country.



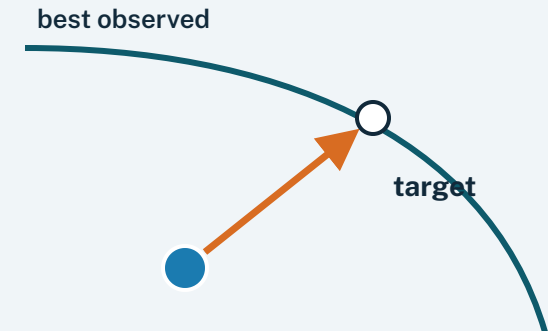
Where does it stand?

A score from 0 to 1: **how close it is to the best performance observed.**



Who can it learn from?

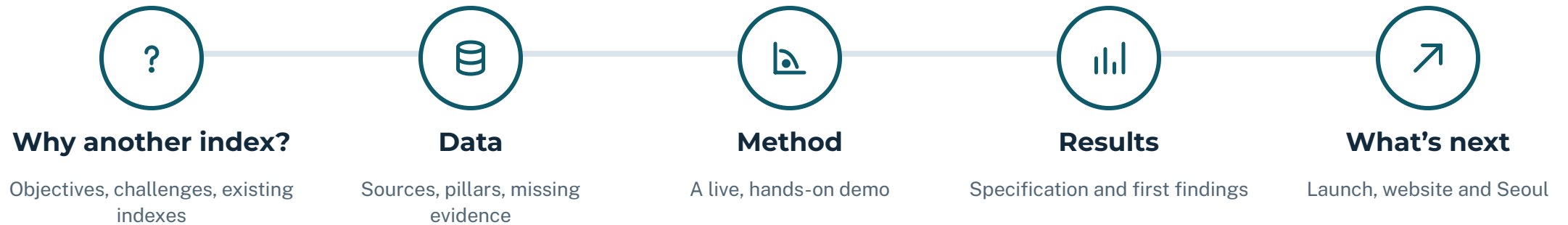
A **benchmark**: a real country with a similar profile and setting that does better.



How far can it go?

A **realistic target**: an improvement that peers have already shown is possible.

Today



Which country should *your* government learn from?

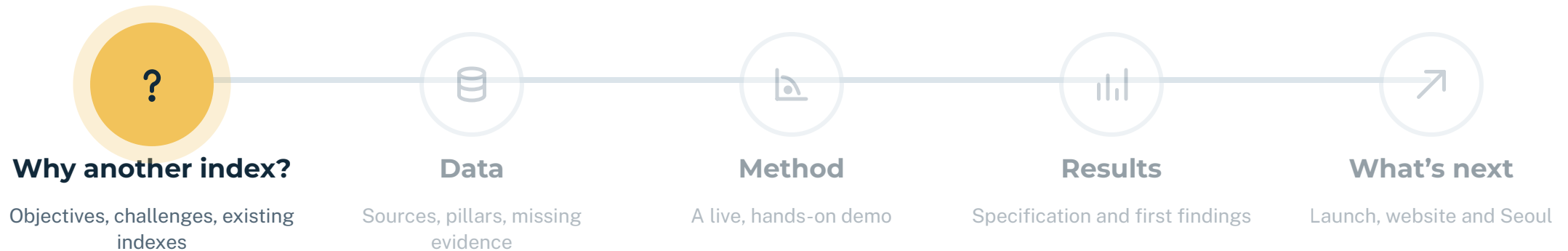


slido · IIAS 2026

Show live answers

Why another index?

Objectives, challenges and what already exists

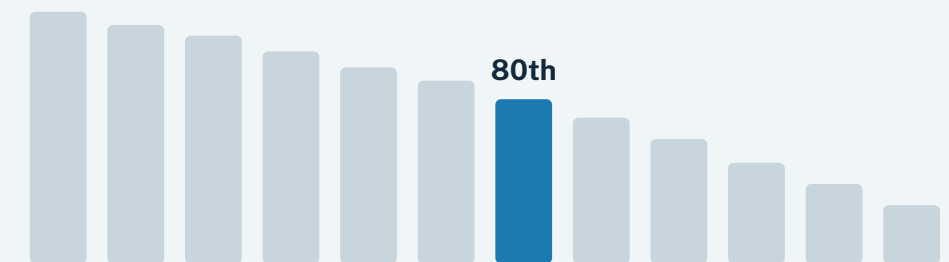


Objectives

WHAT MOST INDEXES DO

Compare

How does my country score against others?



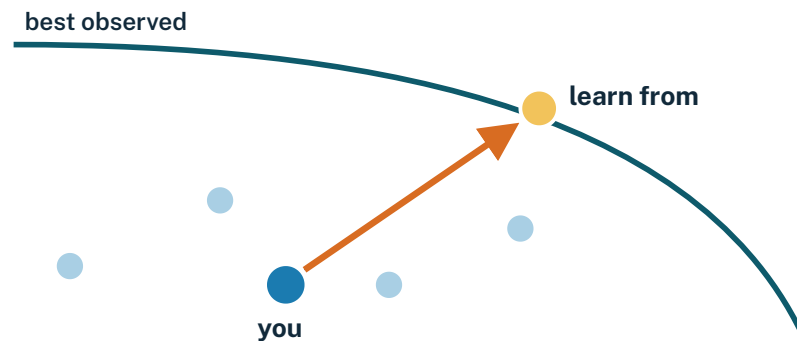
Output **a score** **a rank**



WHAT WE ADD

Guide

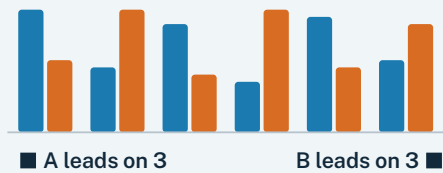
What should we improve, and who can we learn from?



Output **a benchmark** **a priority** **a realistic target**

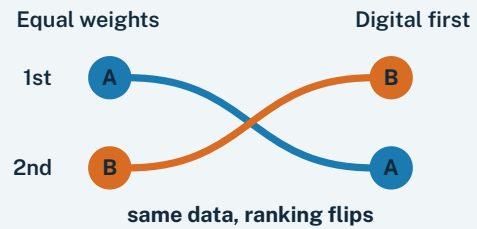
Four challenges

Why measuring governance is hard



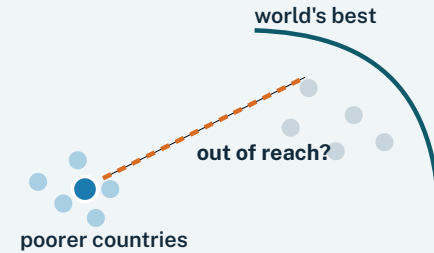
Breadth

Which dimensions to include, and how many? And rarely is one country better on all of them.



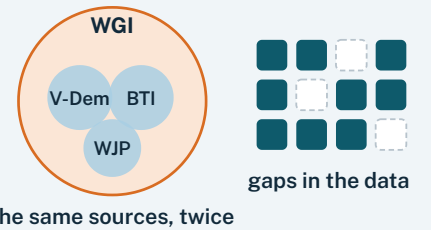
Aggregation

Turning six pillar scores into one needs decisions on how to combine them. These decisions change the final score.



