



BUSINESS READY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





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FOREWORD

Whenever the odds seem stacked against human aspirations—when economic growth looks set to remain feeble as far as the eye can see, when too many countries seem destined to grow old before they become rich, when climate change seems to have crossed the tipping point—it is worth remembering the distinctive virtue of our species. Predictions of global doom have proliferated throughout history. Yet the sky hasn't fallen, for one reason: human ingenuity.

It was ingenuity that disarmed the so-called “population bomb”—the idea that “hundreds of millions of people” would starve to death in the 1970s as rapid population growth exhausted finite supplies of food. In fact, agricultural innovations—such as the development of high-yield, pest-resistant crops—caused global food production to grow faster than the population in nearly every part of the world. It was human ingenuity that defeated deadly diseases including once-dreaded HIV/AIDS and, most recently, COVID-19. If climate change is somehow tamed by the middle of this century, the main propellant of that success will be human ingenuity.

But this progress is seldom the fruit of a big eureka moment. Human ingenuity works instead through the miracles that occur when governments, private enterprises, and individuals act in ways that benefit entire societies. That depends on conducive conditions, cultivated by a measured blend of rules and practices. The World Bank Group has been inclined to call this “the business climate” or “the business-enabling environment”—because sustained economic development usually reflects systemwide business success.

For too long, though, the focus has been too much on what governments can do for the good of business—and not enough on what businesses can do for the good of all. This report marks a crucial first step to correct that imbalance. The *Business Ready* (B-READY) project aims to build a comprehensive instrument panel that by 2026 will enable about 180 economies to dial in the precise settings needed for a vibrant private sector development—the combination of conditions that will reduce poverty, advance shared prosperity, and speed up the transition to a low-carbon economy. Its goal is to accelerate smart development by encouraging healthy competition among businesses—and countries. It is designed expressly to discourage “a race to the bottom” or simplistic solutions that were the unintended by-product of *Doing Business*, our previous effort to help countries establish the right conditions for private sector development.

Business Ready's analytical framework recognizes that there is more to a healthy business environment than the “ease of doing business.” It accounts for the possibility that reducing the “cost of doing business” can unintentionally mean raising the costs for society at large. Accordingly, *Business Ready* assesses not only the regulatory burden on enterprises—how long it takes to start a business, for example—but also the quality of regulations: Do labor laws, for example, protect workers from being arbitrarily fired? Do they inadvertently make women workers less competitive than men and discourage them from seeking work?

Beyond assessing the rules and regulations that govern business, *Business Ready* delves into the public services needed to transform intentions into reality. Do public utilities provide reliable water and electricity for businesses? Do governments make it easy for businesses to fulfill their tax obligations and comply with environmental and social safeguards? Do they set up systems to enable government agencies to share business-related information with one another? Do they provide public databases that support transparency and the free flow of information necessary for a healthy business climate?

The result is a data set of breathtaking detail that encompasses nearly 2,000 data points per economy. It is possible to zero in, for example, on the frequency of power outages suffered by firms, how long it takes to file and pay taxes, or the average cost to settle a commercial dispute in different economies. Comparable data of this quality simply are not available anywhere else. That makes *Business Ready* an essential public good. The trove of insights it offers will enable businesses to make better decisions about where and how they operate. It will spur governments to adopt better policies by learning from one another. And it will permit researchers everywhere to join the effort to get global private sector development right.

This first edition of *Business Ready* covers only 50 economies. That is a reflection of the care and deliberation we are putting into getting the analysis right. Next year, the project will include more than 100 economies, and in 2026 the coverage will expand to about 180 economies. With each iteration, the report's design and methods will be refined to reflect the lessons learned from the rollout. So why not wait for the methods to be perfected before publishing the data? Because the world does not enjoy the luxury of time—development delayed is development denied—and because it speeds the process of getting feedback from the intended beneficiaries of an assessment, a big part of getting the assessment right. In any case, in a dynamic global economy, accuracy will always be a moving target.

The data and methods used here are both more rigorous and more transparent than those of *Doing Business*. They consolidate the judgments of more than 2,500 experts in the business climate and the survey responses of more than 29,000 businesses. They are more exhaustive, in short, than anything that has been attempted so far by an international institution—and they are of immediate value to the 50 economies covered here. Moreover, every piece of data collected for this report is now publicly available on the B-READY website—so it can be checked and verified by anyone who so chooses.

Analysis of this year's data leads to two general observations. First, economies tend to perform better at enacting regulations to improve the national business climate than they do in providing the public services needed to secure actual progress. In short, there is a sizeable implementation gap. But the good news is that the gap shrinks when the quality of regulations improves. Second, richer economies tend to be more business-ready, but a country need not be wealthy to create a good business environment. Among the 50 economies assessed this year, several developing economies rank among the top 10 in several categories: Rwanda for public services and operational efficiency, Colombia for its regulatory framework and public services, and Georgia for its regulatory framework and operational efficiency.

This suggests progress is possible for most countries. Governments should step up efforts to become business-ready—but not for the fleeting satisfaction of national bragging rights, or the uncertain promise of a big surge in foreign investment. The rewards are far more encompassing: When correctly chosen and carefully sequenced, business reforms can accelerate economic growth, boost productivity, and help reduce carbon emissions at the same time. It creates the conditions for human ingenuity to flourish—exactly what the world needs at a time of slowing growth, rising debt, and climate change. *Business Ready* illuminates the path forward.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

A vibrant private sector is central to efforts to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity on a livable planet.¹ When it functions well, the private sector sparks innovation and entrepreneurship. It can unlock economic opportunities for people who need them the most. It can drive more efficient and sustainable use of natural resources.^{2,3}

Today, the private sector generates about 90 percent of jobs,⁴ 75 percent of investment,⁵ more than 70 percent of output,⁶ and more than 80 percent of government revenues in developing economies.⁷ But it has been stalled since the global financial crisis of 2008–09. Private investment in these economies has slowed substantially. Per capita investment growth between 2023 and 2024 is expected to average only 3.7 percent, barely half the rate of the previous two decades.⁸

The private sector must become more dynamic and resilient to meet formidable development challenges. In the coming decade alone, the world must create jobs for 44 million young people each year, 30 percent of them in Africa.⁹ To end extreme poverty within a decade, most low-income economies will need to achieve a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita growth of about 9 percent each and every year.¹⁰ To escape the “middle-income trap,” developing economies will need a GDP per capita growth of more than 5 percent per year over extended periods.¹¹ To tackle climate change and achieve other key global development goals by 2030, they need to secure a hefty increase in investment—about US\$2.4 trillion per year.¹²

These challenges are far beyond the capacity of governments to tackle alone. Any viable plan for overcoming them will depend on a particular type of private sector development—one that mobilizes private capital and maximizes the benefits for businesses, entrepreneurs, workers, and society as a whole. That requires answering some critical questions. What exactly are the elements of a business climate that can deliver such benefits? Which economies have done best at creating that climate, and how can others learn from them? Which policies must be introduced or ramped up? Which should be phased out?

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This report is designed to help economies answer those questions. It is the first of an annual series that will assess the business climate of a successively larger number of economies over the next three years, reaching worldwide coverage by 2026. Until then, its design and methodology will evolve in accordance with lessons learned from each rollout year.

What is *Business Ready*?

Business Ready (B-READY) (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/businessready>) is a new data collection and analysis project of the World Bank Group to assess the business and investment climate worldwide, accompanied by an annual corporate flagship report. It is a key instrument of the World Bank Group's new strategy to facilitate private investment, generate employment, and improve productivity to help economies accelerate development in inclusive and sustainable ways. It replaces and improves upon the World Bank Group's earlier *Doing Business* project (refer to box ES.1). It reflects a more balanced and transparent approach toward evaluating an economy's business and investment climate, building on recommendations from hundreds of experts from within and outside the World Bank Group, including from governments, the private sector, and civil society organizations. B-READY will provide a quantitative assessment of the business environment with an annual frequency and worldwide coverage. The project aims to balance de jure and de facto measures, ensuring that the data produced are both comparable across economies and representative within each economy.

BOX ES.1

Comparison of the key features of *Doing Business* and B-READY

On September 16, 2021, the senior management of the World Bank Group decided to discontinue the *Doing Business* report and data collection. It also announced the development of a new approach for assessing the business and investment climate: the *Business Ready* (B-READY) project. This new project draws on advice from experts in the

World Bank Group and recommendations from qualified academics and practitioners outside the institution, including the External Panel Review on *Doing Business* methodology (World Bank 2021), as well as feedback from an extensive consultation process with potential users in government, the private sector, and civil society.

(Continued)

BOX ES.1**Comparison of the key features of *Doing Business* and B-READY (Continued)**

While the focus of the *Doing Business* project was on assessing the business environment for small and medium enterprises, the B-READY project targets private sector development as a whole. *Doing Business* centered on the regulatory burden for firms, with some attention to public services. In contrast, B-READY evaluates the regulatory burden as well as the quality of regulations and provision of related public services, along with the ease of compliance with the regulatory framework and the effective use of public services directly relevant to firms. All topics examined by B-READY are structured under three pillars: (I) Regulatory Framework, (II) Public Services, and (III) Operational Efficiency. Furthermore, the new project assesses not only the ability to conduct business for individual firms (firm flexibility), but also the inclusive and sustainable aspects of private sector development (social benefits). To gather data, B-READY uses 21 questionnaires, compared with 11 questionnaires used by *Doing Business*. In its first year, it collected data on almost 1,200 indicators (from about 2,000 data points) per economy. It also covers all major topics related to a firm's life cycle, whereas *Doing Business* sometimes omitted critical areas such as labor.

Doing Business collected data through expert consultations and extensive case studies with strict assumptions, covering either de jure or

de facto regulations, but not both uniformly. In contrast, B-READY combines expert consultations and firm surveys to capture a balanced view of de jure and de facto aspects. This allows B-READY to achieve a better balance between data comparability across economies.

Doing Business assessed economies' performance based on rankings and scores, focusing on aggregate rankings to drive public interest and motivate reforms. B-READY uses quantifiable disaggregated indicators, aggregating points into scores by topic and pillar. This approach identifies specific areas for reform and encourages reforms without overhyping economywide rankings.

While *Doing Business* covered the main business city in 191 economies and the second-largest business city in 11 economies, B-READY aims for wide coverage within and across economies, with coverage for different topics based on whether regulations are national or local.

Like *Doing Business*, B-READY updates data each year for indicators based on expert consultations. For data derived from firm-level surveys, it updates data for different sets of economies each year, resulting in stable data for each economy over a three-year cycle.

B-READY assessments aim to improve the private sector, not only by advancing the interests of individual firms but also by elevating the interests of workers, consumers, potential new enterprises, and the natural environment. B-READY aims to achieve this objective by focusing on three main areas:

1. *Reform advocacy*: B-READY advocates for policy reform through the effective communication of international benchmarking, opening the door for knowledge sharing and policy dialogue for governments, the private sector, the World Bank Group, and other development institutions.
2. *Policy guidance*: B-READY guides specific policy change through comprehensive and relevant data and information, showing how and by how much each economy lags in international good practice.
3. *Analysis and research*: B-READY provides granular data for research and analysis, shedding light on the drivers and mechanisms of private sector development.

As a new project, B-READY is in a three-year rollout phase, spanning 2024 to 2026. During this period, the project will grow in geographic coverage and refine its process and methodology. This 2024 report is the first of three during the rollout. It covers 50 economies that span all income levels and geographic regions around the world. Due to the limited number of economies included in this first report, the regional and income trends are suggestive, not definitive. Likewise, the methodology remains open to refinement and may evolve through subsequent iterations. The second report, expected to be released in September 2025, will cover more than 100 economies. The third report, expected to be released in September 2026, will assess about 180 economies, bringing the rollout phase to conclusion and providing a full global benchmark for future business readiness assessments. There is no straightforward advantage or disadvantage of economies being in one round versus another. In fact, there are pros and cons of participating either earlier or later in the project. Earlier participation will bring data faster for potential attention and action, while later participation will bring a more refined methodology and a broader economy coverage for enhanced benchmarking.¹³

B-READY's analytical framework: Ten topics, three pillars, three cross-cutting themes

Ten topics. B-READY is organized according to topics essential for private sector development that correspond to various stages of the life cycle of a firm and its participation in the market while opening, operating (or expanding), and closing (or reorganizing) a business

(refer to figure ES.1). The 10 topics are *Business Entry*, *Business Location*, *Utility Services*, *Labor*, *Financial Services*, *International Trade*, *Taxation*, *Dispute Resolution*, *Market Competition*, and *Business Insolvency*.

FIGURE ES.1 B-READY topics correspond to various stages of the life cycle of a firm and examine three cross-cutting themes



Source: B-READY project.

