



Atlas of Legal Needs Survey: Search Protocol and Criteria for Including New Surveys

The World Justice Project (WJP) estimates that, globally, 1.5 billion people cannot obtain justice for civil, administrative, or criminal justice problems; 4.5 billion people are excluded from the opportunities the law provides; and 253 million people live in extreme conditions of injustice.¹ This crisis of unmet justice needs must be tackled by data-driven, actionable, and people-centered policies.

Legal Needs Surveys have a “bottom-up” approach: instead of collecting institutional information, polling experts focus on the experiences of people facing unmet justice needs or justiciable problems. Legal Needs Surveys provide the ability to track how justiciable problems vary and are distributed among populations through generated data. For those reasons, Legal Needs Surveys are a crucial source of empirical information that can inform actionable and people-centered justice reform.

Given the importance of Legal Needs Surveys, the Atlas provides a specialized one-stop resource for decisionmakers, advocates, and researchers seeking justice data. The Atlas builds on the efforts by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Open Society Foundations to document all legal needs surveys conducted between 1993 and 2017 in its *Legal Needs Surveys and Access to Justice* methodological guidance.²

Legal Needs Surveys published after 2017 are located by the WJP’s Access to Justice Team in two ways. First, the Access to Justice Team conducts an online search to keep the Atlas updated. Our online search is conducted via two search engines to reduce any possible bias and is directed to find: *a)* new Legal Needs Surveys and *b)* new editions of already existing surveys. Second, legal needs surveys that are available online and not yet included in the Atlas can also be proposed by any interested party via email, at accesstojustice@worldjusticeproject.org

The surveys included have been categorized according to their target population (general population, legal aid users, low/middle income population, and micro, small and medium enterprises). In addition, the Atlas shows if the survey presents data about vulnerable populations (ethnic/racial/religious minorities, sexual minorities, women, people with disabilities, immigrants/refugees/internally displaced population, and age groups at risk), which illustrates the specific justice needs of these groups.

To be included in the Atlas, a survey must meet the following requirements:

1. Must be a *Legal Needs Survey*. According to the OECD’s definition, the key characteristic is that Legal Needs Surveys investigate the experience of justiciable problems from the perspective of those who face them, rather than the professions and institutions that may play a role in their resolution.
2. The survey must have a quantitative element. Survey’s findings should be numerically expressed as to make possible further data analysis.

¹ *Measuring the Justice Gap: A People-Centered Assessment of Unmet Justice Needs Around the World* (Washington DC: World Justice Project, 2019).

https://worldjusticeproject.org/sites/default/files/documents/WJP_Measuring%20the%20Justice%20Gap_final_20Jun2019_0.pdf

² *Legal Needs Surveys and Access to Justice* (Paris: OECD/Open Society Foundations, 2019).

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3. Sample size must be at least 300 participants.
4. Materials, at least in part, must be publicly available.
5. The Atlas does not set a threshold for the survey estimated statistical significance. However, it does take into consideration how clear the survey is about its statistical scope and methodological limitations.