Comparability

Countries differ in history and resources. Who is a fair comparison?



Data

Some dimensions are hard to measure. Sources reuse each other, and many countries have gaps.

Existing indexes

Existing indexes focus on specific aspects and on ranking. They do not tell a country who to learn from.

WORLD BANK

Worldwide Governance Indicators ↗

Six broad dimensions of governance, built from more than 30 underlying sources.

Aggregate

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

Corruption Perceptions Index ↗

Perceived public-sector corruption, combining expert and business assessments.

Aggregate

OECD

Government at a Glance ↗

Detailed indicators on public administration, for OECD members only.

OECD members

CHANDLER INSTITUTE OF GOVERNANCE

Chandler Good Government Index ↗

Government capabilities and outcomes, as a country ranking.

Ranking

V-DEM INSTITUTE

Varieties of Democracy ↗

Expert-coded data on democracy and institutions for almost every country.

We use its data

WORLD JUSTICE PROJECT

Rule of Law Index ↗

Rule of law as experienced by people and assessed by experts.

We use its data

BERTELSMANN STIFTUNG

Transformation Index (BTI) ↗

Governance and transformation in developing and transition countries.

We use its data

UNITED NATIONS (UN DESA)

E-Government Development Index ↗

Online services, telecommunications and human capital, for all UN members.

We use its data

Our index

 **Breadth**



Six pillars

All six must count. No pillar can carry the score on its own.

 **Aggregation**



Flexible weights

Each country gets the weights that suit it best, within set limits.

 **Comparability**



Peer groups

Countries are compared with their region and their income group.

 **Data**



Primary sources

We use the original assessments (such as V-Dem or BTI), not indexes built from other indexes, so nothing is counted twice. A missing pillar gives a range, not a guess.

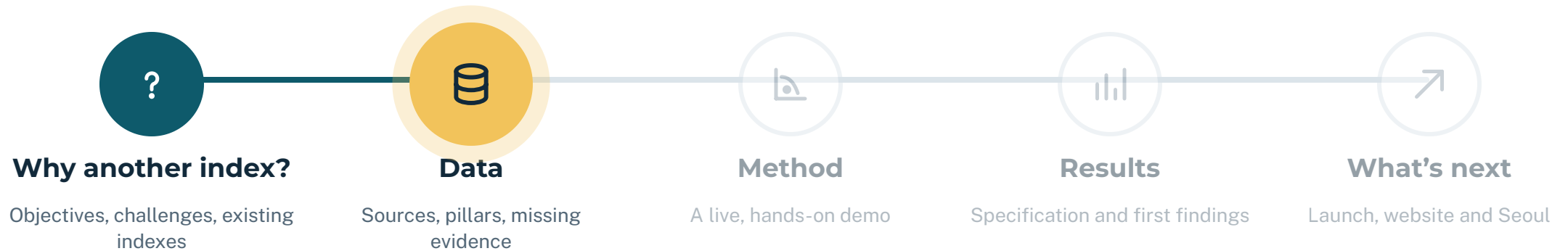
This ensures that our index gives each country a pathway, not only a rank.

A fair comparison for **your** country is...

- A its neighbours
- B countries with a similar income
- C the best in the world

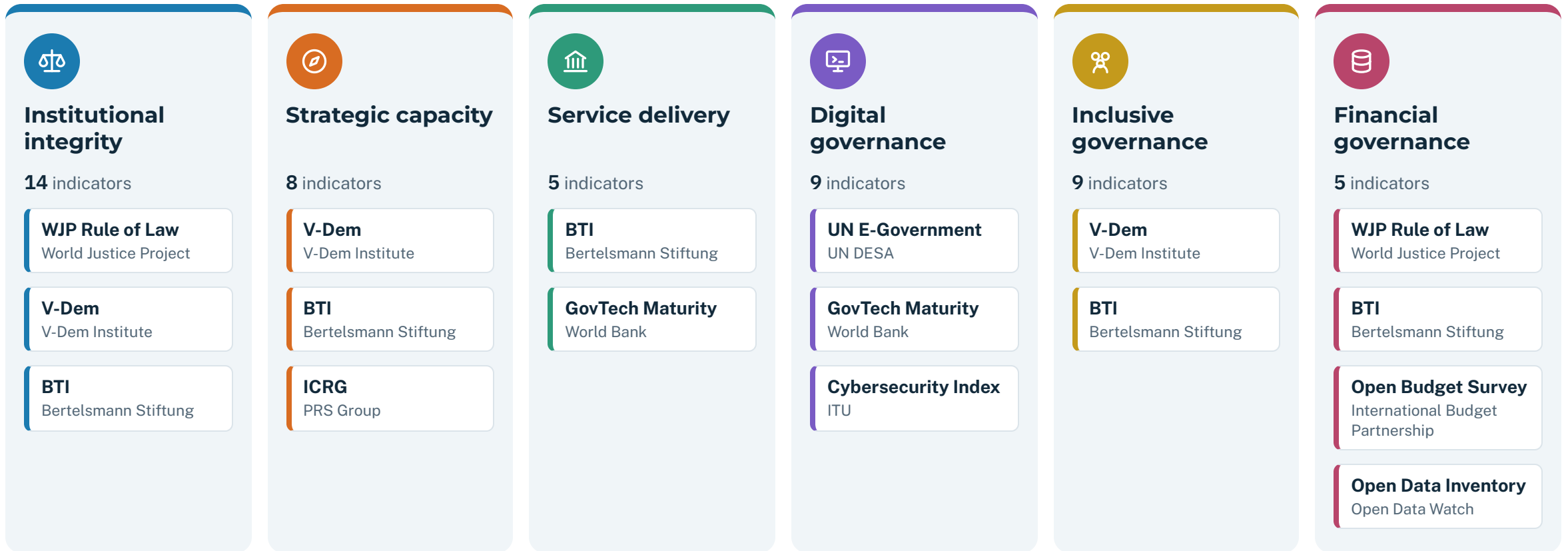
Data

Where governance evidence comes from



Six pillars, nine sources

Each pillar draws on at least two independent expert assessments.



Sources

Primary, global, on topic and open. Every name links to the producer.

SOURCE	PRODUCER	EDITION	COUNTRIES COVERED (OF 164)	PILLARS
Rule of Law Index	World Justice Project	2025	133	I VI
Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)	V-Dem Institute	v16	164	I II V
Transformation Index (BTI)	Bertelsmann Stiftung	2024	135	I II III V VI
UN E-Government Survey (via QoG)	UN DESA, via QoG Institute	Jan. 2026	163	IV
ICRG quality of government (via QoG)	PRS Group, via QoG Institute	Jan. 2026	133	II
GovTech Maturity Index	World Bank	Dec. 2025	163	III IV
Global Cybersecurity Index	ITU	2024	164	IV
Open Budget Survey	International Budget Partnership	2023	123	VI
Open Data Inventory	Open Data Watch	2024	159	VI

18 more instruments reviewed and left out, for example the Worldwide Governance Indicators and the Corruption Perceptions Index, mostly because they repackage sources we already use.

From indicators to pillars

Each pillar score is an average of averages, so every source has the same say.