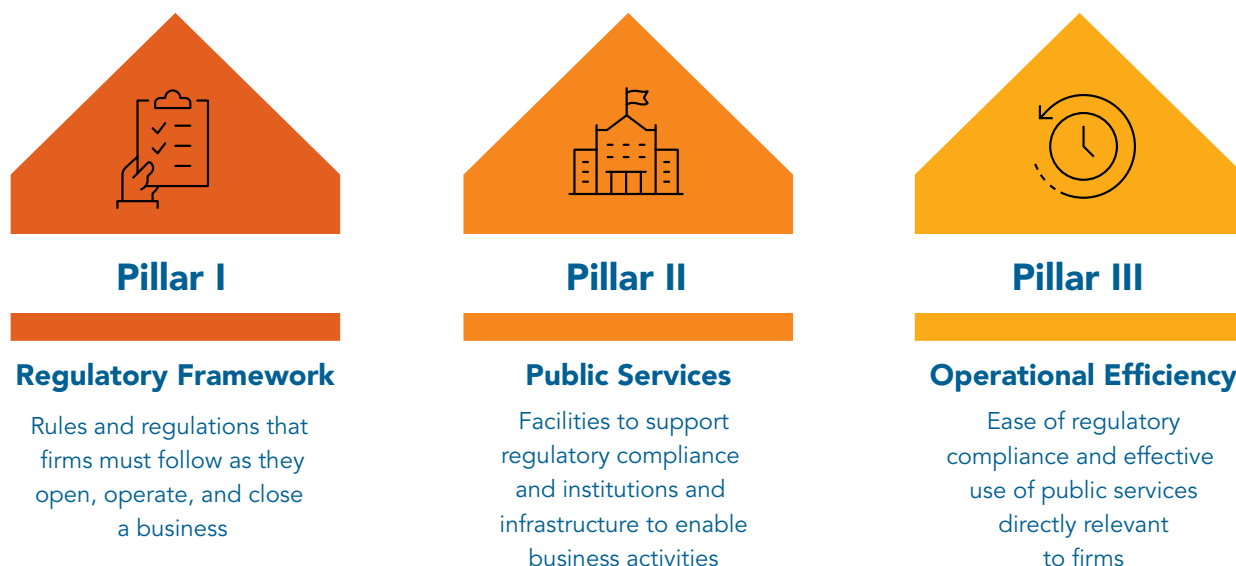
Note: Although Business Entry and Business Insolvency are the clear beginning and end stages of a firm's life cycle, the remaining eight topics can occur in varying sequences during a firm's operating and expanding stages. The topics are interconnected. This figure is not intended to represent a linear progression in a firm's life cycle or to suggest strictly that these ought to be the exact phases, but to give an overall assessment of the business environment of the typical stages of the life cycle of a firm.

Three pillars. For each topic, B-READY considers three pillars:

Pillar I, Regulatory Framework; Pillar II, Public Services; and Pillar III, Operational Efficiency.

- Pillar I:** The Regulatory Framework consists of the rules and regulations that firms must follow as they open, operate (or expand), and close (or reorganize) a business. Indicators under this pillar distinguish between rules and regulations that promote clarity, fairness, and the sustainability of the business environment and those that unnecessarily inhibit entrepreneurial activity.
- Pillar II:** Public Services spans the facilities that governments provide to support compliance with regulations and the institutions and infrastructure that enable business activities. Indicators under this pillar are limited to the scope of the business environment in areas related to the life cycle of the firm. They emphasize such aspects as digitalization, interoperability of government services, and transparency.
- Pillar III:** Operational Efficiency captures the ease of compliance with the regulatory framework and the effective use of public services directly relevant to firms.

To differentiate the B-READY benchmarking exercise from other well-established international measures, B-READY concentrates on the regulatory framework and public service provision at the microeconomic level: that is, as enacted and implemented to directly affect the behavior and performance of active and potential enterprises (refer to figure ES.2).

FIGURE ES.2 B-READY pillars define the scope of the project

Source: B-READY project.

Within these pillars, common features inform the grouping into a particular category. Each category contains a number of *subcategories*.

Indicators: Each subcategory has a number of indicators. Across all topics and pillars, B-READY analyzes nearly 1,200 indicators. The B-READY project focuses on issues where established good practices exist and utilizes quantifiable measures that highlight actionable areas subject to change through policy reform. The data, derived from primary sources specifically collected for the B-READY project, encompass the most relevant aspects of each topic (refer to box ES.2).

BOX ES.2

Assessing business climate conditions: Insights from examples of B-READY indicators

The B-READY indicators measure the detailed conditions that determine the business environment. These conditions vary greatly among the 50 economies assessed this year. For each economy, the B-READY website (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/businessready>) presents data for all the indicators (nearly 1,200) and the granular data points on which they

are built (about 2,000 data points). This box illustrates some of this granular information (refer to chapter 4 for more details about indicators collected for each B-READY topic).

Pillar I, Regulatory Framework. Consider, for example, how the performance of the 50 economies varies on the following indicators

(Continued)

BOX ES.2**Assessing business climate conditions: Insights from examples of B-READY indicators (Continued)**

collected on the Regulatory Framework. Verification of the identify of beneficial owners is required by law in 68 percent of economies, strengthening business accountability and anti-money laundering efforts (Business Entry topic). Paid annual leave and paid sick leave are legally mandated in 72 percent and 88 percent of economies, respectively, allowing workers time for recovery without risking their income (Labor). In 90 percent of economies, the regulatory frameworks prohibit anticompetitive agreements between firms, fostering higher productivity and product quality (Market Competition). Laws and regulations enabling foreign transactions are a policy concern, as evidenced by the recognition of foreign-issued electronic contracts (77 percent of economies), foreign electronic signatures (75 percent of economies), and the absence of limits to cross-border electronic payments (71 percent of economies) (International Trade). Enabling speedy resolution of commercial disputes is also an area of regulatory concern, with only 8 percent of economies legally providing a time standard for all four procedures measured by B-READY and 66 percent of economies mandating the recognition and enforcement of foreign court judgments (Dispute Resolution).

Pillar II, Public Services. Consider a few examples of indicators collected on Public Services. While 92 percent of economies have taxpayer online tax portals, only 4 percent offer all three electronic self-service tools measured by B-READY—chatbots, e-forums, and e-learning—on their website (Taxation). Similarly, while 92 percent of economies have operational credit bureaus and registries, data

from institutions such as retailers, merchants, and utility companies are collected and distributed in only 20 percent of economies (Financial Services). Only 21 percent of economies implement all seven coordinated border management features measured by B-READY (International Trade). Innovation remains a challenge in some countries, with 26 percent of economies having either only innovation incubators or accelerators, or lacking both (Market Competition). Lastly, only 44 percent of economies have operational courts with specialized expertise in insolvency (Business Insolvency).

Pillar III, Operational Efficiency. Finally consider a selection of indicators on Operational Efficiency. The registration process for a domestic firm ranges between 3 and 80 days in the sampled economies, while foreign firms may wait up to 106 days (Business Entry). Obtaining a construction-related permit takes 30 days on average across economies, but this can extend up to 120 days in some. Securing an environmental permit generally requires even more time, averaging 218 days, and, in some cases, exceeding two years (Business Location). Firms face an average of four electrical outages per month, although the number can be as high as 22 in some economies (Utility Services). The time to obtain a loan varies significantly, ranging from 7 days in the best-performing economy to 45 days in the worst (Financial Services). Resolving a business dispute in court takes, on average across economies, just over 2 years, but the duration can vary widely, from as little as 105 days to as long as 5 years (Dispute Resolution).

Three cross-cutting themes. Across the 10 topics, the assessment includes data on three cross-cutting areas increasingly important in modern economies: digital adoption, environmental sustainability, and gender. B-READY looks at digital adoption, either by governments or businesses, anchored in specific areas of the business environment. For environmental sustainability, B-READY assesses relevant indicators that reflect environmental regulatory provisions affecting business operations. For gender, the report focuses on the collection and availability of anonymized data disaggregated by sex, as well as measuring the implementation and targeting of programs and gender-sensitive regulations affecting businesses in economies around the world.

Scoring

For each economy, B-READY produces two sets of scores: one consisting of 10 topic scores and another comprising three pillar scores. Topic and pillar scores can range from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 100.

For topic scores, every score is generated by averaging the scores assigned to each of the three pillars (Regulatory Framework, Public Services, Operational Efficiency) for that topic. Within these pillars, common features inform the grouping into a particular *category*. Each category contains a number of *subcategories*. In turn, each subcategory contains a number of *indicators*.

Points are allocated to each indicator according to its contribution to firm flexibility (that is, ease of business from a firm's perspective) and/or social benefits (that is, the impact to the broader private sector). Indicator points are then compiled to determine the total points for the subcategory, category, and ultimately, the pillar. Categories and subcategories are weighted to reflect their significance and relevance to that pillar. Each pillar score in a topic is standardized to potentially range from 0 to 100.

For pillar scores, each score is generated by averaging the scores assigned to that pillar (Regulatory Framework, Public Services, or Operational Efficiency) across 10 topics.

Data collection and governance

B-READY combines primary data collected from thousands of specialists—each an expert in the private sector of a specific economy—with data collected directly from businesses operating in that economy. To accomplish this, B-READY uses expert questionnaires tailored to

collect data for the Regulatory Framework and Public Services pillars from specialists in each topic.¹⁴ The questionnaires are administered to three to five experts per questionnaire and economy. Additionally, the World Bank Enterprise Surveys directly collect data from businesses for indicators within the Operational Efficiency pillar.¹⁵ The project also uses expert questionnaires to collect data on Operational Efficiency indicators not routinely faced by firms themselves, in topics such as Business Entry and Business Insolvency, because ad hoc surveys would be prohibitively expensive.

The complementary use of expert questionnaires and firm-level surveys is an important innovation that capitalizes on the advantages of both data collection modes and represents a significant increase in the data available to policy makers, development practitioners, and researchers. For each economy, expert questionnaire data will be updated every year, while Enterprise Surveys data will be updated every three years (refer to figure ES.3). The World Bank Enterprise Surveys program has been expanded from 15 to about 60 surveys per year to accommodate the data collection effort.

B-READY attempts to achieve a balance between data comparability across economies and data representativeness within each economy. Expert questionnaires address this balance by using broad parameters, instead of narrow case studies, to measure the business environment that most firms face, while retaining comparability across economies. Firm-level surveys address the balance by using representative samples of registered firms, allowing for the comparison of the average or typical experience of actual firms. B-READY, therefore, covers information relevant to firms of different sizes and locations, various economic sectors, and foreign and domestic ownership.

B-READY is governed by the highest data integrity standards, including sound data-gathering processes, robust data safeguards, and clear approval protocols (refer to box ES.3). The two B-READY foundational documents are publicly available on the project website: the *B-READY Manual and Guide*,¹⁶ specifying the protocols and safeguards to ensure the integrity of the assessments, and the *B-READY Methodology Handbook*,¹⁷ detailing the project's topics, indicators, and scoring approach. These documents will be updated and improved as the three-year rollout phase of the project progresses.¹⁸

Transparency and replicability are the cornerstones of B-READY governance. All the granular data used for scoring are made publicly available on the B-READY website (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/businessready>), and all results presented in B-READY reports are replicable using straightforward toolkits made available on the same website.

FIGURE ES.3 B-READY relies on data obtained directly from experts and enterprises

Expert questionnaires	World Bank Enterprise Surveys
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from experts, all in the private sector except for credit registries, who regularly deal with business regulations and related public services and institutions. • Provide de jure information (Pillar I) and de facto information (Pillars II–III). • Data collection through 21 questionnaires, filled in by three to five experts per questionnaire and economy. • Updated annually for each economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from the owners or managers of a representative sample of registered firms. • Provide de facto information (Pillar III). • Data collection embedded in the World Bank Enterprise Surveys program (expanded from 15 to about 60 surveys per year). • Updated every three years for each economy.

Source: B-READY project.

BOX ES.3

Data validation and quality assurance

Data collected through both expert consultations and Enterprise Surveys are subject to rigorous validation and quality assurance processes. When discrepancies arise in questionnaire responses in data collected through expert consultations—such as divergence in private sector responses, divergence between private sector responses and government inputs, or misalignment in the unit of measurement for numerical variables—questionnaires are returned to relevant experts through the survey software, providing them an opportunity to review and change the response if needed.

The Enterprise Surveys also follow a robust quality control process, which includes several

aspects to monitor the order for contacting firms, weekly progress reports, and data quality checks (refer to the *Enterprise Surveys Manual and Guide*).^a

Following data validation and quality assurance processes, the individual data are aggregated to economy-level variables, applying standard aggregation methods of taking the median, mean, or mode, depending on the question type (refer to the *B-READY Methodology Handbook*).^b This step is critical for transforming individual expert and firm insights into a coherent, economywide perspective.

a. https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/enterprisesurveys/documents/methodology/Enterprise%20Surveys_Manual%20and%20Guide.pdf.

b. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/357a611e3406288528cb1e05b3c7dfda-0540012023/original/B-READY-Methodology-Handbook.pdf>.

B-READY 2024 data and summary results

B-READY granular data provide a wealth of information that can be used to guide specific policy reform. These data are presented in the main body of the report and, in more detail, on the B-READY website (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/businessready>) through accessible facilities and tools, including economy profiles.

Performance by pillar

The data for the 50 economies featured in the first report are summarized in table ES.1. Economies are divided into five equal groupings (quintiles), from highest to lowest performers, based on their scores within each pillar. This classification system allows policy makers to readily identify the areas for improvement in their economy: regulations, public services, and operational efficiency.

