

Democratic People's Republic of KOREA

Public Administration Country Profile

Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM)

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

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North Korea

[Click here](#) for detailed map



Source: [The World Factbook – North Korea](#)

Government type

Communist state one-man dictatorship

Independence

15 August 1945 (from Japan)

Constitution

Adopted 1948; completely revised 27 December 1972, revised again in April 1992, and September 1998

Legal system

Based on German civil law system with Japanese influences and Communist legal theory; no judicial review of legislative acts; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Administrative divisions

9 provinces and 4 municipalities

Source: [The World Factbook – North Korea](#)

An independent kingdom for much of its long history, Korea was occupied by Japan in 1905 following the Russo-Japanese War. Five years later, Japan formally annexed the entire peninsula. Following World War II, Korea was split with the northern half coming under Soviet-sponsored Communist domination. After attempting in the Korean War (1950-53) to conquer the US-backed Republic of Korea (ROK) in the southern portion by force, North Korea (DPRK), under its founder President KIM Il-so'ng, adopted a policy of ostensible diplomatic and economic "self-reliance" as a check against excessive Soviet or Communist Chinese influence. KIM's son, the current ruler KIM Jong Il, was officially designated as his father's successor in 1980, assuming a growing political and managerial role until the elder KIM's death in 1994.

The weak overall performance of the DPRK economy, the lack of global integration and a number of natural disasters like flood or drought catastrophes in the 1990s led to insufficient food production, resulting in hunger with an unknown number of casualties. After decades of economic mismanagement and resource misallocation, the DPRK since the mid-1990s has relied heavily on international aid to feed its population while continuing to expend resources to maintain an army of 1.2 million.

Large-scale military spending leaves little resources for investment and civilian consumption. Therefore despite massive international food aid deliveries, the population continues to suffer from prolonged malnutrition and poor living conditions. It should be noted that there is a lack of information since the DPRK does not publish any reliable information, especially regarding economic statistics and the inner workings of the political circles.

North Korea's long-range missile development, as well as its nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons programs and massive conventional armed forces, are of major concern to the international community.

Source: [The World Factbook – North Korea](#) - edited

The two rounds of North Korean missile tests were conducted on July 5, 2006. Seven missiles were fired reportedly from the Musudan-ri Missile Test Facility, and landed in the Sea of Japan.

Industry in North Korea consists mostly of the old Stalinist stalwarts: coal, steel, chemicals and machine tools. Much of it is on the east coast, owing to the proximity of minerals, which are also exported. Light industry is located mainly around the capital, Pyongyang, although each province is meant to be self-sufficient, which creates severe inequalities. Farming has become a disaster. Only a few plains in the south and west are suited to agriculture. A drive for food self-sufficiency in hilly terrain, with excessive emphasis on rice and maize, led to unwise terracing and soil exhaustion.

Source: [Economist Intelligence Unit – North Korea](#) - edited

1. General Information

1.1 People	North Korea	South Korea	Japan	1
Population				a
Total estimated population (,000), 2005	22,488	47,817	128,084	
Female estimated population (,000), 2005	11,255	23,844	65,506	
Male estimated population (,000), 2005	11,233	23,973	62,578	
Sex ratio (males per 100 females), 2005	100	101	96	
Average annual rate of change of pop. (%), 2000-2005	0.56	0.44	0.17	
Youth and Elderly Population				b
Total population under age 15 (%), 2005	25	19	14	
Female population aged 60+ (%), 2005	13	16	29	
Male population aged 60+ (%), 2005	10	12	24	
Human Settlements				c
Urban population (%), 2004	61	81	66	
Rural population (%), 2004	39	19	34	
Urban average annual rate of change in pop. (%), '00-'05	1.03	0.85	0.29	
Rural average annual rate of change in pop/ (%), '00-'05	-0.23	-0.60	-0.15	
Education				d
Total school life expectancy, 2002/2003	-	16	15 ⁱ	1
Female school life expectancy, 2002/2003	-	15	14 ⁱ	1
Male school life expectancy, 2002/2003	-	16	15 ⁱ	1
Female estimated adult (15+) illiteracy rate (%), 2000	-	-	-	2
Male estimated adult (15+) illiteracy rate (%), 2000	-	-	-	2
Employment				e
Unemployment rate (15+) (%), 2003	-	3.4	5.3	1
Female adult (+15) economic activity rate (%), 1990	61	-	-	2
Male adult (+15) economic activity rate (%), 1990	79	-	-	2

