



Regional Profile:
Latin America

Doing business in a
more transparent world

COMPARING REGULATION FOR DOMESTIC FIRMS IN 183 ECONOMIES

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Copies of *Doing Business 2012: Doing Business in a More Transparent World*, *Doing Business 2011: Making a Difference for Entrepreneurs*, *Doing Business 2010: Reforming through Difficult Times*, *Doing Business 2009*, *Doing Business 2008*, *Doing Business 2007: How to Reform*, *Doing Business in 2006: Creating Jobs*, *Doing Business in 2005: Removing Obstacles to Growth* and *Doing Business in 2004: Understanding Regulations* may be downloaded at www.doingbusiness.org.

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CONTENTS

Introduction.....	4
The business environment.....	5
Starting a business.....	11
Dealing with construction permits	20
Getting electricity	27
Registering property	32
Getting credit	39
Protecting investors	44
Paying taxes.....	51
Trading across borders	60
Enforcing contracts.....	71
Resolving insolvency	77
Data notes.....	84
Resources on the <i>Doing Business</i> website	88

INTRODUCTION

Doing Business sheds light on how easy or difficult it is for a local entrepreneur to open and run a small to medium-size business when complying with relevant regulations. It measures and tracks changes in regulations affecting 10 areas in the life cycle of a business: starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, registering property, getting credit, protecting investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts and resolving insolvency.

In a series of annual reports *Doing Business* presents quantitative indicators on business regulations and the protection of property rights that can be compared across 183 economies, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, over time. The data set covers 46 economies in Sub-Saharan Africa, 32 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 24 in East Asia and the Pacific, 24 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 18 in the Middle East and North Africa and 8 in South Asia, as well as 31 OECD high-income economies. The indicators are used to analyze economic outcomes and identify what reforms have worked, where and why.

This regional profile presents the *Doing Business* indicators for Latin America. It also shows the regional average, the best performance globally for each indicator and data for the following comparator regions: Caribbean states, East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), European Union (EU), South Asia (SA) and OECD

high income. The data in this report are current as of June 1, 2011 (except for the paying taxes indicators, which cover the period January–December 2010).

The *Doing Business* methodology has limitations. Other areas important to business—such as an economy's proximity to large markets, the quality of its infrastructure services (other than those related to trading across borders and getting electricity), the security of property from theft and looting, the transparency of government procurement, macroeconomic conditions or the underlying strength of institutions—are not directly studied by *Doing Business*. The indicators refer to a specific type of business, generally a local limited liability company operating in the largest business city. Because standard assumptions are used in the data collection, comparisons and benchmarks are valid across economies. The data not only highlight the extent of obstacles to doing business; they also help identify the source of those obstacles, supporting policy makers in designing regulatory reform.

More information is available in the full report. *Doing Business 2012* presents the indicators, analyzes their relationship with economic outcomes and recommends regulatory reforms. The data, along with information on ordering the *Doing Business 2012* report, are available on the *Doing Business* website at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

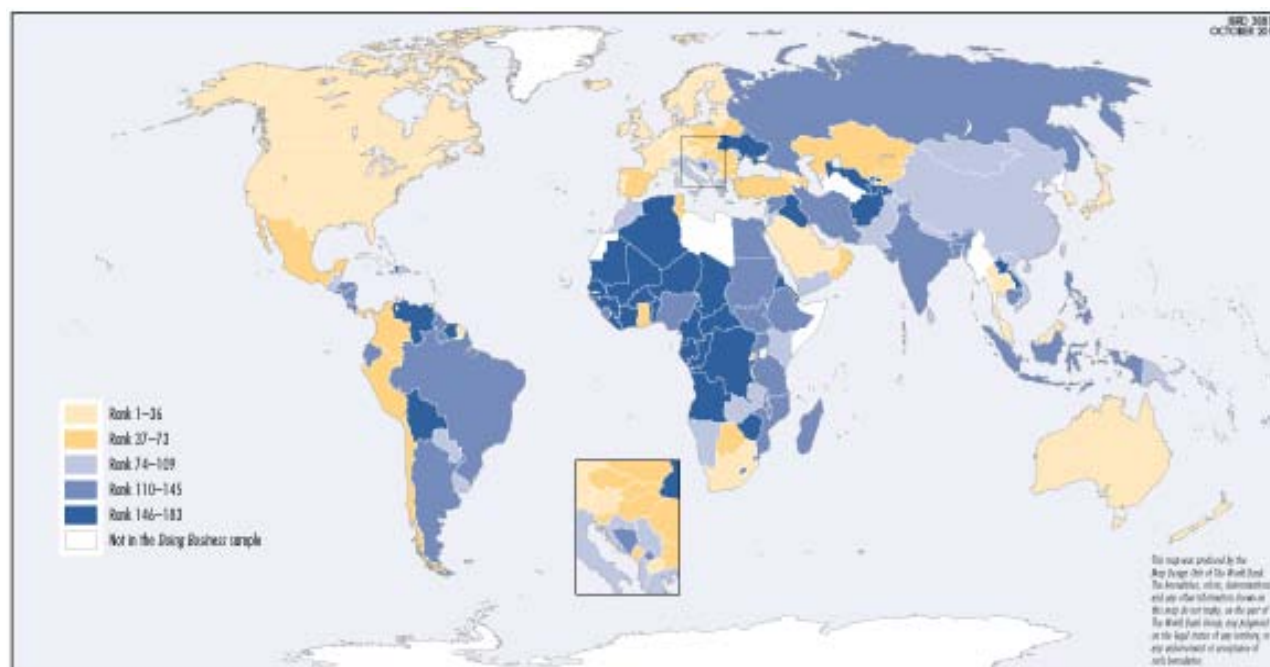
THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

For policy makers trying to improve their economy's regulatory environment for business, a good place to start is to find out how it compares with the regulatory environment in other economies. *Doing Business* provides an aggregate ranking on the ease of doing business based on indicator sets that measure and benchmark regulations applying to domestic small to medium-size businesses through their life cycle. Economies are ranked from 1 to 183 by the ease of doing business index. For each economy the index is calculated as the ranking on the simple average of its percentile rankings on each of the 10 topics included in the index in *Doing Business 2012*: starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, registering property, getting credit, protecting investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts and resolving insolvency.