TABLE ES.1 B-READY 2024 performance, by pillar

Pillar I Regulatory Framework		Pillar II Public Services		Pillar III Operational Efficiency	
Hungary	78.23	Estonia	73.31	Singapore	87.33
Portugal	78.11	Singapore	70.40	Georgia	84.75
Georgia	77.67	Croatia	70.24	Rwanda	81.31
Slovak Republic	77.29	Portugal	69.53	Estonia	80.28
Colombia	76.50	Hungary	69.50	Hong Kong SAR, China	78.52
Bulgaria	76.33	New Zealand	68.91	New Zealand	76.39
Romania	76.19	Slovak Republic	68.17	North Macedonia	75.81
Greece	75.60	Rwanda	67.37	Bulgaria	74.82
Mexico	75.07	Colombia	66.28	Kyrgyz Republic	74.71
Croatia	73.48	Greece	64.51	Viet Nam	72.78
Estonia	72.84	Bulgaria	64.03	Nepal	72.21
Montenegro	72.48	Costa Rica	63.58	Slovak Republic	71.14
Hong Kong SAR, China	72.40	Indonesia	63.44	Montenegro	71.03
Singapore	72.37	Georgia	63.33	Hungary	70.68
Costa Rica	71.41	Romania	63.19	Portugal	70.53
Philippines	70.68	Hong Kong SAR, China	62.64	Bangladesh	70.49
Rwanda	70.35	Peru	59.76	Bosnia and Herzegovina	70.05
North Macedonia	69.95	Morocco	58.66	Mauritius	69.79
Peru	69.51	Mexico	57.25	Samoa	68.32
Togo	69.03	Mauritius	56.28	Croatia	68.31

Quintile: ■ Top ■ Second ■ Third ■ Fourth ■ Bottom

(Continued)

TABLE ES.1 B-READY 2024 performance, by pillar (Continued)

Pillar I Regulatory Framework		Pillar II Public Services		Pillar III Operational Efficiency	
Morocco	68.92	North Macedonia	53.56	Botswana	67.73
Côte d'Ivoire	68.16	Viet Nam	53.41	Barbados	66.55
Bosnia and Herzegovina	67.45	Tanzania	51.56	Colombia	66.38
New Zealand	67.45	Philippines	50.80	Lesotho	66.06
Ghana	66.91	Paraguay	50.68	Pakistan	65.90
Viet Nam	66.81	Togo	49.58	Romania	65.74
Botswana	66.01	Nepal	49.29	Togo	64.36
Kyrgyz Republic	65.22	Montenegro	48.92	Seychelles	63.57
Tanzania	65.00	Botswana	48.52	Tanzania	62.15
Mauritius	64.55	Ghana	47.67	Mexico	61.73
Indonesia	63.98	Barbados	46.40	Indonesia	61.31
Cambodia	62.94	El Salvador	45.36	Cambodia	60.66
Chad	61.22	Pakistan	44.97	Paraguay	60.60
Central African Republic	61.11	Bangladesh	41.64	Morocco	59.66
Paraguay	60.90	Kyrgyz Republic	41.23	Greece	58.98
El Salvador	60.38	Côte d'Ivoire	40.34	Philippines	57.95
Nepal	59.34	Samoa	40.04	Peru	56.20
Pakistan	59.10	Cambodia	39.14	El Salvador	54.53
Seychelles	58.85	Lesotho	37.89	Ghana	54.42
Barbados	58.81	Bosnia and Herzegovina	37.81	Costa Rica	53.66
Madagascar	57.38	Seychelles	37.21	West Bank and Gaza	52.75
Samoa	57.13	Vanuatu	32.06	Sierra Leone	52.51
Bangladesh	56.99	Madagascar	31.64	Madagascar	52.29
Lesotho	54.94	Sierra Leone	30.73	Côte d'Ivoire	50.31
Sierra Leone	54.09	West Bank and Gaza	28.42	Gambia, The	48.44
Gambia, The	53.37	Timor-Leste	23.80	Chad	48.05
Vanuatu	50.44	Chad	23.51	Iraq	46.79
Iraq	49.39	Iraq	21.45	Timor-Leste	44.83
West Bank and Gaza	47.54	Gambia, The	20.11	Vanuatu	43.94
Timor-Leste	46.21	Central African Republic	18.35	Central African Republic	40.36

Quintile: ■ Top ■ Second ■ Third ■ Fourth ■ Bottom

Source: B-READY 2024 data.

Note: The economies are ordered according to their scores in each of the three pillars: Pillar I, Regulatory Framework; Pillar II, Public Services; and Pillar III, Operational Efficiency. They are further grouped in quintiles, which are marked with varying shades of blue (with darker shades representing better performance).

Top quintile. Economies in the top quintile (indicated by the darkest shade of blue in table ES.1) represent the highest performers, encompassing the top 20 percent of the data, from the 80th percentile to the maximum values. In the Regulatory Framework pillar, Hungary leads with a score of 78.23 points; the average score is 76.45 points. This pillar has the narrowest range among all three pillars (4.75 points). This narrow range shows that economies within this quintile maintain similar high standards, demonstrating a widespread adoption of internationally recognized good practices in the Regulatory Framework pillar.

In the Public Services pillar, Estonia emerges as the top performer, with a score of 73.31 points. This pillar has the lowest average score across all pillars (68.82 points), with a range of 8.80 points. The moderate range suggests variability in the quality of public services, although most economies still offer superior support for businesses through enhanced transparency, digitalization, and interoperability of government services.

In the Operational Efficiency pillar, Singapore stands out as the top performer, with a score of 87.33 points. The average score in this pillar is 78.67 points, the highest among pillars. However, scores also have the most significant variation among all pillars, with a range of 14.55 points. This relatively wide range indicates uneven performance levels among top-performing economies.

Overall, economies in the top quintile perform well across multiple pillars, often ranking highly across various topics. For instance, Estonia scores in the top quintile of economies in 7 of the 10 topics, and Rwanda scores in the first quintile in 6 of the 10 topics. This strong performance across pillars showcases the broad strengths of these economies, although it also reveals specific areas where further improvements could enhance their overall competitiveness.

Second quintile. This quintile includes the economies ranked between the 60th and 80th percentiles. These economies exhibit strong performance but also show potential for improvement. In this quintile, the Regulatory Framework pillar has the highest average score (71.10 points) among the three pillars, coupled with the narrowest range (3.81 points), indicating a relatively consistent performance across these economies and adherence to regulatory good practices. Estonia leads this pillar with a score of 72.84 points.

In the Public Services pillar, Bulgaria achieves the highest score of 64.03 points. Pillar II has the lowest average score (61.22 points) with the widest range (7.75 points) among the three pillars. This broader range

suggests disparities in public services that could be addressed to further elevate these economies.

The Operational Efficiency pillar shows a relatively higher average score of 70.26 points compared to Pillar II, with a lower range of 3.90 points. Nepal leads this pillar with a score of 72.21 points. While most economies in this quintile demonstrate relatively strong operational efficiency, slight disparities suggest that targeted reforms could enhance efficiency further.

Third quintile. This quintile covers the middle 20 percent of economies, ranging from the 40th to the 60th percentile. These economies exhibit a mix of strengths and weaknesses in their business environment. In the Regulatory Framework pillar, the average score of the third quintile is 66.65 points, with Morocco achieving the highest score of 68.92 points. The Operational Efficiency pillar follows closely, with an average score of 65.02 points, led by Botswana at 67.73 points. The Public Services pillar has the lowest average score among the three (50.40 points), with North Macedonia scoring the highest at 53.56 points.

In the third quintile, the ranges between the highest and lowest scores across all pillars are relatively similar, indicating consistent levels of performance within each pillar among these economies. However, while these economies may have established laws and regulations, deficiencies in public services appear to be hindering them from developing a robust private sector. To improve their overall business environment, these economies should address weaknesses in the topics and pillars where they currently underperform.

Fourth quintile. This quintile encompasses the economies ranked from the 20th to the 40th percentile. These economies grapple with a challenging business environment characterized by relatively weak regulatory frameworks and public services, which constrains the operational efficiency of their businesses. Among the pillars, the Public Services pillar has the lowest average score (41.48 points), reflecting the relatively low level of support available to businesses. The Operational Efficiency pillar comes next with an average of 57.80 points, while the Regulatory Framework pillar has the highest average score, at 60.66 points. Indonesia achieves the highest score in this quintile for the Regulatory Framework pillar with 63.98 points, while Barbados scores the lowest with 58.81 points. In the same quintile for the Public Services pillar, Barbados attains the highest score of 46.40 points, while Bosnia and Herzegovina records the lowest with 37.81 points. These relatively low scores underscore the pressing need for improvement in these economies to foster a more conducive business environment.

Bottom quintile. Economies in the bottom quintile (lightest shade of blue in table ES.1) represent the lowest performance in each pillar. These economies particularly struggle in the Public Services pillar, with an average score of 26.73 points. In contrast, they show relatively higher average scores in the Regulatory Framework pillar (52.75 points) and Operational Efficiency pillar (48.03 points). Notably, the range between the highest and lowest scores within these pillars is the widest in this quintile, highlighting the significant disparities in performance. For example, Madagascar achieves the highest score in this group for the Regulatory Framework pillar, with 57.38 points, while Timor-Leste scores the lowest, with 46.21 points. Similarly, the Seychelles records the highest score in the Public Services pillar, with 37.21 points, while the Central African Republic records the lowest, with 18.35 points. These wide ranges indicate that while some economies in this quintile manage to maintain moderately stable regulatory and operational frameworks, others fall severely behind, especially in public service delivery. Entrepreneurs in these economies, some of which are fragile and conflict-affected, need to show remarkable resilience in conducting their operations. The pronounced disparity in pillar performance underscores the uneven development within these economies and points to critical areas that require urgent attention and reform.

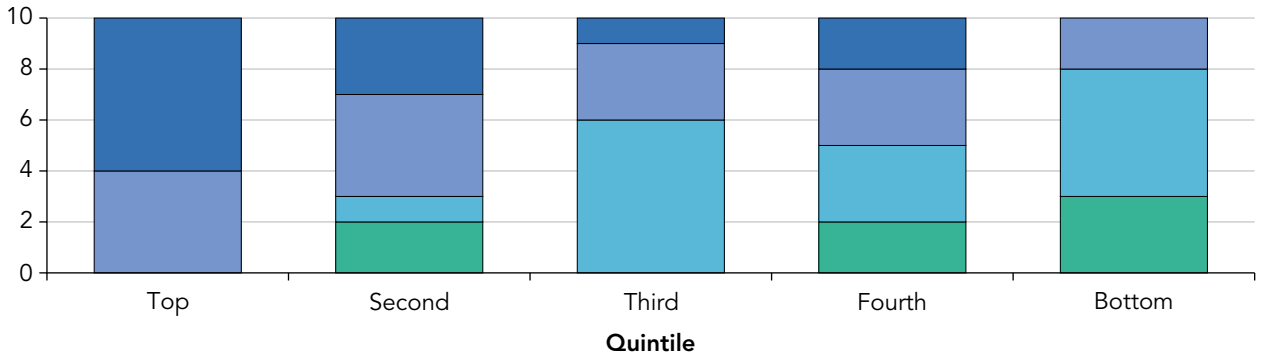
There is significant diversity in the distribution of economies by income level across the three pillars. Figure ES.4 shows how economies in each of the quintiles are distributed by income across the three pillars. These patterns yield several important insights.

Economies of varying income levels can adopt strong regulatory frameworks (refer to figure ES.4, panel a). The top quintile in the Regulatory Framework pillar consists mostly of high-income economies, but 40 percent are upper-middle-income economies (Bulgaria, Colombia, Georgia, Mexico). The second quintile features all income levels: 3 high-income economies (Estonia; Hong Kong SAR, China; Singapore); 4 upper-middle-income economies (Costa Rica, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Peru); 1 lower-middle-income economy (the Philippines); and 2 low-income economies (Rwanda, Togo). Such regional and income-level diversity emphasizes the potential for any economy to establish a robust legal and regulatory framework that can boost its business climate. Additionally, it presents an opportunity for mutual learning among peers. The third quintile mainly consists of lower-middle-income economies, with 1 high-income economy (New Zealand) and 3 upper-middle-income economies (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Mauritius). The fourth quintile is diverse, spanning all income levels, while the bottom quintile consists mostly of lower-middle-income economies, with 2 upper-middle-income economies (Iraq, West Bank and Gaza) and 3 low-income economies (The Gambia, Madagascar, Sierra Leone).