Notes: ⁱ 2001/2002

1.2 Economy	North Korea	South Korea	Japan	2
GDP				a
GDP total (millions US\$), 2005	208,000 ⁱ	787,624	4,505,912	
GDP per capita (US\$), 2005	9,140 ⁱⁱ	16,293	35,805	
PPP GDP total (millions int. US\$), 2005	-	1,056,094	3,943,754	
PPP GDP per capita(int. US\$), 2005	-	21,851	30,460	
Sectors				b
Value added in agriculture (% of GDP), 2004	30	3.4	2.1	
Value added in industry (% of GDP), 2004	34	40.8	34.9	
Value added in services (% of GDP), 2004	36	55.5	63.0	
Miscellaneous				c
GDP implicit price deflator (annual % growth), 2004	-	2.7	-2.3	
Private consumption (% of GDP), 2004	-	51.9	56.9 ⁱⁱⁱ	
Government consumption (% of GDP), 2004	-	13.5	17.5 ⁱⁱⁱ	

Notes: ⁱ 2004; ⁱⁱ 2002; ⁱⁱⁱ 2003.

¹ United Nations Statistics Division:

^a Statistics Division and Population Division of the UN Secretariat; ^b Statistics Division and Population Division of the UN Secretariat; ^c Population Division of the UN Secretariat; ^{d1} UNESCO; ^{d2} UNESCO; ^{e1} ILO; ^{e2} ILO/OECD

² World Bank - Data and Statistics:

^a Quick Reference Tables; ^b Economist Intelligence Unit Country Data; ^c Data Profile Tables; ^d Country at a Glance

1.3 Public Spending	North Korea	South Korea	Japan	
Public expenditures				3
Education (% of GNP), 1990	-	3.3	-	a
Education (% of GNP), 2000-2002	-	4.2 ⁱ	3.6 ⁱ	a
Health (% of GDP), 1990	-	1.8	4.6	
Health (% of GDP), 2002	3.5	2.6	6.5	
Military (% of GDP), 1990	-	3.7	0.9	b
Military (% of GDP), 2003	-	2.5	1.0	b
Total debt service (% of GDP), 1990	-	3.3	-	
Total debt service (% of GDP), 2000	-	5.1	-	

Notes: ⁱ Data may not be strictly comparable with those for earlier years as a result of methodological changes.

1.4 Public Sector Employment and Wages						
<i>Data from the latest year available</i>		North Korea 1991-1995	North Korea 1996-2000	East Asia & Pacific average ⁴ 1996-2000	South Regional average ⁴ 1996-2000	low income group average ⁴ 1996-2000
Employment						
Civilian Central Government ⁵	(,000)	-	-			
	(% pop.)	-	-	0.63	-	0.5
Sub-national Government ⁵	(,000)	-	-			
	(% pop.)	-	-	0.63	-	0.5
Education employees	(,000)	-	-			
	(% pop.)	-	-	0.76	0.4	0.9
Health employees	(,000)	-	-			
	(% pop.)	-	-	0.16	0.5	0.6
Police	(,000)	-	-			
	(% pop.)	-	-	0.26	0.62	0.3
Armed forces	(,000)	-	1.055			
	(% pop.)	-	4.6	0.53	0.7	0.3
SOE Employees	(,000)	-	-			
	(% pop.)	-	-	1.18	-	13.1
Total Public Employment	(,000)	-	-			
	(% pop.)	-	-	-	-	-
Wages						
Total Central gov't wage bill	(% of GDP)	-	-	9.4	2.1	5.4
Total Central gov't wage bill	(% of exp)	-	-	24.4	16.2	24.7
Average gov't wage	(,000 LCU)	-	-			
Real ave. gov't wage ('97 price)	(,000 LCU)	-	-			
Average gov't wage to per capita GDP ratio		-	-	2.9	2.9	4.4

Source: World Bank - Public Sector Employment and Wages

³ UNDP - Human Development Report 2002

^a Data refer to total public expenditure on education, including current and capital expenditures.