1

Rescale

Each indicator is put on a 0–1 scale, where 1 is best.



2

Assign

Each indicator goes to the one pillar it measures.



3

Average twice

First the indicators of each source, then the sources.

EXAMPLE: INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

Rule of Law Index

5 indicators



avg

V-Dem

5 indicators



avg

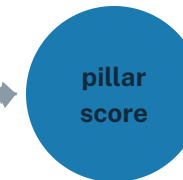
BTI

4 indicators



avg

one number per source

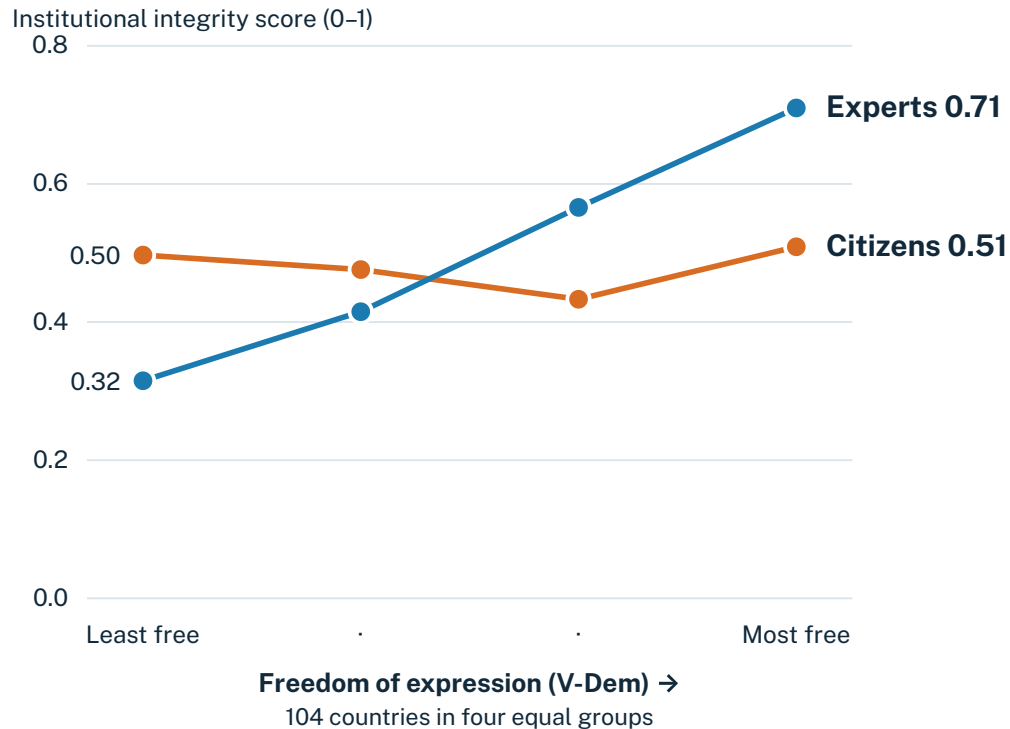


= average of the 3 sources

each source counts 1/3,
however many indicators it has

Experts and citizens disagree

Citizens rate their institutions about the same everywhere. Experts rate them much lower where speech is not free.



EXPERTS ARE ASKED, FOR EXAMPLE (PARAPHRASED)

"How often does the high court rule independently of the government?"

V-Dem, BTI, Rule of Law Index

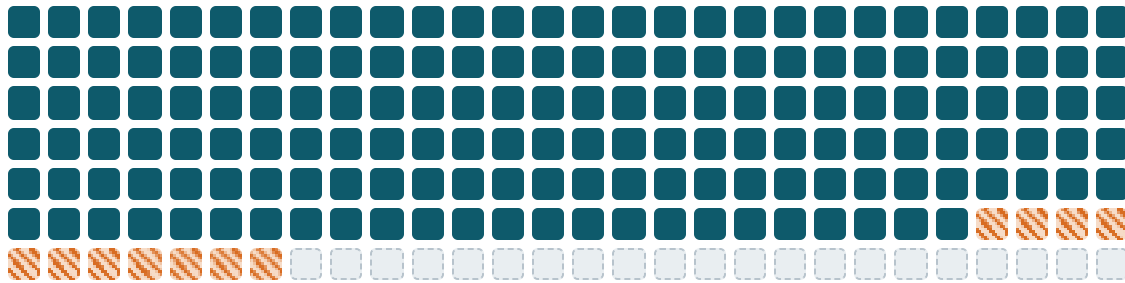
CITIZENS ARE ASKED, FOR EXAMPLE

"How much do you trust the courts of law?"

Surveys used: [Afrobarometer](#) · [AmericasBarometer](#) · [World Values Survey](#) · [Arab Barometer](#)

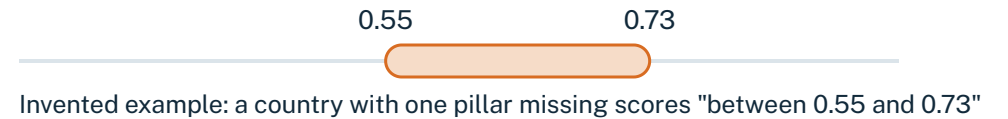
Because the two disagree most where speech is restricted, citizen surveys are shown as a separate layer and are not mixed into the score.

Missing evidence



196 UN member and observer states, one square each

- **164** all six pillars observed: **a score**
- ▨ **11** one pillar missing: **a range**, from its lowest and highest plausible value
- **21** two or more pillars missing: **not assessed**



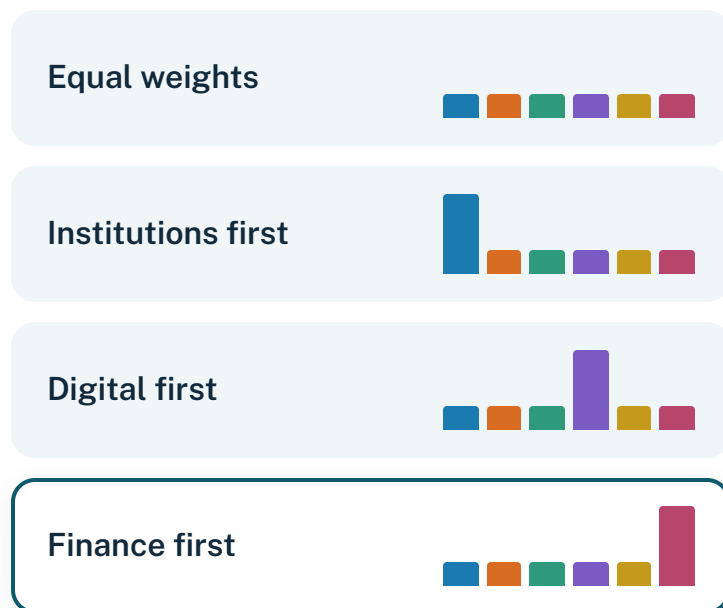
Method

How six pillars become one fair score, and a pathway



The aggregation problem

Six scores, one number: whoever picks the weights picks the winner.