FIGURE ES.4 The distribution of economies by income level varies considerably across pillars and by performance

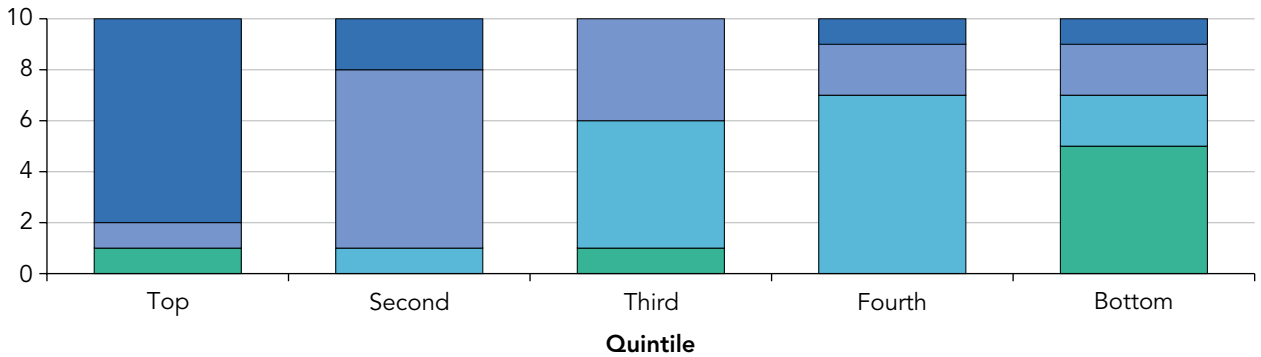
a. Pillar I, Regulatory Framework

Number of economies



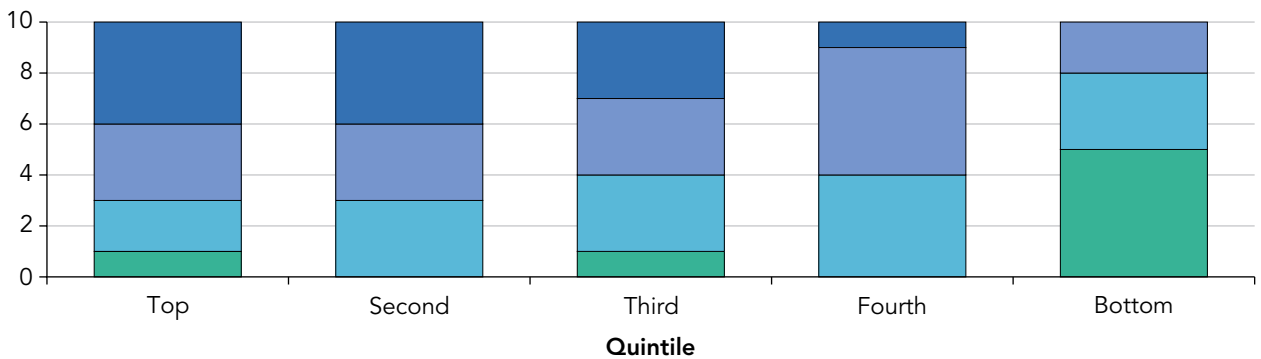
b. Pillar II, Public Services

Number of economies



c. Pillar III, Operational Efficiency

Number of economies



■ High income ■ Upper middle income ■ Lower middle income ■ Low income

Source: B-READY 2024 data.

Note: The income classification data are as of June 2024 to ensure alignment with the latest data collection period.

High-income economies tend to provide higher quality public services to support businesses, but all income levels are represented across top quintiles (refer to figure ES.4, panel b). The Public Services pillar

shows higher diversity of income levels across the quintiles. High-income economies make up 80 percent of the top quintile; however, the group also contains 1 upper-middle-income economy (Colombia) and 1 low-income economy (Rwanda). The second quintile includes 2 high-income economies (Hong Kong SAR, China; Romania), 7 upper-middle-income economies, and 1 lower-middle-income economy (Morocco). The third quintile also shows diversity, with 4 upper-middle-income economies (Botswana, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Paraguay), 5 lower-middle-income economies (Ghana, Nepal, the Philippines, Tanzania, Viet Nam), and 1 low-income economy (Togo). The fourth quintile follows suit and consists of 1 high-income economy (Barbados), 2 upper-middle-income economies (Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador), and 7 lower-middle-income economies. The bottom quintile is evenly split between low-income economies (the Central African Republic, Chad, The Gambia, Madagascar, Sierra Leone) and economies in other income levels (Iraq, the Seychelles, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, West Bank and Gaza).

Economies across all income levels can facilitate the operational efficiency of firms (refer to figure ES.4, panel c). High-income economies

comprise 40 percent of the top quintile in the Operational Efficiency pillar (Estonia; Hong Kong SAR, China; New Zealand; Singapore), while economies from other income levels make up the remaining 60 percent. This distribution demonstrates the potential for any economy to achieve relatively high levels of operational efficiency across its business environment. In the second quintile, 40 percent of economies are high-income (Croatia, Hungary, Portugal, the Slovak Republic), with the rest split equally between upper-middle-income (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mauritius, Montenegro) and lower-middle-income economies (Bangladesh, Nepal, Samoa). The third quintile has equal representation from high-income (Barbados, Romania, the Seychelles), upper-middle-income (Botswana, Colombia, Mexico), and lower-middle-income economies (Lesotho, Pakistan, Tanzania), with 1 low-income economy (Togo). The fourth quintile consists of 1 high-income economy (Greece), 5 upper-middle-income economies (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Indonesia, Paraguay, Peru), and 4 lower-middle-income economies (Cambodia, Ghana, Morocco, the Philippines). Most of the economies in the bottom quintile are low-income (the Central African Republic, Chad, The Gambia, Madagascar, Sierra Leone), with 3 lower-middle-income economies (Côte d'Ivoire, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu) and 2 upper-middle-income economies (Iraq, West Bank and Gaza). These findings should be interpreted with caution, due to the limited geographic coverage of this 2024 report.

Performance by topic

Beyond the pillar performance of economies, B-READY 2024 also presents information on economy performance at the topic level. Table ES.2 provides a visual representation that allows readers to identify the specific topics where economies should improve. To inform detailed policy advice, B-READY also provides much more granular data for each topic and pillar in appendix A (in the full report) and on the project's website (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/businessready>).

The performance patterns of economies tend to be consistent across various topics, but all economies have room for improvement. While economies exhibit varying degrees of performance across different topics, a consistent pattern emerges. Economies with a favorable business environment in one area (for example, being in a higher quintile group) tend to have a similar performance in other areas (being in higher quintiles). The opposite is also true. Economies in a lower quintile in one area tend to have lower quintile performances across other areas. This trend could be attributed to the fact that topics are interlinked. Policy makers may consider these interlinkages as they devise reform strategies.

To explore the linkages between the topics, the topic scores were ordered from highest to lowest, and the correlations were analyzed based on this ordering. This method, which assesses the association between two variables based on their position rather than their raw values, is particularly useful when comparing how economies belong to specific quintiles.

For example, Market Competition and Business Location are the two topics with the most similarity in the distribution of economies—meaning that the same economies appear in the same performance quintile in both topics. Their correlation is 0.80. Seven economies are present in the top quintile for both (Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Rwanda, Singapore). Another 5 economies share the second quintile (Hong Kong SAR, China; Mauritius; Portugal; Romania; the Slovak Republic), and 6 appear consistently in the bottom quintile in both (Chad, The Gambia, Iraq, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste).¹² This suggests that economies that protect fair and efficient allocation of resources between competing firms are also more likely to have regulations and services that reduce market distortion of land and property rights, including clearly defined sets of building regulations and environmental permitting standards.

TABLE ES.2 B-READY 2024 performance, by topic

Economy	Business Entry	Business Location	Utility Services	Labor	Financial Services	International Trade	Taxation	Dispute Resolution	Market Competition	Business Insolvency
Bangladesh	74.08	66.91	62.10	64.01	61.45	53.86	56.36	41.90	42.65	40.39
Barbados	78.23	44.39	62.81	69.64	61.37	57.54	52.34	61.63	39.17	45.42
Bosnia and Herzegovina	55.73	63.83	59.58	69.87	56.41	68.65	46.92	49.92	52.23	61.23
Botswana	92.50	56.78	60.85	63.51	69.30	68.26	50.88	56.06	50.92	38.45
Bulgaria	92.08	71.51	81.10	68.72	68.56	75.82	59.96	68.78	64.34	66.40
Cambodia	43.80	49.00	64.45	68.44	86.03	57.68	58.60	61.76	33.09	19.63
Central African Republic	46.26	44.98	53.02	49.95	33.98	34.82	23.28	38.46	33.84	40.81
Chad	47.48	41.04	43.46	55.67	44.26	43.31	43.39	49.23	32.52	42.24
Colombia	88.62	72.38	74.99	62.08	75.19	54.02	57.71	72.85	64.84	74.49
Costa Rica	71.08	72.99	70.22	58.73	66.14	73.93	42.22	59.91	68.55	45.09
Côte d'Ivoire	63.82	44.21	58.87	69.28	42.19	51.08	53.39	61.44	34.68	50.44
Croatia	78.72	76.24	76.77	75.60	63.28	84.73	39.86	71.84	63.24	76.48
El Salvador	45.86	61.90	65.57	56.19	70.99	61.72	43.03	61.45	49.52	18.01
Estonia	90.75	80.40	72.72	68.89	61.54	85.59	70.72	80.24	64.69	79.22
Gambia, The	46.61	33.42	36.43	49.22	42.20	38.58	39.01	50.69	26.76	43.47
Georgia	80.08	83.01	73.08	83.46	74.97	76.72	68.51	82.09	54.93	75.65
Ghana	40.99	60.39	68.52	68.57	59.86	56.25	56.78	54.85	32.19	64.93
Greece	96.58	57.86	69.30	64.71	58.63	87.04	56.02	65.61	64.18	43.71
Hong Kong SAR, China	85.49	71.17	77.71	68.81	69.96	90.77	70.56	72.67	57.80	46.91
Hungary	85.81	73.52	64.45	81.87	80.70	78.23	59.35	75.20	63.17	65.75
Indonesia	63.72	68.09	70.55	72.20	56.51	64.58	59.91	64.24	52.34	56.96
Iraq	52.22	48.47	54.19	53.66	44.05	42.13	29.40	39.87	21.38	6.74
Kyrgyz Republic	64.83	67.37	71.92	54.35	70.62	60.65	46.59	62.54	52.70	52.31
Lesotho	76.44	45.93	56.05	62.69	54.30	61.39	60.19	50.10	25.53	37.02
Madagascar	62.35	42.44	35.04	50.68	50.66	54.83	51.66	47.71	39.90	35.77

Quintile: ■ Top ■ Second ■ Third ■ Fourth ■ Bottom

(Continued)

TABLE ES.2 B-READY 2024 performance, by topic (Continued)

Economy	Business Entry	Business Location	Utility Services	Labor	Financial Services	International Trade	Taxation	Dispute Resolution	Market Competition	Business Insolvency
Mauritius	75.58	68.64	41.48	76.60	60.17	74.36	69.22	51.32	57.03	61.02
Mexico	61.53	61.81	76.79	59.74	84.31	63.77	65.56	67.69	51.69	53.93
Montenegro	79.72	66.55	73.63	63.25	63.16	67.20	44.04	68.79	53.12	61.96
Morocco	76.73	77.39	76.64	59.10	62.66	75.51	47.69	43.67	58.14	46.58
Nepal	66.36	60.51	65.39	65.70	70.58	66.77	57.99	64.40	33.06	52.04
New Zealand	84.64	80.38	63.00	79.95	85.04	69.94	71.74	61.07	53.87	59.52
North Macedonia	90.83	55.68	78.44	70.40	73.42	65.34	46.84	61.10	62.26	60.09
Pakistan	91.50	54.25	59.21	53.45	67.97	45.71	57.48	41.99	46.24	48.79
Paraguay	53.92	60.50	53.64	66.23	63.90	64.55	55.27	62.27	48.34	45.33
Peru	63.22	64.89	65.30	64.61	78.41	49.81	49.97	56.61	63.76	61.66
Philippines	48.49	60.27	66.47	75.54	60.70	71.47	56.66	62.88	50.13	45.51
Portugal	92.67	70.17	78.20	73.66	71.12	75.40	52.86	72.41	61.52	79.24
Romania	79.50	69.56	67.61	62.76	73.42	85.80	50.61	74.42	61.06	59.00
Rwanda	85.39	72.01	67.76	60.15	69.28	82.09	66.31	82.87	64.02	80.20
Samoa	73.39	60.10	65.03	70.24	52.09	51.36	56.94	47.82	51.16	23.52
Seychelles	54.49	57.83	53.77	72.71	56.07	61.43	58.35	37.84	35.90	43.72
Sierra Leone	48.44	46.36	60.54	69.02	41.57	37.69	41.45	42.26	30.17	40.26
Singapore	93.57	78.24	81.76	66.83	73.33	79.83	70.39	71.08	62.29	89.69
Slovak Republic	85.62	71.13	86.42	70.87	65.53	80.88	49.85	78.31	60.81	72.59
Tanzania	69.15	53.62	78.73	63.95	57.28	60.11	61.57	63.46	48.29	39.56
Timor-Leste	49.92	40.31	60.19	56.91	24.82	48.61	48.89	36.47	16.69	0.00
Togo	77.26	67.76	65.04	56.45	53.64	60.89	58.68	69.48	41.24	59.45
Vanuatu	44.08	51.63	51.14	54.37	41.24	41.28	50.21	43.04	23.01	21.44
Viet Nam	65.47	62.92	78.73	73.19	57.17	72.39	56.46	64.23	57.67	55.12
West Bank and Gaza	62.47	55.05	57.76	53.14	44.60	49.16	33.09	36.51	25.29	11.99

Quintile: ■ Top ■ Second ■ Third ■ Fourth ■ Bottom

Source: B-READY 2024 data.

Note: The economies are ordered alphabetically. Shades of blue represent the quintiles of the topic scores. The darker the shade, the better the performance.