^b As a result of a number of limitations in the data, comparisons of military expenditure data over time and across countries should be made with caution. For detailed notes on the data see SIPRI (2001).

⁴ Averages for regions and sub regions are only generated if data is available for at least 35% of the countries in that region or sub region.

⁵ Excluding education, health and police – if available (view [Country Sources](#) for further explanations).

2. Legal Structure

North Korea is a communist state under the one-man leadership of Kim Jong Il, chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC) —the nation’s “highest administrative authority”—supreme commander of the Korean People’s Army (KPA), and general secretary of the Korean Workers’ Party (KWP). The 1948 constitution of North Korea was replaced with a new constitution in 1972, and it was amended in late 1992 and in 1998, although North Korea’s government has never publicized the changes. Constitutionally, the highest state power of North Korea is vested in the Supreme People’s Assembly (SPA) whose president leads a cabinet headed by a premier.

Source: [Federal Research Division - The Library of Congress - Country Profile: North Korea \(2005\)](#) - edited

2.1 Legislative Branch

Unicameral Supreme People’s Assembly or Ch’oego Inmin Hoeui (687 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms).⁶

Women in parliament: 138 out of 687 seats: (20.1%).⁷

The Supreme People’s Assembly (SPA) is the parliament of North Korea (DPRK). This unicameral legislative body consists of a single chamber with 687 members, who are popularly elected to serve five year terms. Elections were last held in August 3, 2003, and will be held again in 2008.

Kim Yong Nam currently serves as the President of the SPA Presidium, North Korea’s titular head of state. According to the Constitution of North Korea, it is the highest organ of state power. When the Assembly is not in session the Presidium, nominally a 15 member standing committee which is elected by the members of the assembly, serves as the country’s legislature. The Korean Worker’s Party (KWP) approves a list of SPA candidates who are elected without opposition, but some seats are held by approved minor parties.

Source: [Federal Research Division - The Library of Congress - Country Profile: North Korea \(2005\)](#) - edited

Fact box:

elections: last held 3 August 2003 (next to be held in August 2008)
election results: percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - NA; ruling party approves a list of candidates who are elected without opposition; some seats are held by minor parties⁸

2.2 Executive Branch

cabinet: Naegak (cabinet) members, except for Minister of People’s Armed Forces, are appointed by Supreme People’s Assembly (SPA)

elections: last held in September 2003 (next to be held in September 2008)

⁶ Source of fact boxes if nothing else stated: [The World Factbook - Country](#)

⁷ [Inter-Parliamentary Union - Women in National Parliaments](#)

⁸ [Electionworld.org - Country](#)

Constitutional revisions in September 1998 abolished the Central People's Committee, renamed the State Administration Council as the cabinet and reaffirmed the National Defence Commission (NDC) as the highest state body, albeit nominally under the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA, the parliament). The SPA is a rubber-stamp body, which meets for only a few days each year. Also, at the same time, Kim-Il Sung (who died in 1994) was dubbed "eternal president." The president of the SPA presidium performs the formal duties of the head of state, but ultimate executive power lies with the chairman of the NDC, Kim-Jong Il.

Source: [The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited 2006 – North Korea, Country Report \(2006\)](#)

Kim-Jong Il was first appointed to the National Defense Commission by his father, President Kim Il Sung, in April 1993, and he was reelected to this position in 1998 and 2003. Despite the consolidation of party, state, and military structures under the leadership of one man, some analysts see these three power centers as rivals for power, with the military in the ascendant. In true dynastic fashion, Kim Jong Il appears to be grooming one or the other of his sons—Kim Jong-chol and Kim Jong-woon—as his successor.