Bars: how much each pillar counts, I to VI

1

Country D

strong strategy and finance



2

Country A

strong institutions, weak digital



3

Country C

balanced



4

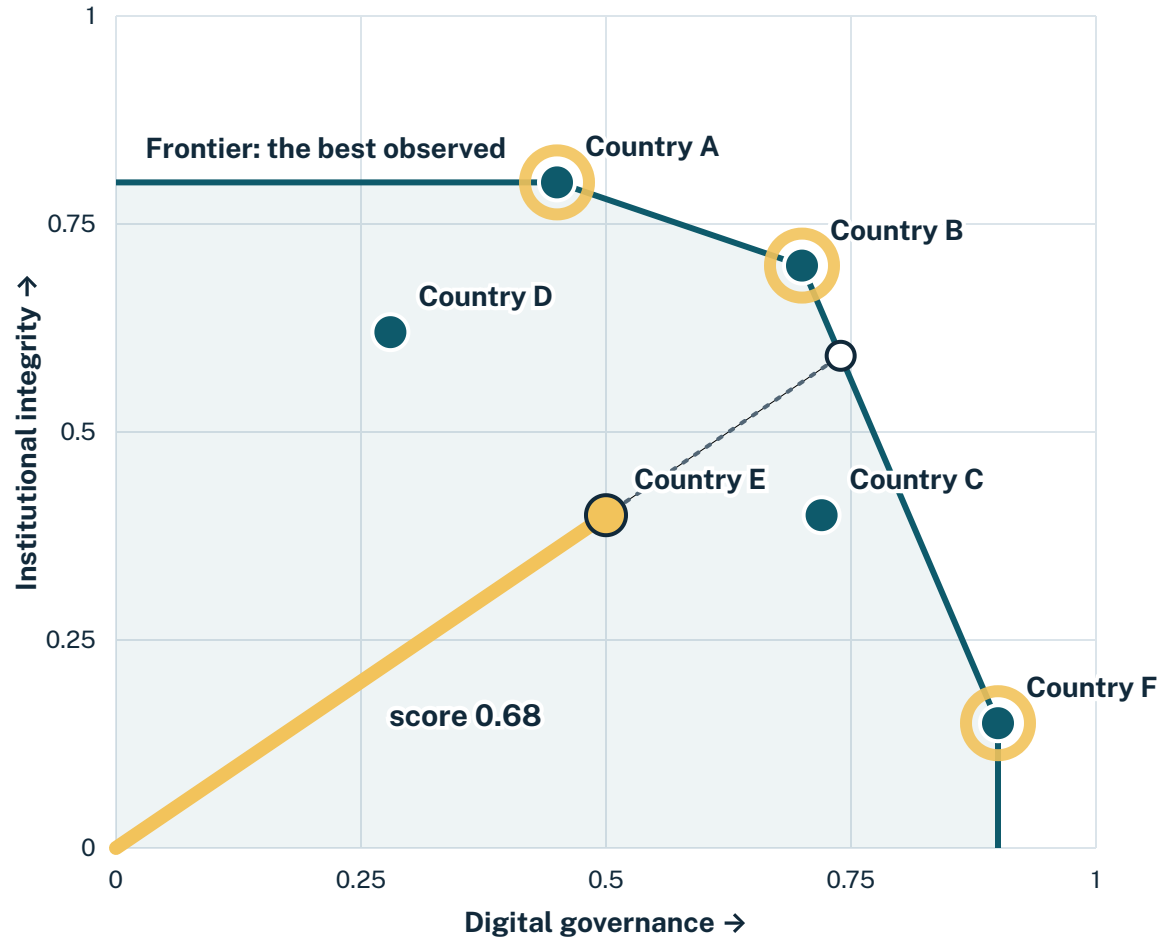
Country B

digital champion



The benefit of the doubt

Each country chooses its own weights. Then the method compares it with the best.

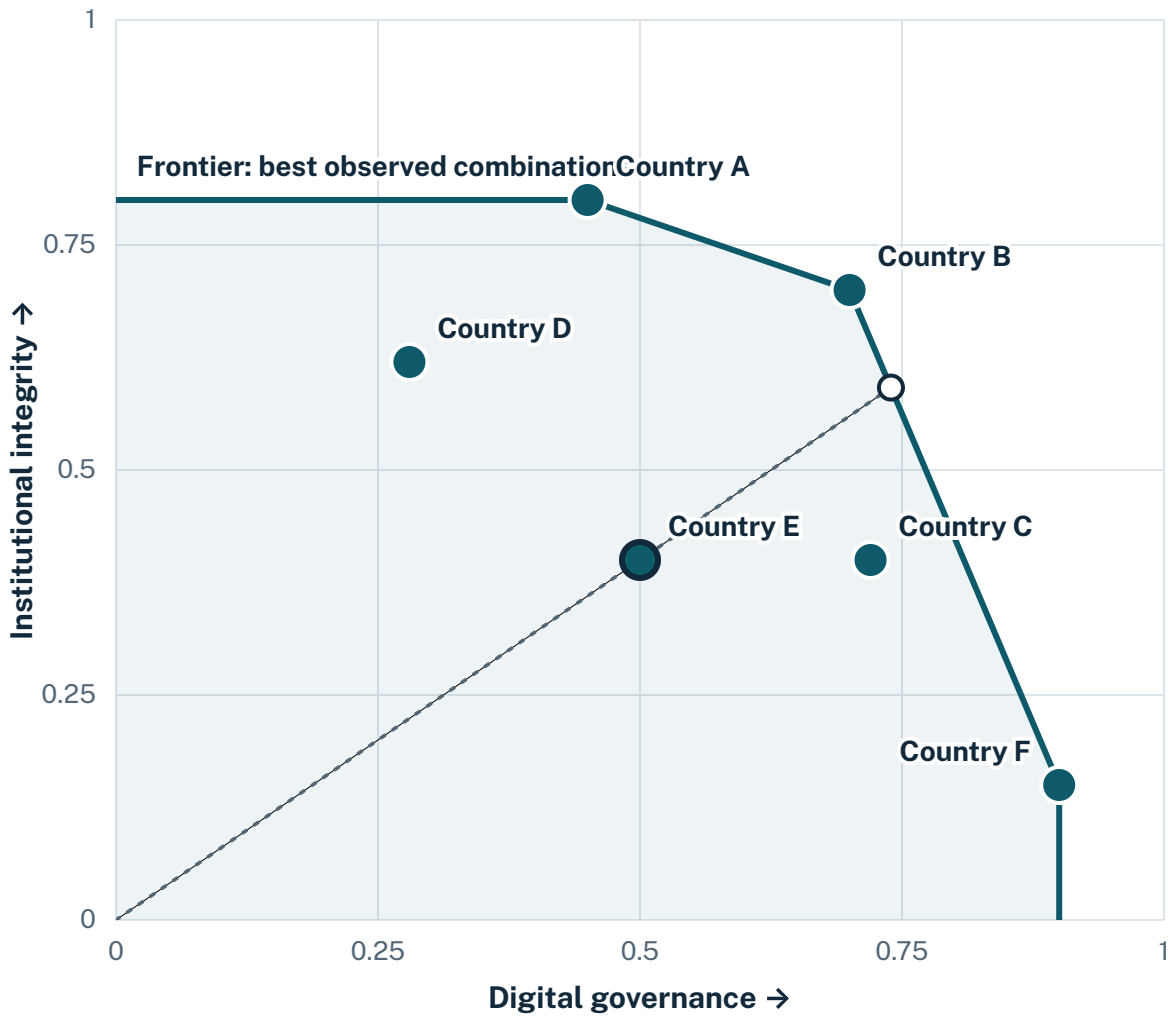


The score

The score is how far a country gets along its own line towards the frontier. Country E gets **68%** of the way.

