



CHANDLER  
GOOD GOVERNMENT INDEX

## Global Governance Performance Hits Five-Year High, But Fiscal Pressures Remain

*The 2026 Chandler Good Government Index finds broad-based improvement across 133 countries, even as long-term structural weaknesses persist.*

- **Five-year high.** More countries improved their government performance in 2026 than in any previous edition, pushing the global average score to its highest level since 2022.
- **Fiscal recovery begins.** Financial Stewardship, which tracks fiscal discipline, debt management, and spending efficiency, improved for the first time after four consecutive years of decline.
- **Singapore extends its lead.** Singapore ranks first for the fourth consecutive year, followed by Norway, which climbed two places to second. Denmark held third. Finland dropped to fourth.
- **Biggest improvers since 2021.** The UAE (up 17 places), Mongolia (up 12), and Viet Nam (up 9) recorded the largest gains in rank among countries tracked across all six editions.

The Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI) assesses government capability and performance across seven pillars, from fiscal management and institutional strength to public service delivery and global influence. Now covering 133 countries, the 2026 edition finds the broadest annual improvement in government performance since the Index launched in 2021. Among the top 20, Australia rose to 11<sup>th</sup>, and Japan and Iceland each climbed three places to 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. The United Kingdom fell out of the top 20 for the first time, dropping to 21<sup>st</sup>. France fell from 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>. The United States slipped one place to 26<sup>th</sup>. Germany held at 7<sup>th</sup>.

One significant development in 2026 is the first improvement in Financial Stewardship since the Index began. The 2026 upturn follows years of broad-based fiscal strain. Post-pandemic spending expansion and inflationary pressures weighed on government finances worldwide, and despite the recent recovery, 70% of countries tracked since 2021 still have weaker fiscal positions today than when the Index began.

Europe and North America recorded the steepest decline over the six-year period, though the region edged up slightly in 2026. Africa, Asia Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean also recorded net declines, though less steeply. The exception is the Middle East, Central and West Asia, the only region to record a modest net gain in fiscal performance over the full period. While such improvement is welcomed, it should not be overstated. The IMF projects that global public debt will reach 100% of GDP by 2029, with a third of countries already carrying debt above pre-pandemic levels.

Looking at the full six years, the recovery remains narrow. Only 43% of the 104 countries tracked since 2021 have higher overall scores today, and five of seven pillars have declined over the same period, covering fiscal health, market attractiveness, global influence, leadership and foresight, and the laws and policies that shape everyday life. Only two pillars improved – Strong Institutions, which measures institutional quality and policy implementation, and Helping People Rise, which tracks public outcomes experienced by citizens.

Countries in Asia Pacific and in the Middle East, Central and West Asia region are climbing the Index through sustained investment in core government capabilities, including institutional quality, fiscal management, and public service delivery. Several established performers in Europe and North America are losing ground, not through a single crisis but through gradual erosion across multiple dimensions of government effectiveness.

The 2026 CGGI results suggest that strong government performance is not a permanent condition. It requires continuous investment in state capability, fiscal resilience, and the institutional discipline to sustain reforms through periods of crisis and uncertainty.

The full 2026 Index, including country profiles, pillar scores, and historical comparisons, is available at <https://chandlergovernmentindex.com/>

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