The position of president ceased to exist with the elder Kim's death in 1994. The premier (currently Pak Pong-ju) is head of government (since September 2003) and is assisted by three vice premiers and a cabinet of 27 ministers, all of whom are appointed by the Supreme People's Assembly (Ch'oego Inmin Hoewi—SPA). A twenty-eighth minister, the minister of the People's Armed Forces (Kim Il-ch'ol), is not subordinate to the cabinet but answers directly to Kim Jong Il.

Source: [Federal Research Division - The Library of Congress - Country Profile: North Korea \(2005\)](#)

2.3 Judiciary Branch

Central Court (judges are elected by the Supreme People's Assembly)

The three-level judicial system is patterned after the Soviet model. The Central Court is the highest court and has judges appointed by the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA). According to the constitution, the Central Court is accountable to the SPA, and the Criminal Code subjects judges to criminal liability for handing down "unjust judgments." The legal system does not acknowledge individual rights. The Ministry of Public Security routinely dispenses with trials in political cases and refers prisoners to the Ministry of State Security for punishment. In addition to the Central Court, there are provincial courts at the intermediate level, and "people's courts" at the lowest level. Prosecutors are grouped under separate, parallel chains of command

Fact box:

chief of state: KIM Jong Il (since July 1994); note - on 3 September 2003, rubberstamp Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) reelected KIM Jong Il chairman of the National Defense Commission, a position accorded nation's "highest administrative authority"; SPA reelected KIM Yong Nam president of its Presidium also with responsibility of representing state and receiving diplomatic credentials; SPA appointed PAK Pong Ju premier
head of government: Premier PAK Pong Ju (since 3 September 2003); Vice Premiers KWAK Pom Gi (since 5 September 1998), JON Sung Hun (since 3 September 2003), RO Tu Chol (since 3 September 2003)

subordinate to the Central Procurator's Office, which supervises local procurators' offices at provincial and county levels.

Source: [Federal Research Division The Library of Congress - Country Profile: North Korea](#) (2005)

Judges are elected for three-year terms by the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA). There are also a number of provincial and people's courts whose members are elected by local people's assemblies. However, elections are held sporadically for Korean Workers' Party (KWP)-approved delegates to the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) and provincial and local people's assemblies. One hundred percent of the vote for a single candidate is not unusual. The assemblies meet only for a few days each year to give formal approval to state directives.

Source: [Federal Research Division The Library of Congress - Country Profile: North Korea](#) (2005) - edited

2.4 Local Government

North Korea has three levels of local government. The first level includes provinces (*do*) and province-level municipalities (*chikalsi* or *jikhalsi*). The second level includes ordinary cities (*si* or *shi*), urban districts (*kuyŏk*), and counties (*gun* or *kun*). The third level is made up of traditional villages (*ri* or *ni*). Cities are subdivided into wards (*gu*), and some cities and wards are subdivided into neighborhoods (*dong*), the lowest level of urban government to have its own office and staff. Officials leading these various levels of government are elected by local Korean Workers' Party (KWP) committees, local people's assemblies, and local administrative committees. Local people's assemblies at all levels perform

North Korea is divided into nine provinces and four provincial-level municipalities: Pyongyang, Chongjin, Nampo and Kaesong. Local people's assemblies elect the members of their people's committees in charge of administrative duties including making economic plans and budgets that have to be approved by higher authorities. the same symbolic legislative duties as the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA).