The score already uses the weights that suit E best, so a low score is hard to argue with.

An example



COUNTRY E · SCORE

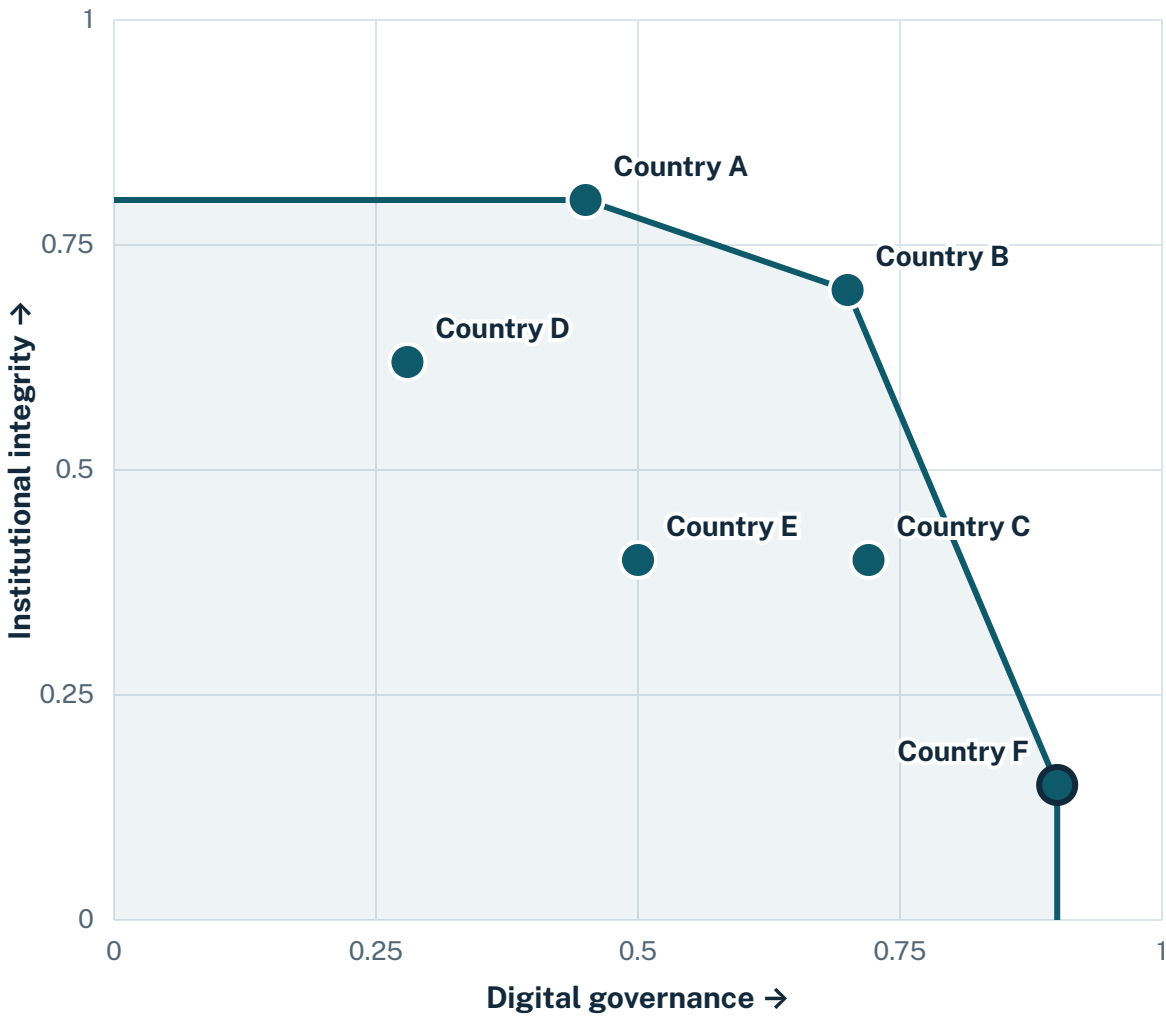
0.68

Country E gets **68%** of the way from zero to the frontier, keeping its own mix of pillars.



[Remove Country E](#) [Reset](#)