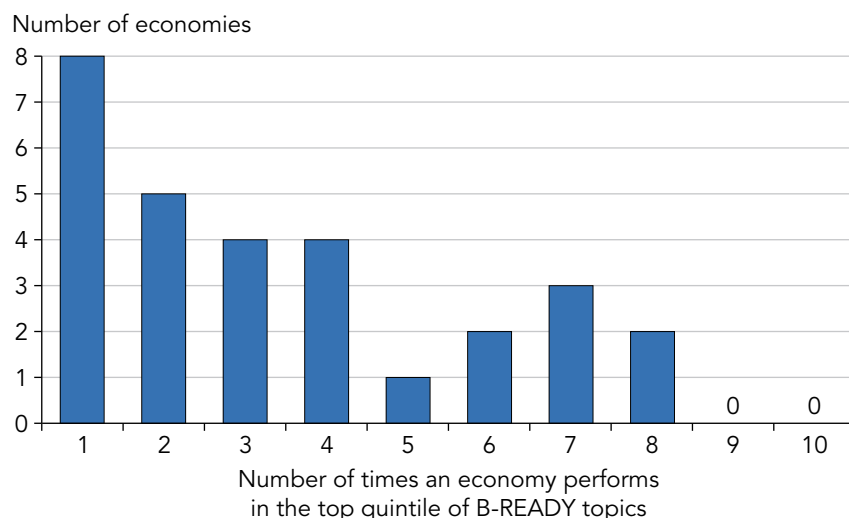
International Trade and Market Competition are the second most similar topics in terms of economy distribution; their correlation is 0.76. Six economies are present in the top quintile for both (Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Rwanda, Singapore). Another 5 economies share the second quintile (Mauritius, Morocco, New Zealand, Portugal, Viet Nam), and 7 appear consistently in the bottom quintile in both (Chad, The Gambia, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, West Bank and Gaza).²⁰ Global trade dynamics and government policies on trade influence competitive practices within markets and vice versa. For example, companies that engage in global trade can adopt innovative practices from other economies, enhancing their competitive capabilities. The exchange of knowledge and diversification of products benefit consumers, while fostering a more dynamic competitive environment.

Another notable example of complementarities is between Dispute Resolution and Business Insolvency, with a correlation of 0.72. These two topics share 8 economies in their top quintile (Colombia, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Portugal, Rwanda, the Slovak Republic), while 3 economies consistently appear in the second quintile (Indonesia, Montenegro, Togo), and 4 in the bottom quintile (Iraq, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, West Bank and Gaza).²¹ This finding suggests a likely complementarity arising from the characteristics of the judiciary institutions benchmarked within these topics. A favorable business environment in one area also tends to have a good environment in other areas, and overall. In some topics, however, complementarities are limited or nonexistent due to the very different nature of topics, such as Taxation and Utility Services or Labor and Financial Services.²²

Figure ES.5 presents the distribution of economies in top quintiles. Strong performance is not reserved to a small group of economies. In total, 29 economies score in the top quintile in at least one topic, representing all income levels (1 low-income, 7 lower-middle-income, 10 upper-middle-income, 11 high-income economies) and all global regions (6 economies from East Asia and Pacific; 6 OECD high-income economies; 5 from Europe and Central Asia; 4 from Latin America and the Caribbean; 1 from the Middle East and North Africa; 1 from South Asia; and 6 from Sub-Saharan Africa). This is very encouraging. However, no economy scores in the top quintile across 9 or 10 topics, indicating that there is potential for improvement in every economy across the 10 topics.

FIGURE ES.5 Strong performance is not confined to a small group of economies, but all have room for improvement

Distribution of economies in top quintiles



Source: B-READY 2024 data.

Note: The sample comprises 50 economies. The distribution is the following: 8 economies (Botswana, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lesotho, Morocco, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Seychelles) are present in the top quintile for any one topic; 5 economies (Costa Rica, Mauritius, Peru, Tanzania, Viet Nam) for any two topics; 4 economies (Greece, Mexico, North Macedonia, Romania) for any three topics; 4 economies (Bulgaria; Hong Kong SAR, China; New Zealand; the Slovak Republic) for any four topics; 1 economy (Portugal) for any five topics; 2 economies (Colombia, Rwanda) for any six topics; 3 economies (Estonia, Croatia, Georgia) for any seven topics; 2 economies (Hungary, Singapore) for any eight topics. No economy scores in the top quintile across any nine topics or across all ten topics.

B-READY 2024 key emerging findings

1. Economies do not need to be rich to develop a good business

environment. The three B-READY pillar scores (Regulatory Framework, Public Services, Operational Efficiency) have strong positive associations with GDP per capita (refer to figure ES.6). Nevertheless, some low-income and middle-income economies also achieve relatively high scores. For example, Colombia, Georgia, Rwanda, and Togo perform well on Regulatory Framework. Rwanda also performs well in Public Services. It also excels in Operational Efficiency, along with Georgia, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Nepal.

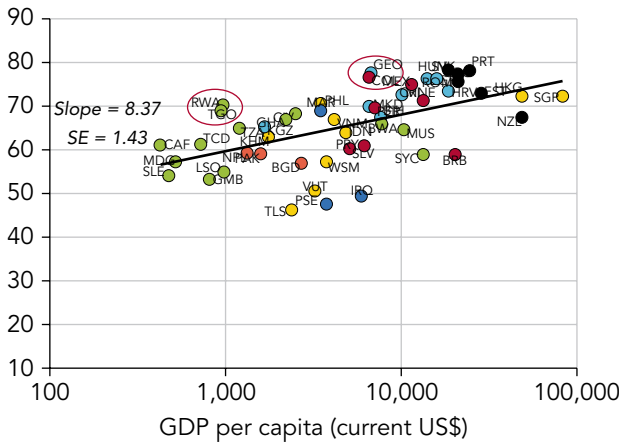
Figure ES.7 displays performance groups by specific topic and shows the occurrence of low-income and middle-income economies in the top two quintiles of each topic. Low- and middle-income economies appear in the top two quintiles for all the topics covered by B-READY. In all, 29 of the 38 economies classified at these income levels are present in the top two quintiles in at least one B-READY topic. Financial Services and Taxation have the highest number of low- and middle-income economies (14) in the

top two groups, followed by Utility Services (13), Business Insolvency (12), and Business Location, Dispute Resolution, and Labor (11 each). These results underscore the point that robust business environments can exist at all income levels, albeit in specific areas.

FIGURE ES.6 The association between B-READY pillar scores and GDP per capita is strong and positive, with notable exceptions

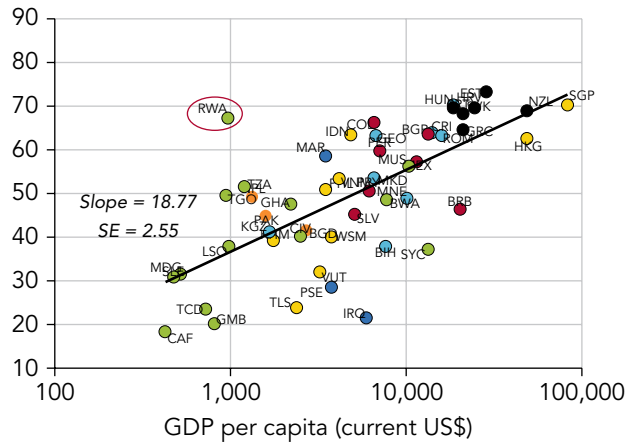
a. Pillar I, Regulatory Framework

Regulatory Framework score (0–100)



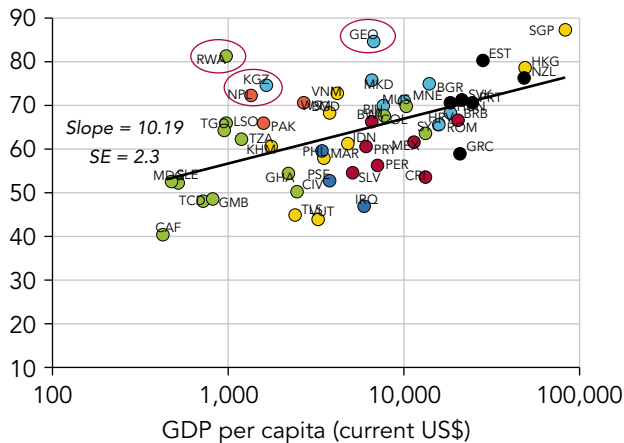
b. Pillar II, Public Services

Public Services score (0–100)



c. Pillar III, Operational Efficiency

Operational Efficiency score (0–100)

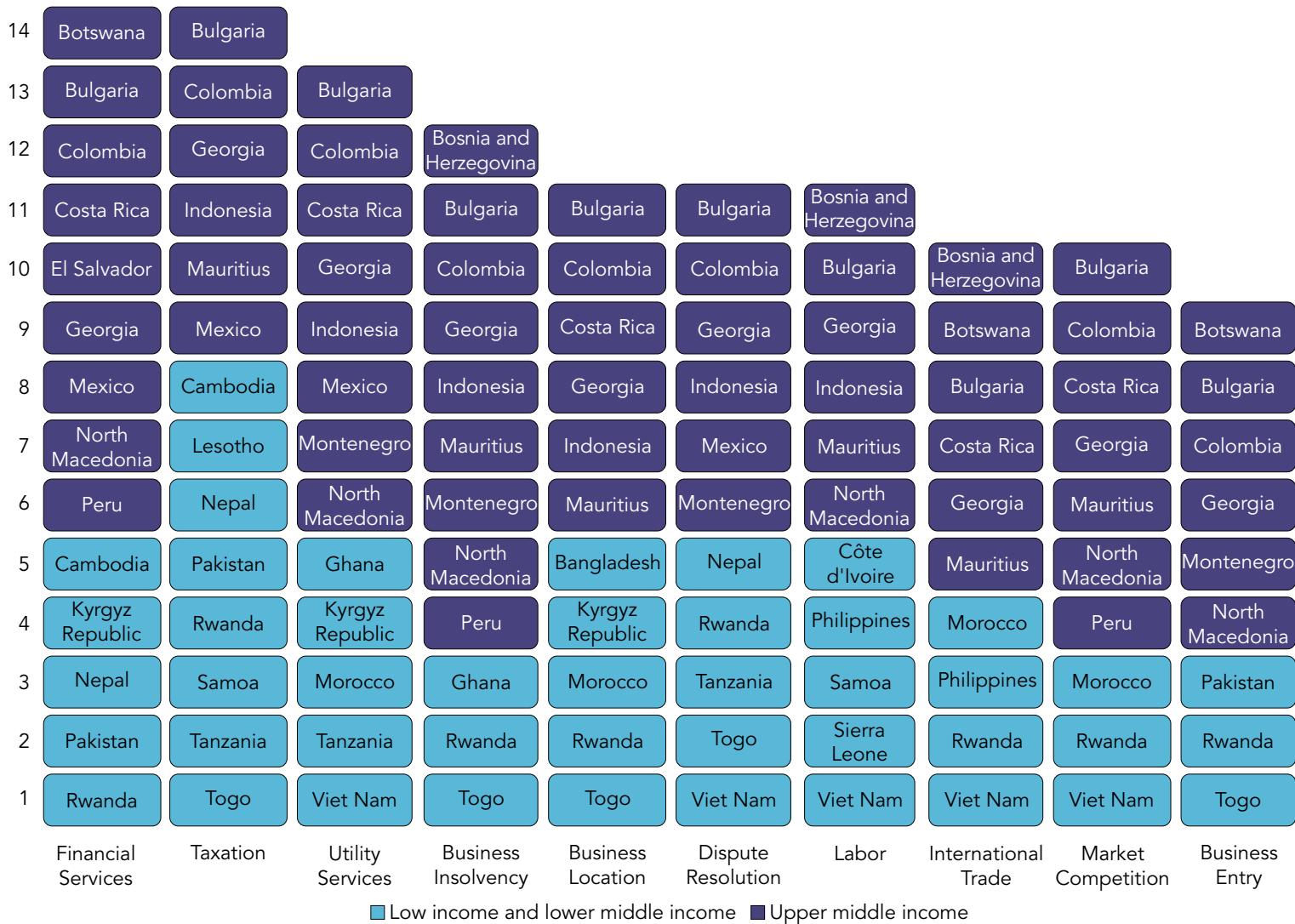


- East Asia and Pacific
- Europe and Central Asia
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Middle East and North Africa
- OECD high income
- South Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa

Sources: B-READY 2024 data; World Development Indicators 2023.

Note: The sample comprises 50 economies. The statistical relationship between the B-READY pillar scores and GDP per capita is significant at the 1 percent level. The x-axis uses a log scale. A fitted regression line is included for each panel. Economies circled in red are examples of low- and middle-income economies that achieve relatively high scores within their income groups. For economy abbreviations, refer to appendix B (in the full report) and International Organization for Standardization (ISO), <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#search>. GDP = gross domestic product; OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; SE = standard error.

FIGURE ES.7 Low-income and middle-income economies can be found in the top two quintiles in every topic



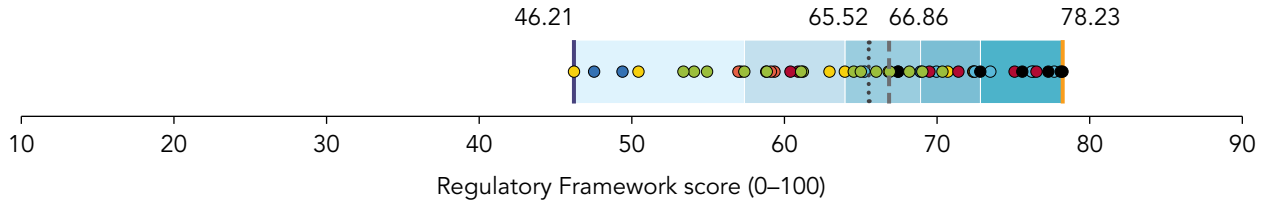
Source: B-READY 2024.