Source: [Federal Research Division The Library of Congress - Country Profile: North Korea](#) (2005)

3. The State and Civil Society

3.1 Ombudsperson

Source: [Institution - Title](#)

3.2 Civil Society

According to a report by the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, torture "is routine and severe." There are no practical restrictions on the ability of the government to detain and imprison persons at will and to hold them incommunicado. Prison conditions have been described as "harsh" and "starvation and executions were common." A common punishment is "reeducation through labor." This practice consists of forced labor, such as logging, mining, or tending crops under harsh conditions, and reeducation consisting of memorizing Kim Jong Il's speeches and being forced to participate in self-criticism sessions. It was reported in 2003 that an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 persons were being held in detention camps in remote areas for political reasons.

Source: [Federal Research Division The Library of Congress - Country Profile: North Korea \(2005\)](#)

There is a lack of information available on the human rights situation in North Korea may explain some of the world's hesitation in reacting to the current crisis there. The U.S. State Department is providing support to South Korean nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that are monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation in North Korea.

Source: [The U.S. Department of State – Human Rights in Democratic People's Republic of Korea](#)

4. Civil Service

The actual power in the civil service of the highly centralized government rests in the hands of the communist Korean Worker's Party (KWP) led by the party general secretary who is the highest leader of the country, Kim Jong Il.

Source: [North Korea Country Review 2006 – Political Overview](#)

4.1 Legal basis

4.2 Recruitment

Source: [Institution - Title](#)

4.3 Promotion

Source: [Institution - Title](#)

4.4 Remuneration

In 2002, most salaries lay in the range of 150-200 won per month. A mid-ranking government official earns 2,700 won a month (The official bank rate on 26th January 2006 was Won139.10: US\$1).

Source: [The Economist Group – North Korea](#)

4.5 Training

With respect to the policy and institutional framework of North Korea it operates in, UN agencies support comprehensive assessments and development plans and policies for all level of sectors. The objectives of training civil servant in North Korea are to strengthen the delivery of civil services, improve capacities to management health, education and water and sanitation programmes. The UN also assists the Government to increase access to, and quality of, basic health care services, improve early childhood development and care, as well as availability of nutritious food to children and pregnant/lactating women, iron/folic acid for women before pregnancy to prevent anemia and multi micronutrients during pregnancy.

Source: [CAP – Humanitarian Appeal 2004 – DPRK](#) - edited

4.6 Gender

Source: [Institution - Title](#)

5. Ethics and Civil Service

5.1 Corruption

2003 CPI Score relates to perceptions of the degree of corruption as seen by business people and country analysts and ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt).

Corruption Perceptions Index							
Rank	Country	2003 CPI Score	Surveys Used	Standard Deviation	High-Low Range	Number Inst.	90 percent confidence range
1	Highly clean	9.7	8	0.3	9.2 - 10.0	4	9.5 - 9.9
#	North Korea	-	-	-	-	-	-
133	Highly corrupt	1.3	8	0.7	0.3 - 2.2	6	0.9 - 1.7

Source: [Transparency International - Corruption Perceptions Index 2003](#)

Surveys Used: Refers to the number of surveys that were used to assess a country's performance. 17 surveys were used and at least 3 surveys were required for a country to be included in the CPI.

Standard Deviation: Indicates differences in the values of the sources. Values below 0.5 indicate agreement, values between 0.5 and c. 0.9 indicate some agreement, while values equal or larger than 1 indicate disagreement.

High-Low Range: Provides the highest and lowest values of the sources.

Number Institutions: Refers to the number of independent institutions that assessed a country's performance. Since some institutions provided more than one survey.

90 percent confidence range: Provides a range of possible values of the CPI score. With 5 percent probability the score is above this range and with another 5 percent it is below.

The North Korean government does not release statistics on crime. Violent crime is very rare and street crime is uncommon in Pyongyang. Petty thefts have been reported, especially at the airport in Pyongyang.