Choosing the weights



Each country chooses freely

With a limit

COUNTRY F	SCORE	SHARE OF ITS FINAL SCORE
Digital	0.90	100%
Integrity	0.15	0%

Final score

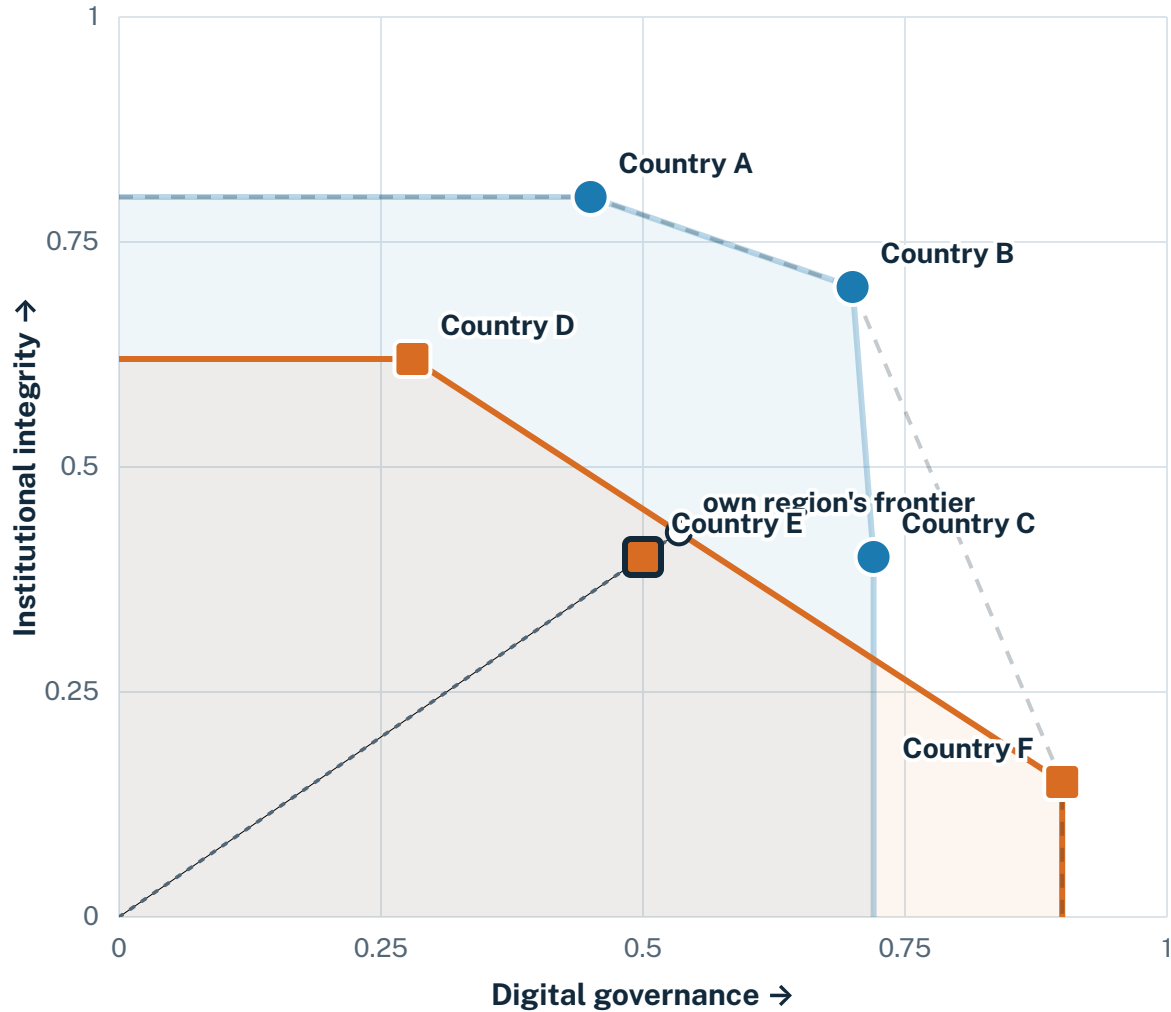
1.00

Country F decides that only **digital governance** counts, where it is strong. Its weak integrity is simply left out, and it looks like a top performer.

Our index allows at most 35% from any one of its six pillars.

Reset

Fair peers



Compare with own region

Compare with everyone

COUNTRY E · REGION SOUTH

0.94

against its own region

Score against own region 0.94

Region's best vs world's best × 0.72

Score against everyone = 0.68

Country E reaches **94%** of its region's best, and its region's best reaches **72%** of the world's best.

Example:

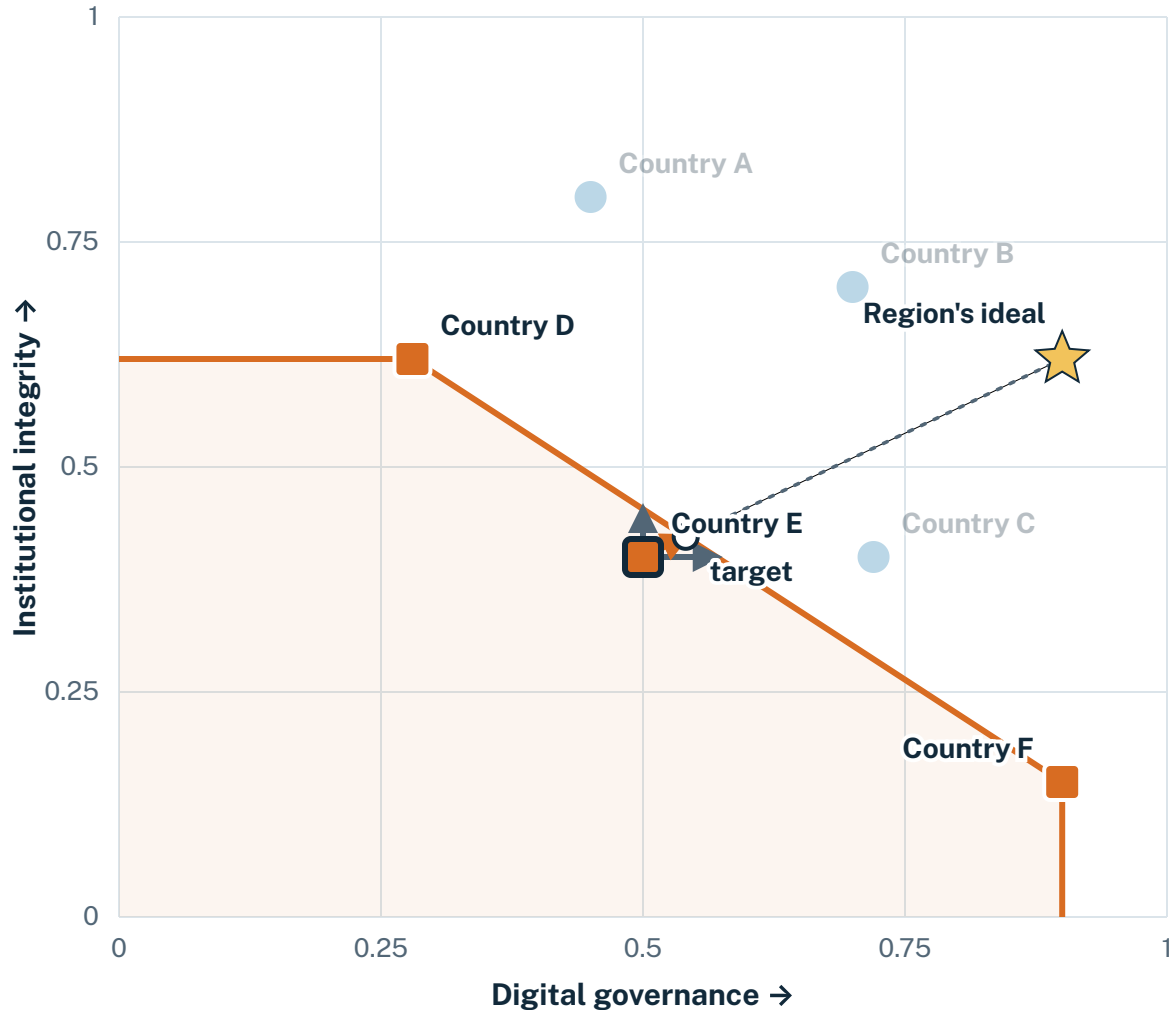
● Region North

■ Region South

Black dashed line: the world frontier.

Reset

From score to pathway



COUNTRY E · AGAINST REGION SOUTH

10%

of the way to the region's ideal (★) is reachable, using what peers already achieve

Digital gap 0.40 - alone 0.07 - 18%

Integrity gap 0.22 - alone 0.05 - 24%

Benchmark **Country D (58%) + Country F (42%)**

Priority pillar **Digital governance**

★ **The region's ideal** combines the best digital score in the region (Country F) with the best integrity score (Country D).
No country has both, so it is a direction, not a target.

Orange arrow: the realistic target on the way to the ideal.

Grey arrows: improving one pillar alone.

Orange %: the share of that gap that can be closed.

Reset

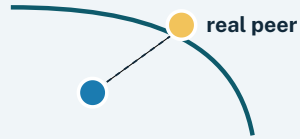
Strengths and limits

A score of 1 means the best among the countries observed.