Note: The sample comprises 50 economies. The income classification data are as of June 2024 to ensure alignment with the latest data collection period.

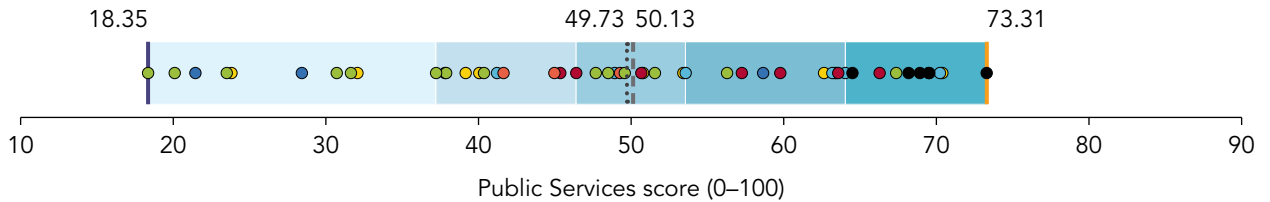
2. Economies vary the most on Public Services, second on Operational Efficiency, and third on Regulatory Framework. Among the three pillars assessed by B-READY, the Public Services pillar has the widest range of 54.96 points (refer to figure ES.8). Operational Efficiency has a score range of 46.97 points, and Regulatory Framework has a range of 32.02 points. These results indicate that business-supporting institutions and infrastructure vary substantially across economies, as does a firm’s experience while complying with regulations and using public services. On the other hand, the regulatory environment appears more homogenous across economies.

FIGURE ES.8 Public Services is the B-READY pillar with the widest range and weakest performance, on average

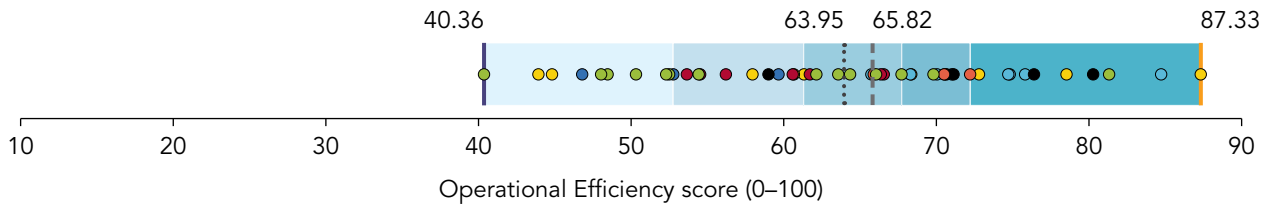
a. Pillar I, Regulatory Framework



b. Pillar II, Public Services



c. Pillar III, Operational Efficiency



- East Asia and Pacific ● Europe and Central Asia ● Latin America and the Caribbean ● Middle East and North Africa
- OECD high income ● South Asia ● Sub-Saharan Africa
- Minimum ····· Mean - - - Median — Maximum

Source: B-READY 2024 data.

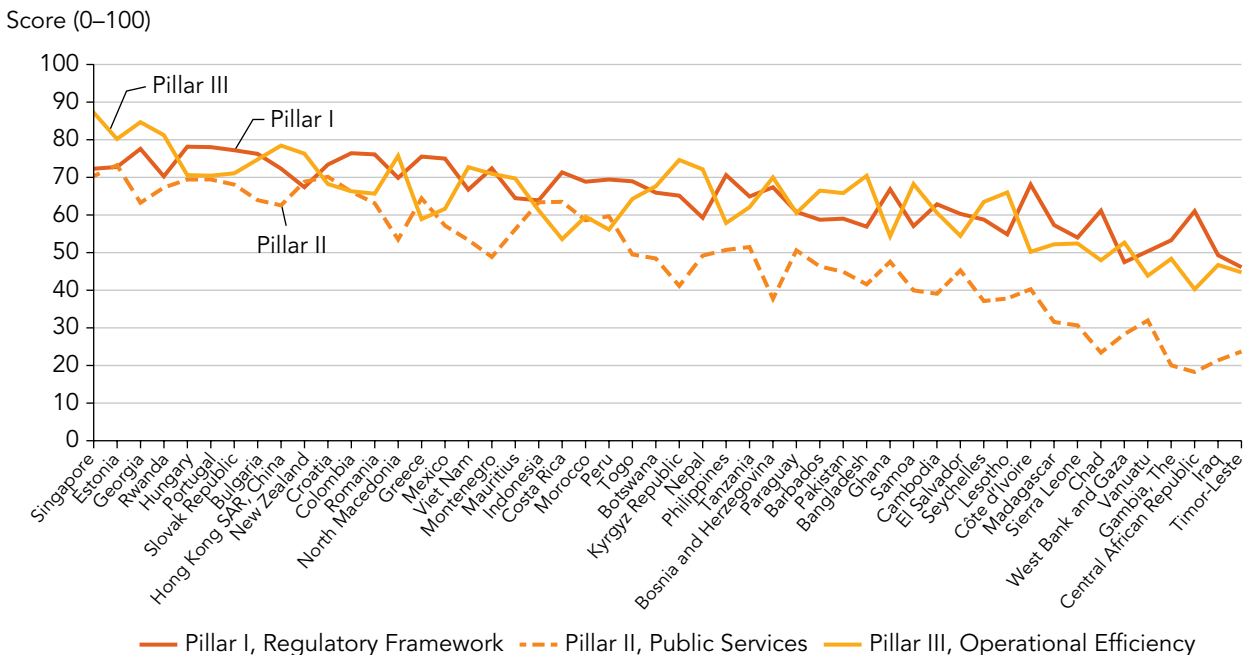
Note: For each pillar, the scores are plotted on the graph with minimum, mean, median, and maximum scores indicated by vertical lines, with corresponding scores provided. The dots, representing economies, indicate by color to which regional grouping an economy belongs. The blue panels represent quintiles (with darker shades indicating better performance). OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

This point is further emphasized in figure ES.9, which presents the pillar scores for each economy. As pillar scores decline from high-performing economies to lower-performing ones, the decline for the Public Services pillar is particularly steep, and the gap between Public Services and Regulatory Framework scores widens significantly for the lower-performing economies. This indicates that disparities in public services contribute substantially to the variation in business environment performance across economies.

3. Economies are better at enacting regulations than providing public services. The B-READY data provide evidence of a “public services gap” across all regional and income groups: that is, a notable difference between the Regulatory Framework score and the Public Services score. Figure ES.10 demonstrates that the Public Services score is lower than the Regulatory Framework score for nearly all economies, as evidenced by its position below the 45-degree line. This gap persists when examining the average scores across all regional and income groups (refer to figure ES.11, panels a and b).

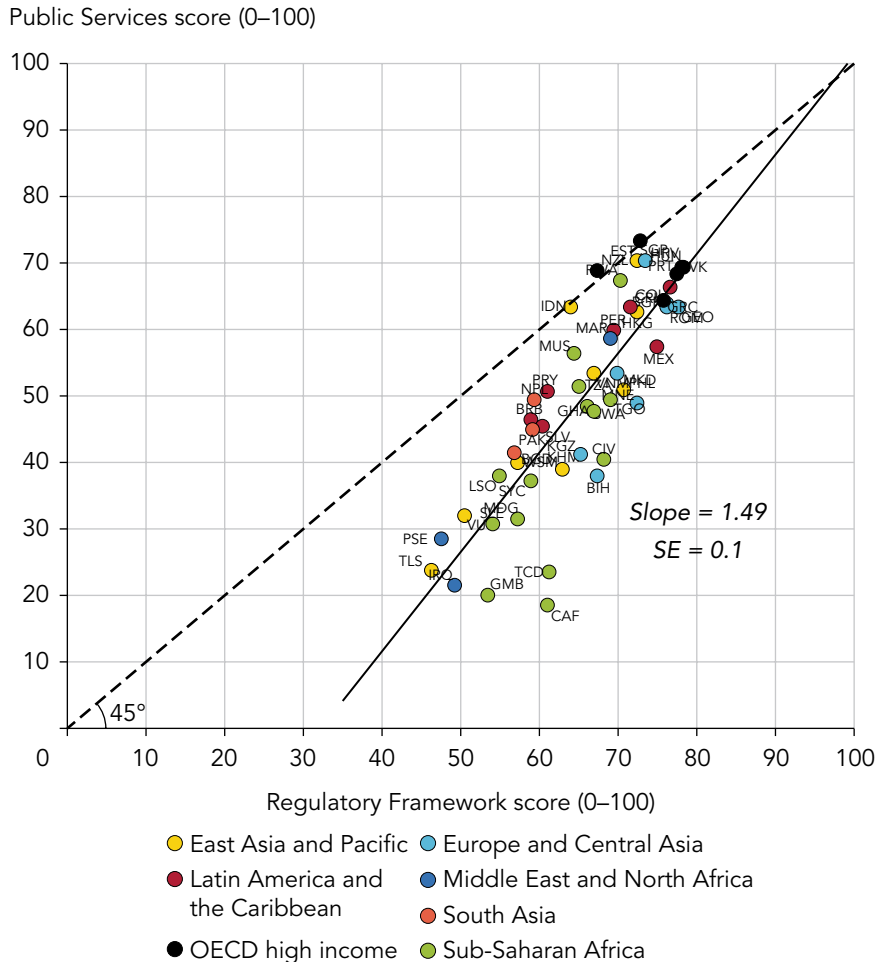
At the regional level, OECD high-income economies exhibit the narrowest public services gap (5.93 points). Economies in Latin America and the

FIGURE ES.9 Pillar II, Public Services, largely drives the variation in the business environment across economies



Source: B-READY 2024 data.
 Note: The sample comprises 50 economies.

FIGURE ES.10 Most economies suffer from a “public services gap”:
Their scores for Public Services are lower than their scores for
Regulatory Frameworks



Source: B-READY 2024 data.

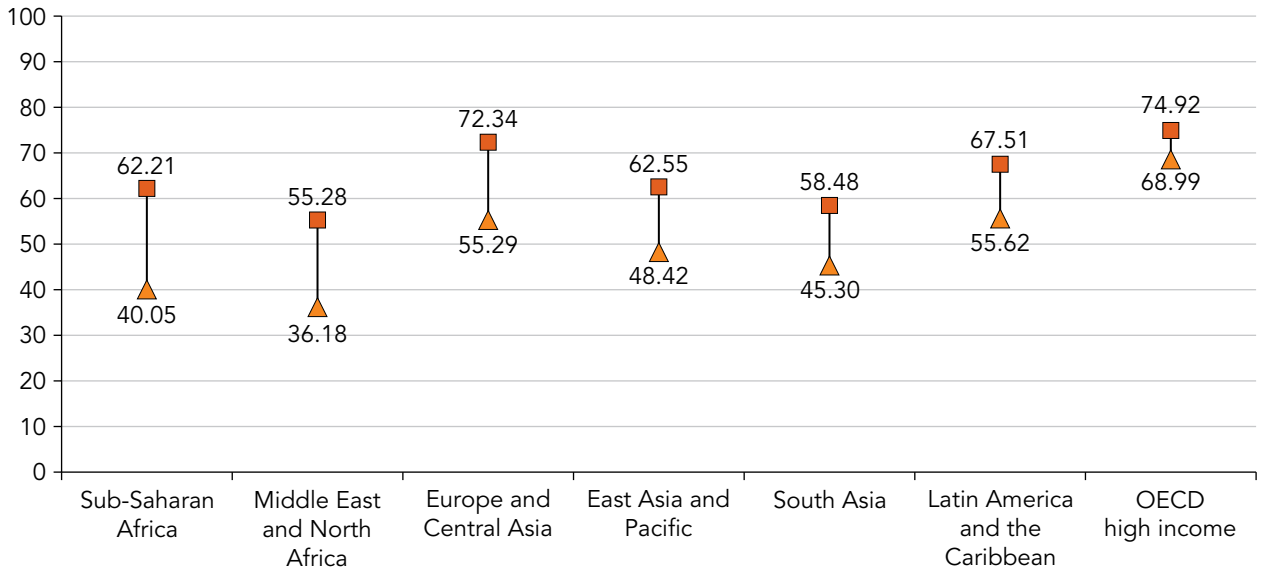
Note: The dashed line is set at 45 degrees, and the solid line represents the linear regression of the Public Services pillar score on the Regulatory Framework pillar score. The relationship is significant at the 1 percent level. The dots, representing economies, indicate by color to which regional grouping an economy belongs. The sample comprises 50 economies. The public services gap is represented by the gap as evidenced by the vast majority of economies positioned below the 45-degree line. For economy abbreviations, refer to appendix B (in the full report) and International Organization for Standardization (ISO), <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#search>. OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; SE = standard error.

Caribbean, South Asia, and East Asia and Pacific follow, with considerably larger gaps of 11.89 points, 13.18 points, and 14.13 points, respectively. Economies in Europe and Central Asia stand out with a relatively wider gap of 17.05 points despite performing exceptionally well on average in Pillar I, indicating important areas for improvement in public services provision. The gap is widest for economies in the Middle East and North Africa (19.10 points) and Sub-Saharan Africa (22.16 points).