Source: [Federal Research Division The Library of Congress - Country Profile: North Korea \(2005\)](#)

The DPRK is one of the most closed and secretive societies in the world. The knowledge of intelligence from other nations regarding drug trafficking and other DPRK related criminality comes from police and press reports, defector statements, embassy and intelligence reporting of various governments and, in the case of trademark violations, the findings of trademark-holder investigations. Foreign law enforcement cases have clearly established that North Korea diplomats, military officers, and other party and/ or government officials have been involved in the smuggling of narcotics. Criminal rackets being run by North Korea continue to attract the attention of U.S. intelligence, which is tracking the regime's money into China and other countries. U.S. officials are eyeing Pyongyang's revenues from illicit drugs, counterfeit consumer products, and counterfeit money, which play a key role in supporting the impoverished government.

Source: [The U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs](#)

5.2 Ethics

The death penalty is mandatory for activities carried out "in collusion with imperialists" or those aimed at "suppressing the national liberation struggle." Prisoners have been sentenced to death for such ill-defined "crimes" as "ideological divergence," "opposing socialism," and "counterrevolutionary crimes." Defectors have claimed that individuals suspected of political crimes have been taken from their homes by state security officials and sent without trial directly to political prison camps.

Source: [Federal Research Division The Library of Congress - Country Profile: North Korea](#) (2005)

6. e-Government

e-Government Readiness Index:

The index refers to the generic capacity or aptitude of the public sector to use ICT for encapsulating in public services and deploying to the public, high quality information (explicit knowledge) and effective communication tools that support human development.

The index is comprised of three sub-indices: Web Measure Index, Telecommunications Infrastructure Index and Human Capital Index.

Web Measure Index:

A scale based on progressively sophisticated web services present. Coverage and sophistication of state-provided e-service and e-product availability correspond to a numerical classification.

Telecommunications Infrastructure Index:

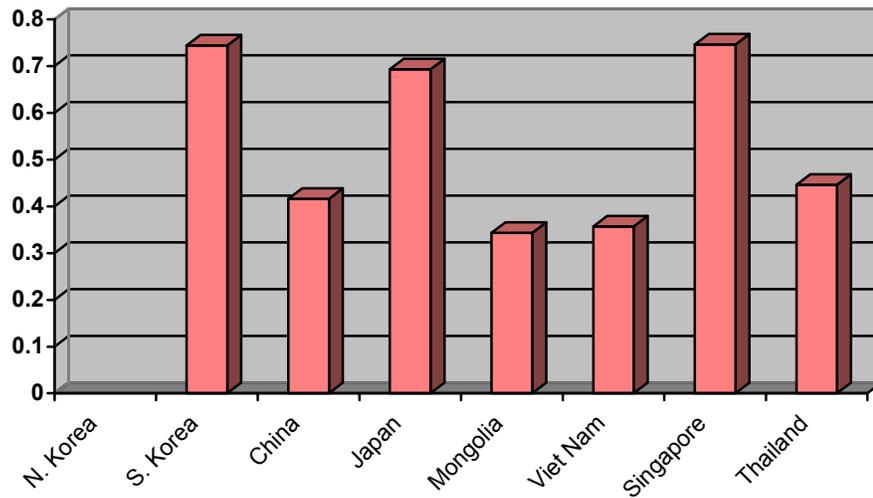
A composite, weighted average index of six primary indices, based on basic infrastructural indicators that define a country's ICT infrastructure capacity.

Primary indicators are: PC's, Internet users, online population and Mobile phones. Secondary indicators are TVs and telephone lines.

Human Capital Index:

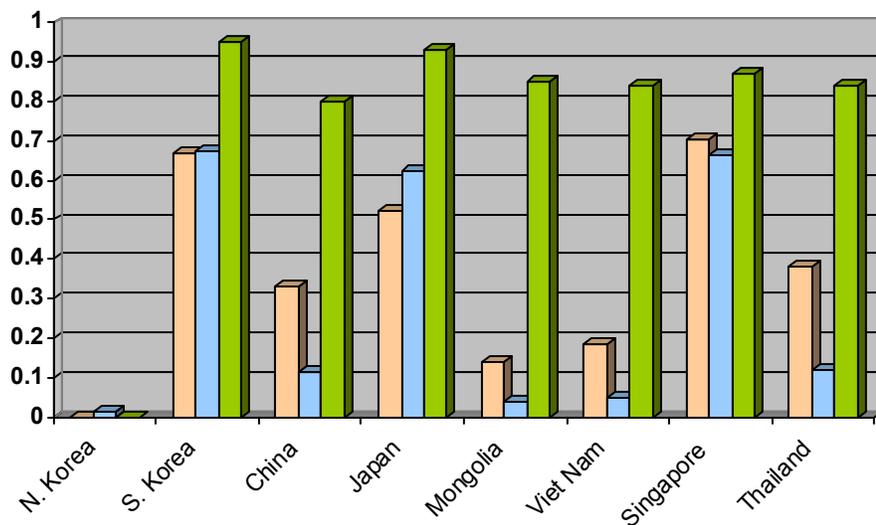
A composite of the adult literacy rate and the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio, with two thirds of the weight given to adult literacy and one third to the gross enrolment ratio.

e-Government Readiness Index



Source: United Nations – World Public Sector Report 2003

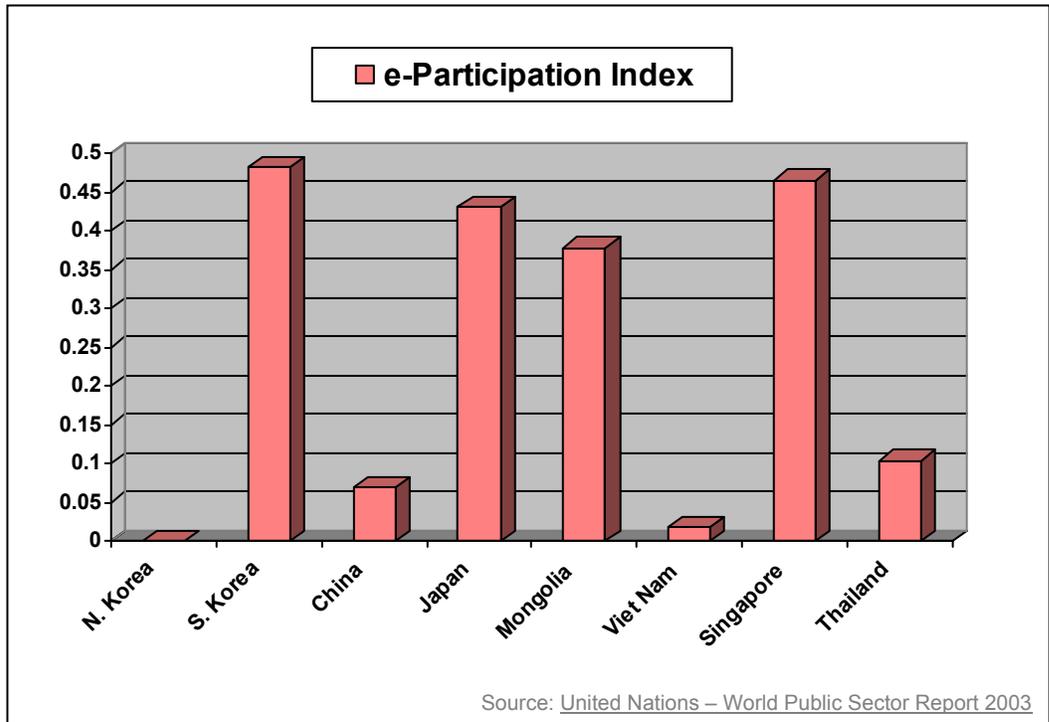
Web Measure Index Telecom. Infrastructure Index Human Capital Index