✓ It can



Score each country without imposing one set of weights



Point to a real country to learn from

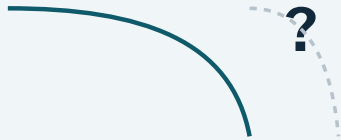


Set targets that peers have already reached



Tell "behind my peers" from "my peers are behind"

✗ It cannot



See beyond the best performance observed



Ignore an unusual country that shifts the frontier (we test for this)

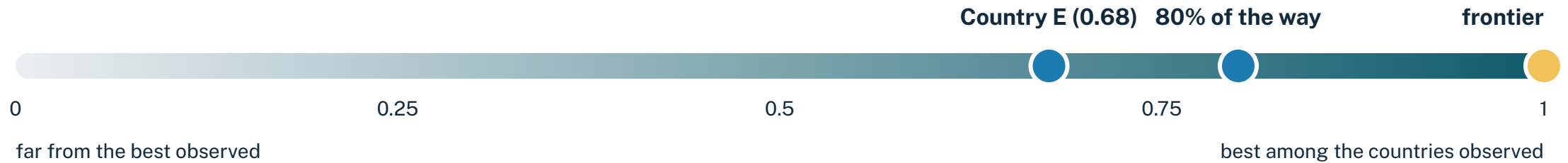


Decide who the right peers are



Say which reform will work: a target is not a plan

How to read a score



1 = on the frontier

The best among the countries observed. It does not mean perfect, or nothing left to improve.

0.80 = 80% of the way

The country reaches 80% of the frontier, keeping its own mix of pillars.

Its best case

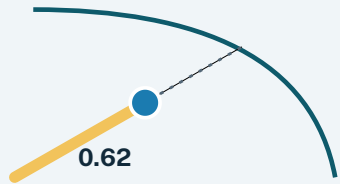
The score already uses the weights most favourable to the country. It cannot be argued up.

Relative to the peers

Change the countries in the comparison, and the frontier and the score can change.

Reading a result

Five questions to ask of any country result.



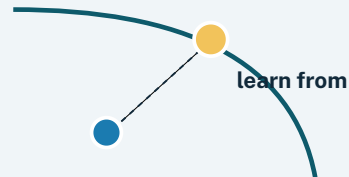
1 Score

How close to the frontier, with its most favourable allowed weights?



2 Peer gap

Is it behind its peers, or are its peers behind?



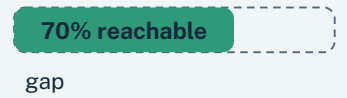
3 Benchmark

Which real country supports the target?



4 Priority

Which pillar gives the largest gain without losses elsewhere?

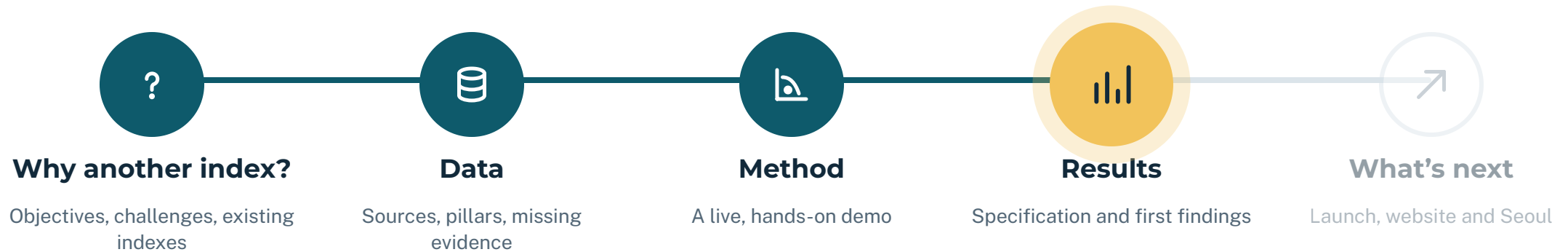


5 Attainable

How much of each gap can actually be closed?

Results

Now with 164 countries



Our specification

The same method as in the demo, with six pillars and real countries.

SIX PILLARS, EACH SCORED 0 TO 1

- I

 Institutional integrity
- III

 Service delivery
- V

 Inclusive governance
- II

 Strategic capacity
- IV

 Digital governance
- VI

 Financial governance

LIMITS ON WEIGHTS

35%

the most one pillar can contribute to a score (equal weights would give 17%)

×3

the most one pillar can count compared with another

We also tested caps from 30% to 40% and ratios from 2 to 4.

WHO COUNTS AS A PEER: TWO SEPARATE RUNS

Run 1 - by region
neighbours

- W. Europe 18
- E. Europe 20
- Americas 27
- Asia-Pacific 26
- MENCA 30
- Sub-Saharan Africa 43

Run 2 - by income
similar resources

- High 50
- Upper-middle 46
- Lower-middle 43
- Low 25

The same 164 countries in both runs, so any difference comes only from who the peers are.

Why the limits are needed

Without limits, most countries would be scored on one pillar only.

WITHOUT LIMITS

One pillar does almost all the work

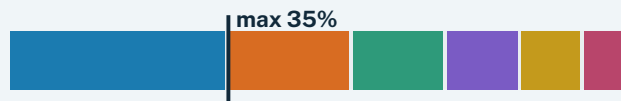
strongest pillar 91%

On average the strongest pillar gives **91%** of a country's score. For **99 of 164** countries it gives all of it, most often digital governance.



WITH LIMITS

Every pillar counts



No pillar can give more than **35%**. A country weak on institutions can no longer hide behind good online services.

ROBUSTNESS

The exact limits hardly matter



We tried nine combinations of limits. Rankings stayed almost the same: the rank correlation never fell below **0.998**, where 1 means exactly the same order.

Who you compare with matters

Changing the peer group barely moves the score, but it changes the advice.

SCORE

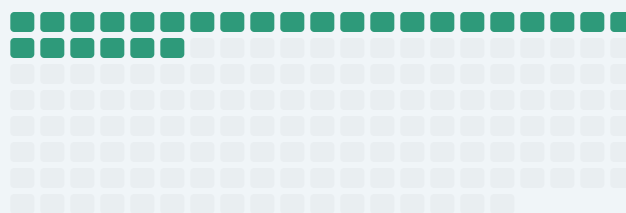
Similar standing



A country that scores well against its neighbours also tends to score well against countries with a similar income (correlation **0.76**).

BENCHMARK

A different country to learn from

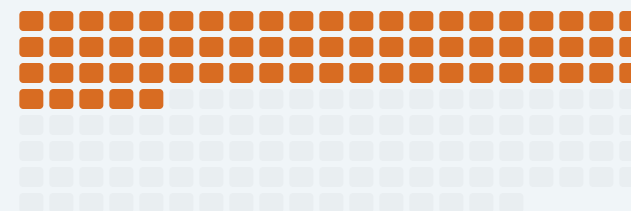


■ same benchmark under both peer groups

Only **27 of 164** countries (16.5%) keep the same main benchmark. All the others get a new one.

PRIORITY

A different first priority



■ different first priority

For **68 of 164** countries (41%), the pillar to work on first changes with the peer group.

Who counts as a peer is a choice, and it changes the advice.

So the index shows the results for both peer groups.

A country profile

What the release will show for each country: the score barely moves with the peers, the advice does.