FIGURE ES.11 The “public services gap” is evident across regions, income levels, and topics

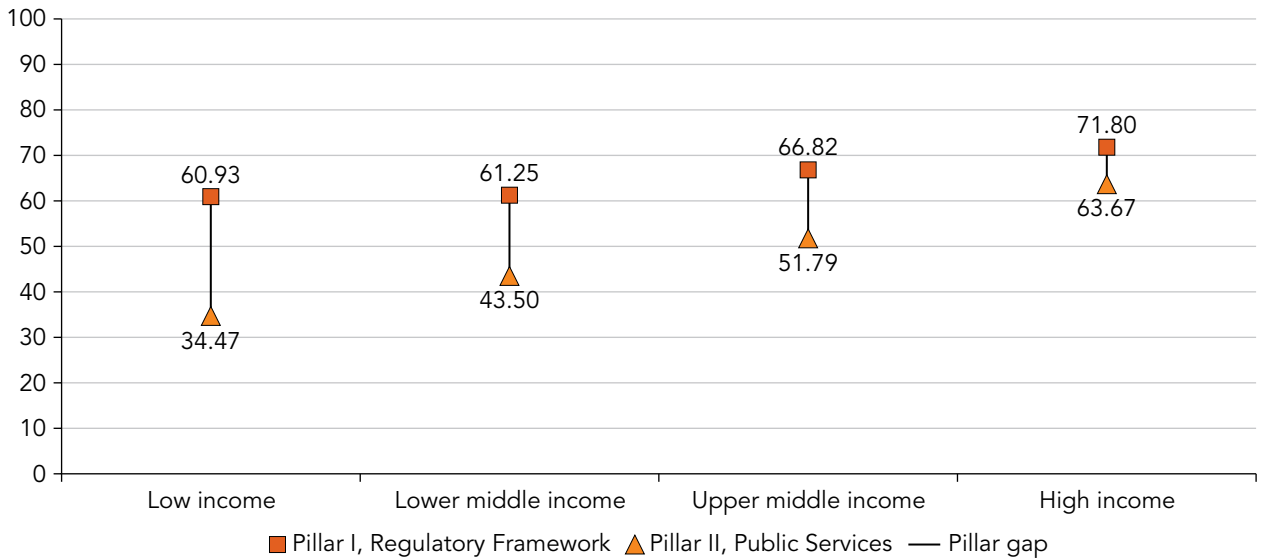
a. By region

Average pillar score (0–100)



b. By income level

Average pillar score (0–100)

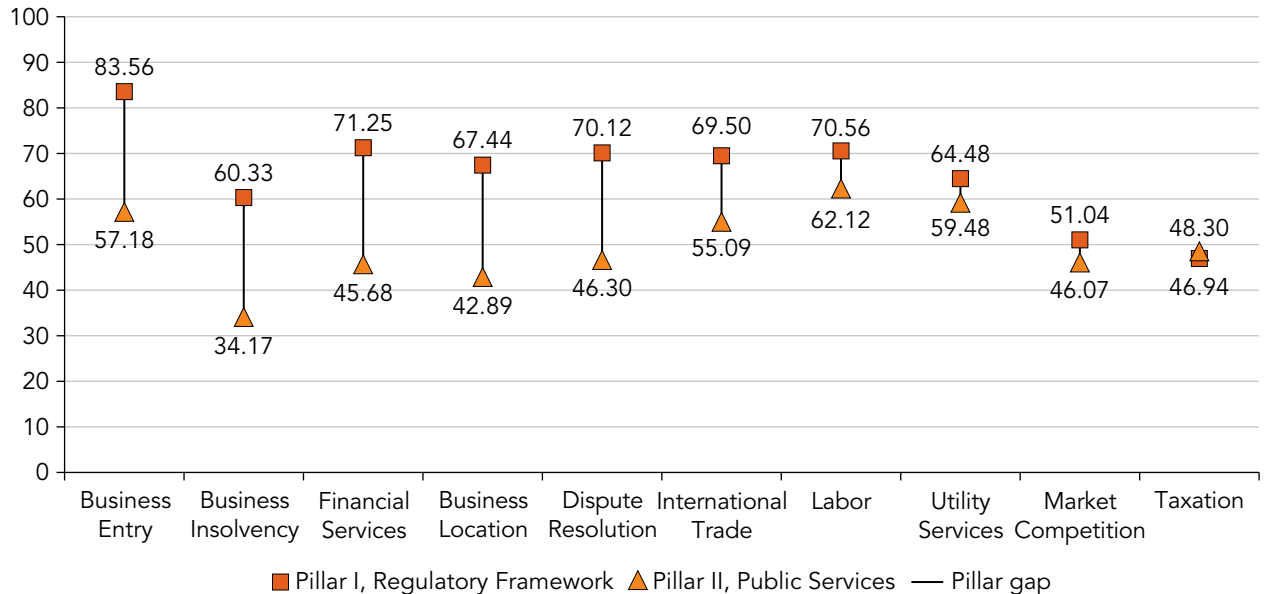


(Continued)

FIGURE ES.11 The “public services gap” is evident across regions, income levels, and topics (Continued)

c. By topic

Average pillar score (0–100)



Source: B-READY 2024 data.

Note: Data in each panel are arranged from the largest to the smallest gap. OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

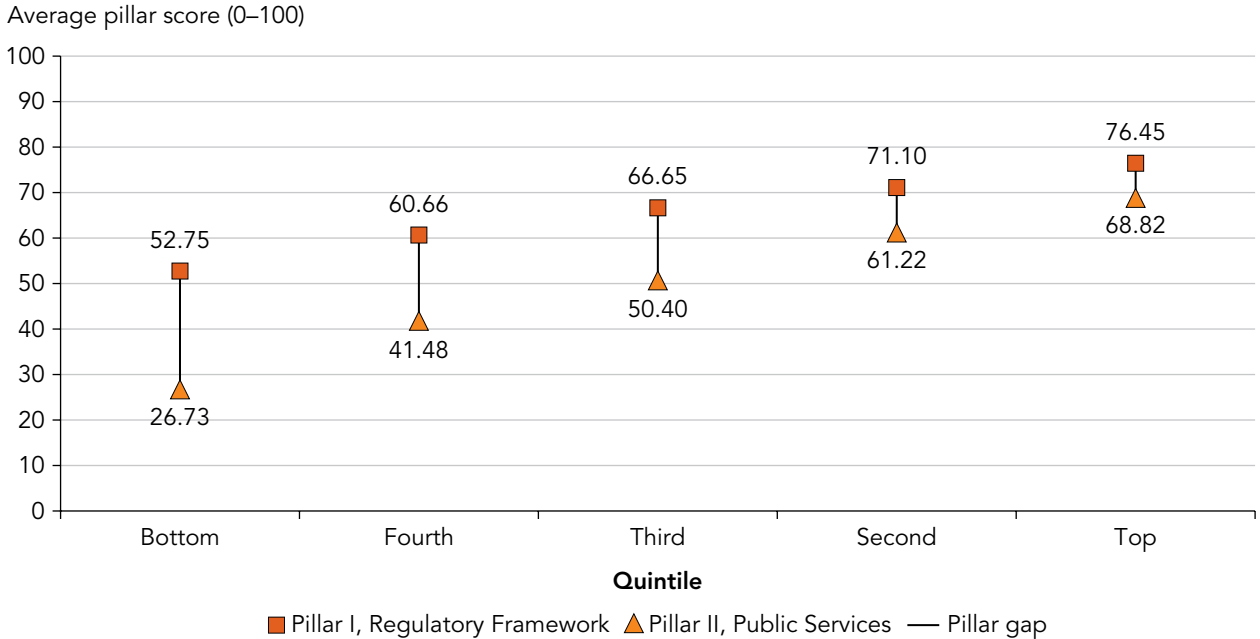
At the income level, high-income economies exhibit the narrowest gap (8.13 points). Moving toward lower-income levels, the gap widens progressively, ranging from 15.03 points in upper-middle-income economies to 17.75 points in lower-middle-income economies, and 26.46 points in low-income economies. Among the various topics (refer to figure ES.11, panel c), the public services gap is most pronounced in Business Entry and nonexistent in Taxation.

However, as the business environment improves, this gap narrows significantly (refer to figure ES.12). Moving from the bottom quintiles to the top quintiles of the two pillars, the public services gap declines from 26.02 and 19.18 points in the bottom and fourth quintiles, respectively, to less than 8 points in the top quintile.

4. Existing firms can be resilient amid poor conditions, but both active and potential firms could thrive if the business environment improves.

Operational Efficiency scores are higher than the average of the other two pillar scores (Regulatory Framework and Public Services) for most economies

FIGURE ES.12 The “public services gap” closes remarkably as the business environment improves



Source: B-READY 2024 data.

Note: The economies in each quintile are determined by the respective scores of the Regulatory Framework and Public Services pillars.

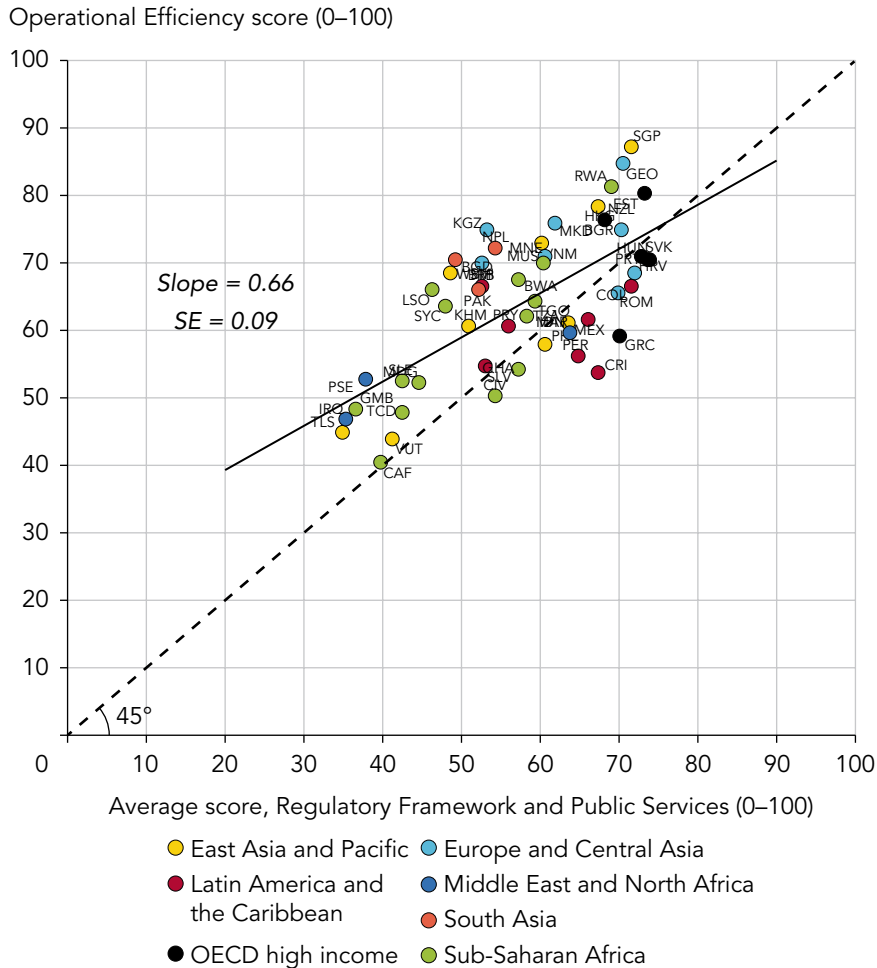
(refer to figure ES.13). Across the 10 topics, the Operational Efficiency pillar outperforms the Public Services pillar on average, and notably so in the topics of Business Location, Utility Services, and Taxation, where the pillar also surpasses the Regulatory Framework pillar (refer to figure ES.14). These patterns highlight the adaptability of firms in environments marked by deficient public services provision, suggesting they may have developed coping mechanisms to navigate their respective business environments.

Although firms exhibit resilience amid challenging conditions, they have the potential to thrive if these conditions improve. Such improvements can also foster market entry for newcomers, essential for cultivating a more dynamic, innovative, and diversified business landscape. A caveat to note in interpreting these data is that firms providing input for Operational Efficiency indicators are sampled from the formal sector and exclude very small or recently established firms. Larger and older firms may be less sensitive to weak regulatory and public services environments.

5. Most economies have room to improve across all B-READY topics.

Figure ES.15 offers a concise overview of the score distribution for all the B-READY topics. The topic of Business Entry has the highest average score (69.96 points), followed by Utility Services (65.13 points), and Labor (64.99 points). Conversely, the topics with the lowest average scores are Market Competition (48.04 points), Business Insolvency (49.99 points),

FIGURE ES.13 For most economies, scores on the Operational Efficiency pillar are higher than the average scores on the Regulatory Framework pillar and the Public Services pillar



Source: B-READY 2024 data.

Note: The dashed line is set at 45 degrees, and the solid line represents the linear regression of the Operational Efficiency score on the average of the Regulatory Framework score and the Public Services score. The relationship is significant at the 1 percent level. The dots, representing economies, indicate by color to which regional grouping an economy belongs. The sample comprises 50 economies. For economy abbreviations, refer to appendix B (in the full report) and International Organization for Standardization (ISO), <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#search>. OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; SE = standard error.