Source: United Nations – World Public Sector Report 2003

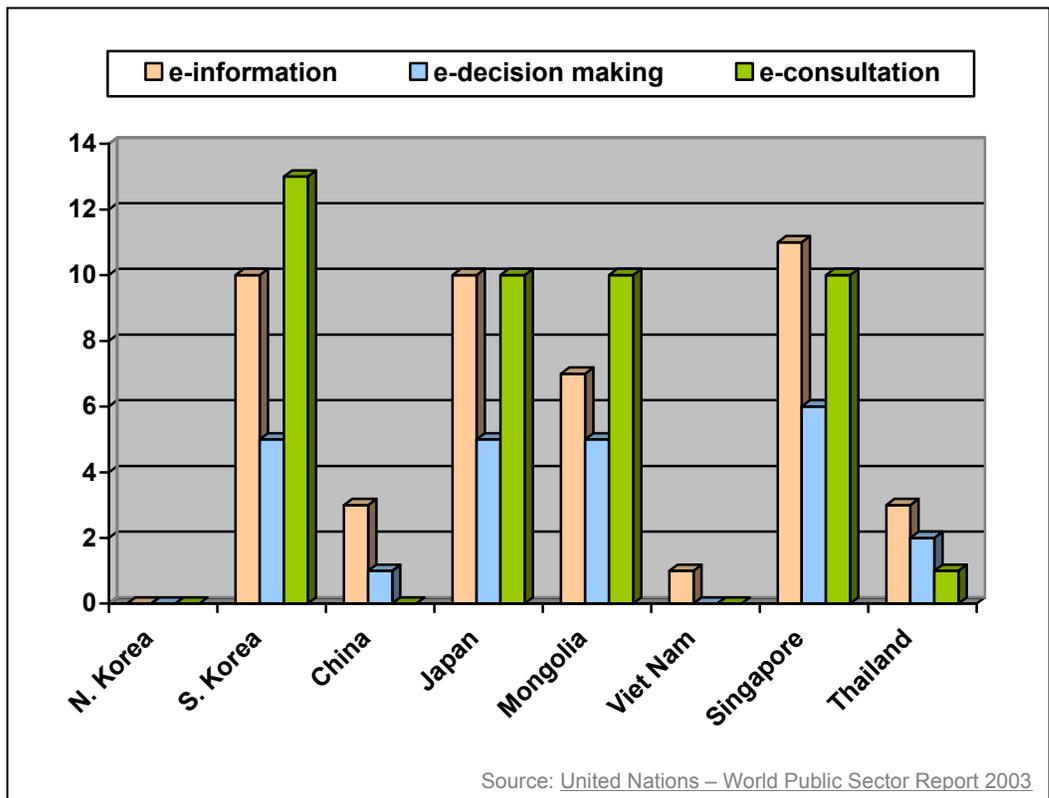
e-Participation Index:

Refers to the willingness, on the part of the government, to use ICT to provide high quality information (explicit knowledge) and effective communication tools for the specific purpose of empowering people for able participation in consultations and decision-making both in their capacity as consumers of public services and as citizens.



e-information:

The government websites offer information on policies and programs, budgets, laws and regulations, and other briefs of key public interest. Tools for disseminating of information exist for timely access and use of public information, including web forums, e-mail lists, newsgroups and chat rooms.



e-decision making:

The government indicates that it will take citizens input into account in decision making and provides actual feedback on the outcome of specific issues.

e-consultation:

The government website explains e-consultation mechanisms and tools. It offers a choice of public policy topics online for discussion with real time and archived access to audios and videos of public meetings. The government encourages citizens to participate in discussions.

7. Links

7.1 National sites	
Authority	Topic
Central Intelligence Agency – The World Factbook	https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/kn.html
Federal Research Division – The Library of Congress	http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/North_korea.pdf
International Constitutional Law (ICL)	http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/kn_idx.html
The U.S. Department of State	http://www.state.gov
The U.S. Department of State – Country Reports on Human Rights Practices	http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2792.htm

7.2 Miscellaneous sites	
Institution	Topic
Economist Intelligence Unit – Country Report	http://portal.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=displayIssueArticle&issue_id=430867628&article_id=440867629
Economist Intelligence Unit – Country Profile	http://portal.eiu.com/report_dl.asp?issue_id=870060072&mode=pdf
Transparency International	http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi
World Bank (WB)	http://www.worldbank.org