ILLUSTRATIVE · INVENTED NUMBERS

Country X

Regional peers

Income peers

WHERE IT STANDS

0.62

4th of 26 in its region

WHO TO LEARN FROM

Country K

a neighbour with a similar profile

WHAT COMES FIRST

Strategic capacity

largest gain without losing elsewhere

Gap to the peers' best, per pillar (solid: the attainable part)



— NOT TODAY

What you will not see today

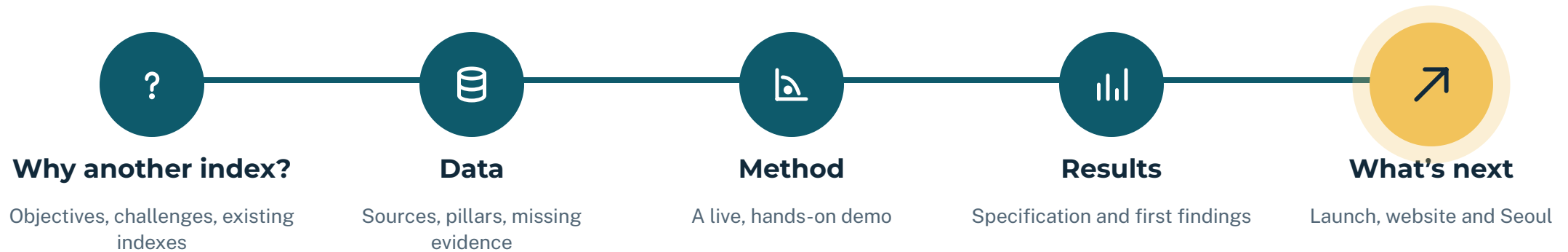


REVEALED IN SEOUL

- **The scores.** Country results stay under wraps until the launch.
- **The country stories.** Benchmarks, peers and priorities, country by country.
- **The full robustness checks.** Presented with the paper in the dedicated session.

What's next

The launch, the website and Seoul



The launch package

ONLINE

igi-index.org

A public website to explore countries, pillars and sources

● In preview

OPEN DATA

Free to reuse

Pillar and composite scores, open licence, with a permanent DOI

● Released with the launch

REPORT

The 2026 report

A short, readable report: results by pillar, region and income group

● In preparation

RESEARCH

The research paper

Every construction choice documented and discussed

● Under review

OPEN TOOL

An R package

A diagnostic to check a composite index before it is built

● Coming after the launch

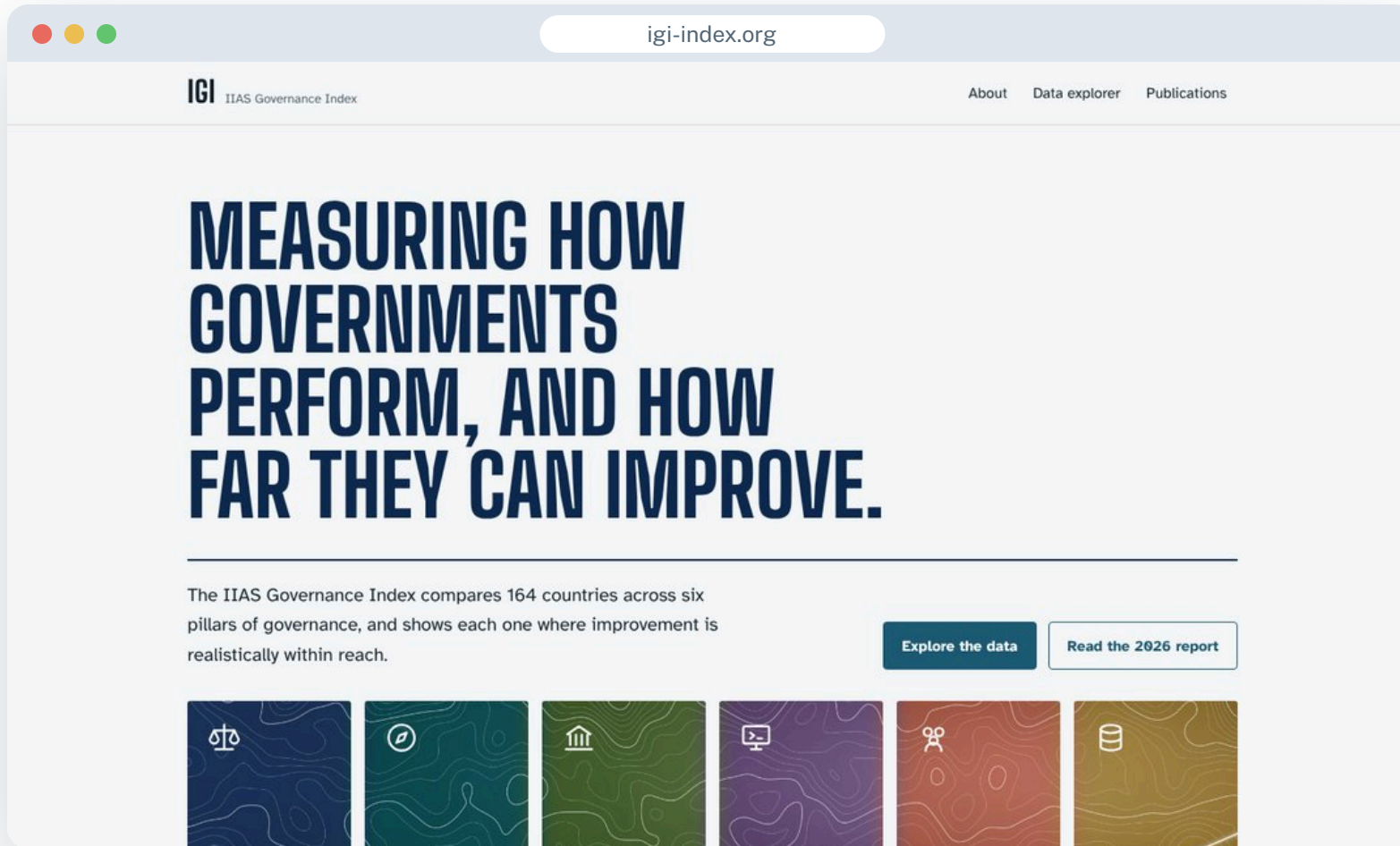
PEOPLE

Advisory group

Experts from across the world's regions, serving in a personal capacity

● Being formed

A first glimpse of the website



Home

Where every country stands, on a world map

About

The pillars, the sources and the principles, in plain words

Data explorer

Read a country in three steps: where it stands, who it is compared with, what to improve first

Publications

The report, the paper, the data and how to cite them

The road to the launch



OCTOBER 2026

Advisory group

Invitations sent to experts from every region



TODAY · ATHENS

First look

First presentation to the IIAS community, here at IASIA



17–20 NOVEMBER · SEOUL

The index

A dedicated session at the IIAS 2026 Conference, with advisory members as discussants



THEN

The launch

Website, open data, report and paper, and your feedback for the next steps

The launch is only the first step

A new period for IIAS under President Voruganti Srinivas, building on the strong legacy of Director General Sofiane Sahraoui

Come to Seoul

See the index and discuss it, 17–20 November

Use it in teaching

Schools of administration train the people who read these numbers

Challenge it

Tell us what is missing, what is unclear, what does not fit your country

Spread the word

Help the index reach the governments and colleagues who can use it

See you in Seoul

IIAS 2026 CONFERENCE - 17-20 NOVEMBER

Dr. Marco De la Cruz

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