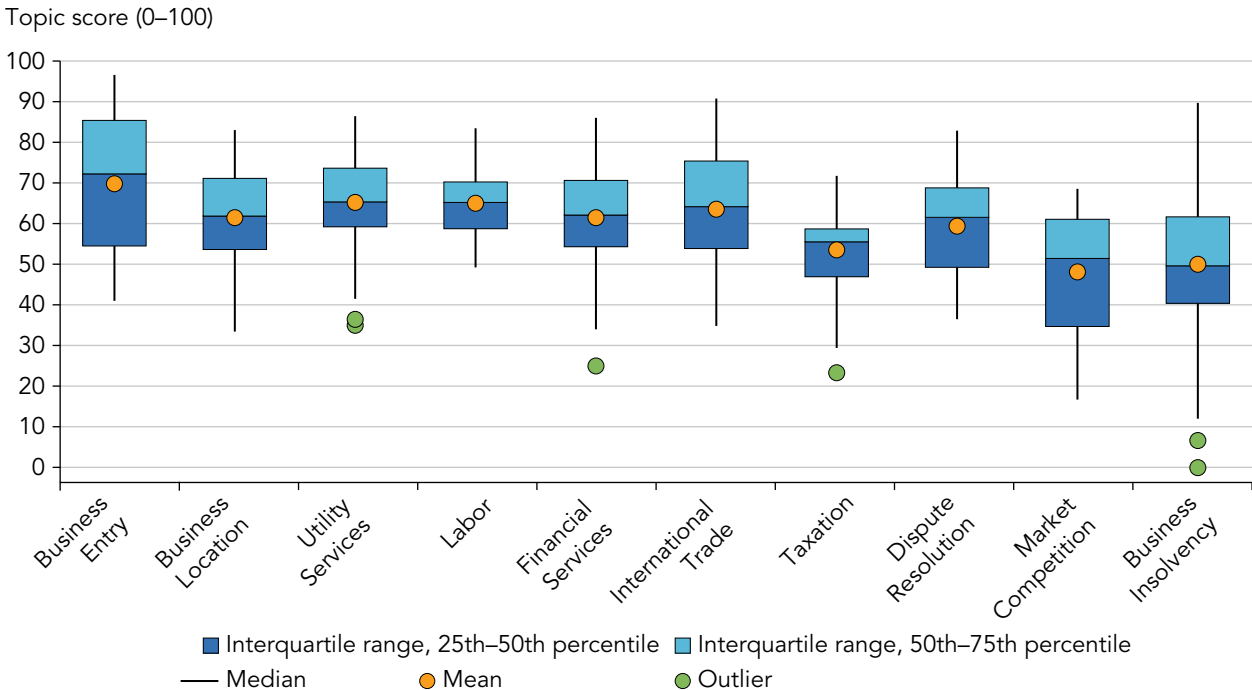
and Taxation (53.50 points). These patterns suggest a large diversity across economies in adopting good international practices in regulations and public services, and their practical implementation, underscoring potential for enhancement across the board. Furthermore, a notable positive correlation across all topics indicates that economies with a favorable business environment in one area also tend to perform well in others, as shown in figure ES.16. Embracing a comprehensive reform agenda spanning all B-READY topics is essential for driving significant improvements in the overall business landscape.

FIGURE ES.14 Firms are resilient to the “public services gap” across topics



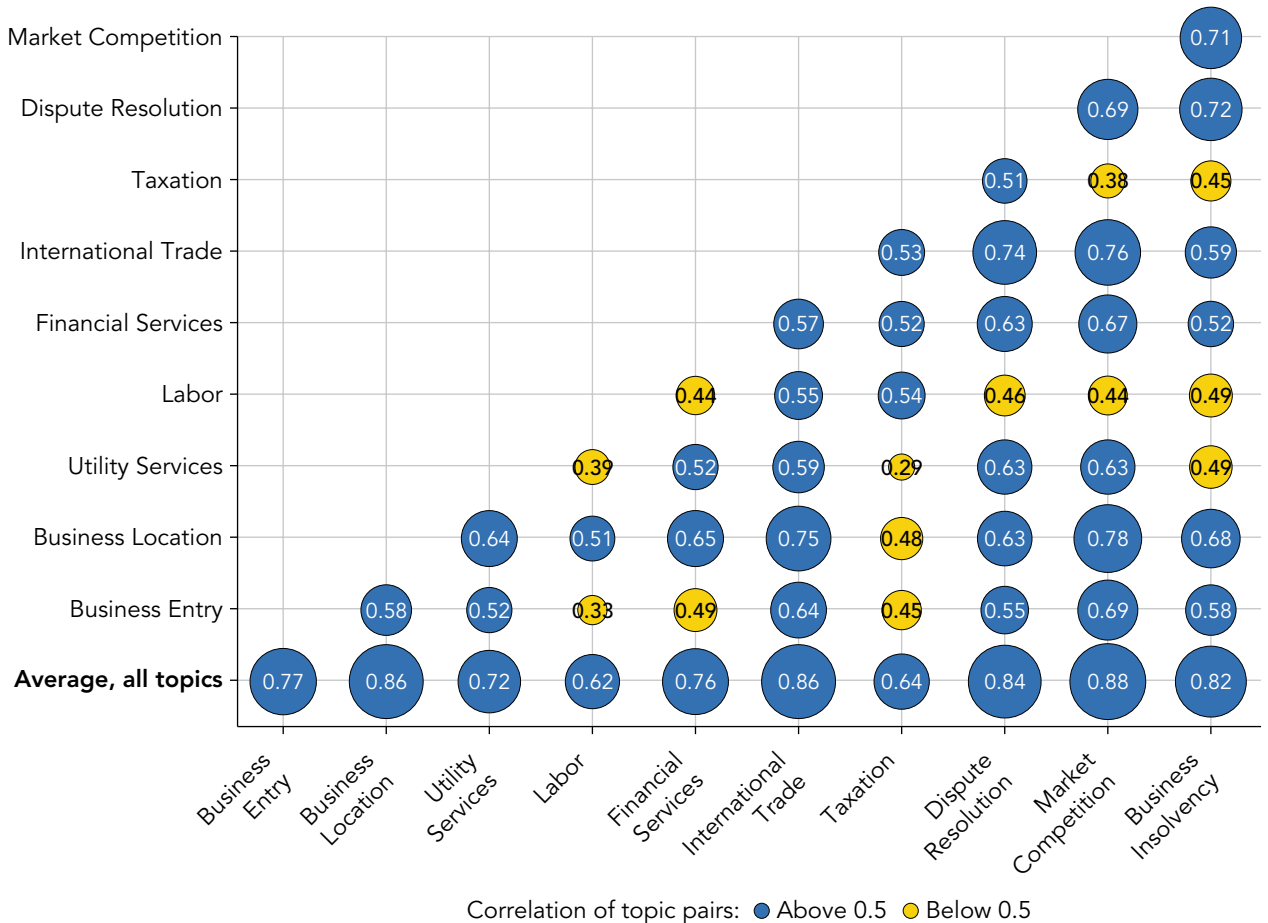
Source: B-READY 2024 data.
 Note: The sample comprises 50 economies.

FIGURE ES.15 The distribution of scores shows scope for improvement across all topics



Source: B-READY 2024 data.
 Note: The figure displays the distribution of B-READY topic scores across the 50 sampled economies. It presents the median (horizontal black line dividing the light blue and dark blue boxes), mean (orange dots), the interquartile range (25th–75th percentiles, light blue and dark blue boxes), and standard whiskers. Points outside the whiskers represent outliers for each topic (green dots).

FIGURE ES.16 Economies with a favorable business environment in one topic tend to perform well in others



Source: B-READY 2024 data.

Note: The figure is based on the B-READY topic scores across the 50 sampled economies. The blue bubbles indicate a correlation of topic pairs above 0.5, while yellow bubbles indicate a correlation below 0.5. The size of the bubble indicates the relative size of the correlation. All correlations are positive and statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

Findings from the cross-cutting themes of digital adoption, environmental sustainability, and gender

B-READY collects data on three critical cross-cutting themes (digital adoption, environmental sustainability, and gender), which are embedded into topics’ corresponding pillars, making them an integral part of topic scores (refer to chapter 4).

Data on digital adoption underscore the variance among economies in the uptake of digital public services, with some services (such as the availability of taxpayer online service portals) more widespread than others (such as electronic court auctions). This pattern suggests that economies still need to develop a wide range of digital services. The adoption of digital public

services generally correlates positively with income levels. For instance, firms in high-income economies use e-payments far more frequently than those in low-income economies. However, there is significant variation among economies within the same income bracket, demonstrating that effective digitalization of public services is achievable at any income level.

In the area of environmental sustainability, much remains to be learned. One emerging trend is that many environmentally good practices are not widely implemented. While nearly all economies have adopted national environmental regulations for construction (47 of them require environmental impact assessments), incentives to promote green building standards are notably scarce, with only 10 economies implementing such measures. Sustainable water supply regulations are in place in about half the economies, reflecting a growing yet incomplete commitment to water conservation. These findings indicate an inconsistent progression toward environmental good practices and underscore the need for broader adoption of regulations and business incentives to achieve global sustainability goals.

Regarding gender, the findings indicate a need for improved sex-disaggregated data to effectively measure gender disparities. For example, many economies lack such data on land ownership, as well as on the representation of judges, mediators, and arbitrators by gender. Regarding gender-targeted programs for women entrepreneurs, about half of the surveyed economies offer specialized support, such as incubators and accelerators. However, only a minority have gender-sensitive regulations in procurement and trade. Significant progress is still required across various areas measured by B-READY to advance gender-sensitive policies that promote the inclusion of women-owned businesses.

Next steps for *Business Ready*

B-READY will continue consultations to further enhance the methodology. The B-READY 2024 report presents information about the first of three initial data collection and reporting cycles. The methodology will be subject to refinements as B-READY expands its economy coverage and moves from initial rollout to full-fledged project. As outlined in the B-READY Concept Note, the consultation process with the rest of the World Bank Group will continue to improve subsequent B-READY data and reports, enhancing their relevance for country engagement. Feedback received from stakeholders during dissemination activities will also be considered during this period. Any changes or updates to B-READY processes and methodology will be reported and published in updated versions of the *B-READY Manual and Guide* and the *B-READY Methodology Handbook*,

available on the B-READY website (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/businessready>).

B-READY 2025 will entail several updates to enhance data collection processes and improve the quality of the data. The updates to expert questionnaires will reflect refinements to the methodology of the topics, which will be included in the *B-READY Methodology Handbook*. The updates to the data collection process will consist of more efficient and streamlined expert recruitment and engagement procedures, which will be included in the *B-READY Manual and Guide*. B-READY will continue to have an open and transparent dialogue with governments, civil society, and private sector organizations. It will provide governments with the possibility to complete B-READY questionnaires that are used to validate data. It will make economy profiles and other informational materials available on the website for everyone to consult. And it will provide opportunities for knowledge sharing through meetings, conferences, and public presentations.

Notes

1. Refer to the World Bank mission statement, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/who-we-are>.
2. Loayza and Pennings (2022).
3. Artuc et al. (2020); SIDALC (Alliance of Agricultural Information Services), <https://www.sidalc.net/search/Record/dig-okr-1098633289/Description>.
4. USAID (2021).
5. World Development Indicators (WDI) 2024 (<https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>). The figure was derived by dividing the five-year average of "Gross fixed capital formation, private sector (% of GDP)" by the five-year average of "Gross fixed capital formation (% of GDP)" for all economies and taking the average across all low- and middle-income economies. Five-year averages use the data available for 2018 to 2022.
6. IMF (2024). The figure was derived by averaging "General government total expenditure (as a % of GDP)" in 2022 across all low- and middle-income countries and subtracting from overall GDP.
7. UNECA (2020).
8. World Bank (2024a).
9. "The World Bank in Africa, Overview," <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/overview>.
10. World Bank (2022b).
11. World Bank (2024b).
12. UN Climate Change (2024).
13. B-READY Concept Note, Annex III b (World Bank 2022a) provides further information on the initially planned gradual expansion of the number of economies: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/2250b12dfe798507f7b42064378cc616-0540012022/original/BEE-Concept>

- Note-December-2022.pdf. The B-READY website also provides up-to-date information on the economies covered and planned to be covered: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/businessready/covered-economies>.
14. B-READY Concept Note, Annex III a, Main Expert Contributors per Topic (World Bank 2022a), <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/2250b12dfe798507f7b42064378cc616-0540012022/original/BEE-Concept-Note-December-2022.pdf>.
 15. For more information about the Enterprise Surveys, refer to <https://www.enterprisesurveys.org/en/methodology> (World Bank 2023c).
 16. World Bank (2023a).
 17. World Bank (2023b).
 18. For more details about the three-year rollout, refer to chapter 1 and the B-READY website: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/businessready>.
 19. Similarities between Market Competition and Business Location extend to the third quintile, where 6 economies are grouped in both topics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Mexico, Montenegro, Paraguay, the Philippines) and another 4 economies appear in the fourth quintile (Cambodia, Pakistan, the Seychelles, Tanzania).
 20. Similarities between International Trade and Market Competition extend to the third quintile, where 5 economies can be found in both topics (El Salvador, Indonesia, Mexico, Montenegro, Paraguay), and the fourth quintile, where 6 economies are present in both (Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Tanzania).
 21. Similarities between Dispute Resolution and Business Insolvency extend to the third quintile, where 4 economies jointly appear (Barbados, Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyz Republic, the Philippines), and to the fourth quintile, where 2 economies appear in both topics (Chad, The Gambia).
 22. The correlation between Taxation and Utility Services is 0.27 (the lowest among all topic correlations). The correlation between Labor and Financial Services is 0.29 (the second-lowest among all topic correlations).

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