The ranking on each topic is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators (see the data notes for more details).¹

The aggregate ranking on the ease of doing business benchmarks each economy's performance on the indicators against that of all other economies in the *Doing Business* sample (figure 1.1). While this ranking tells much about the business environment in an economy, it does not tell the whole story. The ranking on the ease of doing business, and the underlying indicators, do not measure all aspects of the business environment that matter to firms and investors or that affect the competitiveness of the economy. Still, a high ranking does mean that the government has created a regulatory environment conducive to operating a business.

Figure 1.1 Where economies stand in the global ranking on the ease of doing business



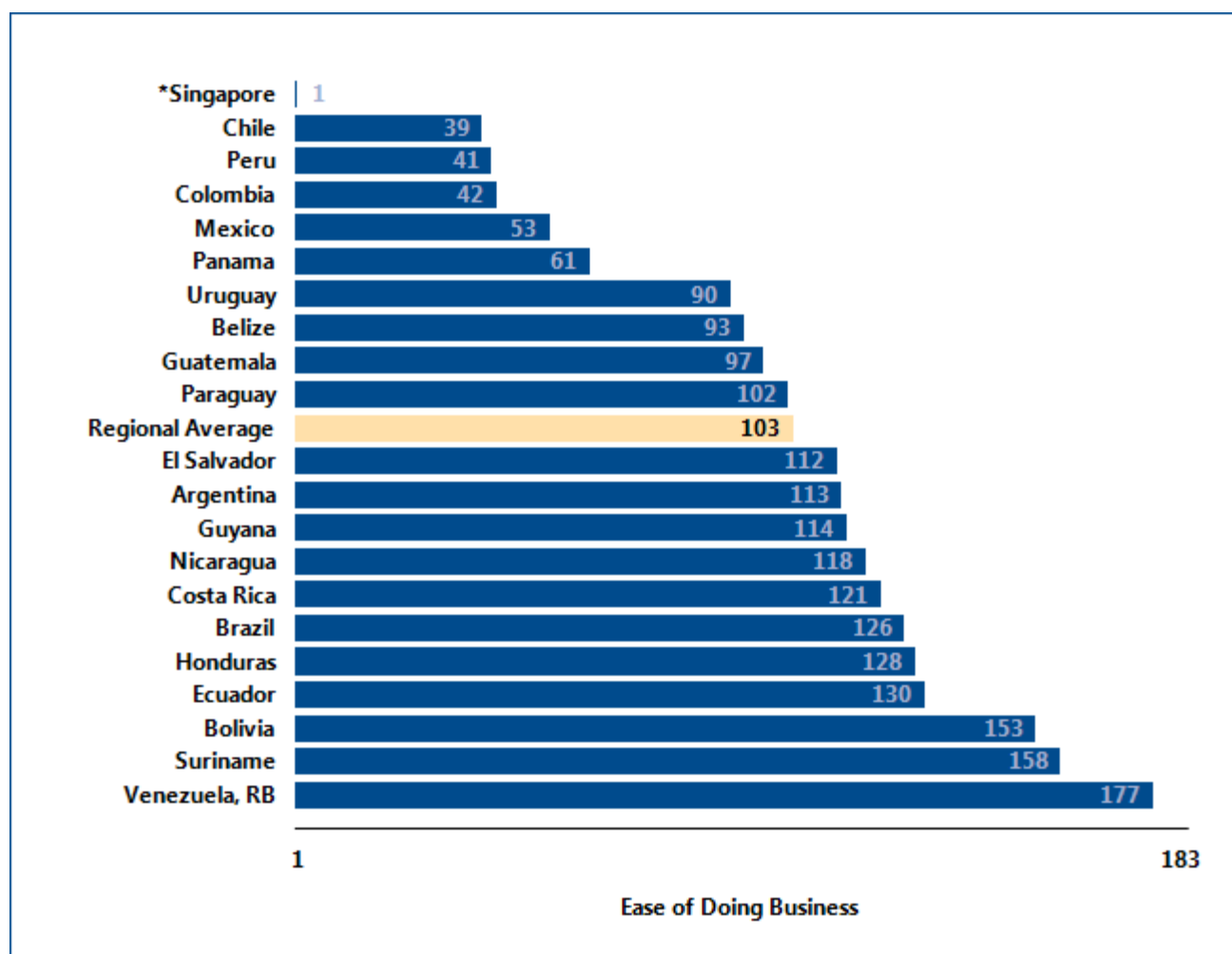
Source: *Doing Business* database.

¹ Except for the ease of getting credit, for which the percentile rankings on its component indicators are weighted, the depth of credit information index at 37.5% and the strength of legal rights index at 62.5%.

THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

For policy makers, knowing where their economy stands in the aggregate ranking on the ease of doing business is useful. Also useful is to know how it ranks compared with other economies in the region and compared with the regional average (figure 1.2). Another perspective is provided by the regional average rankings on the topics included in the ease of doing business index (figure 1.3).

Figure 1.2 How economies in Latin America rank on the ease of doing business



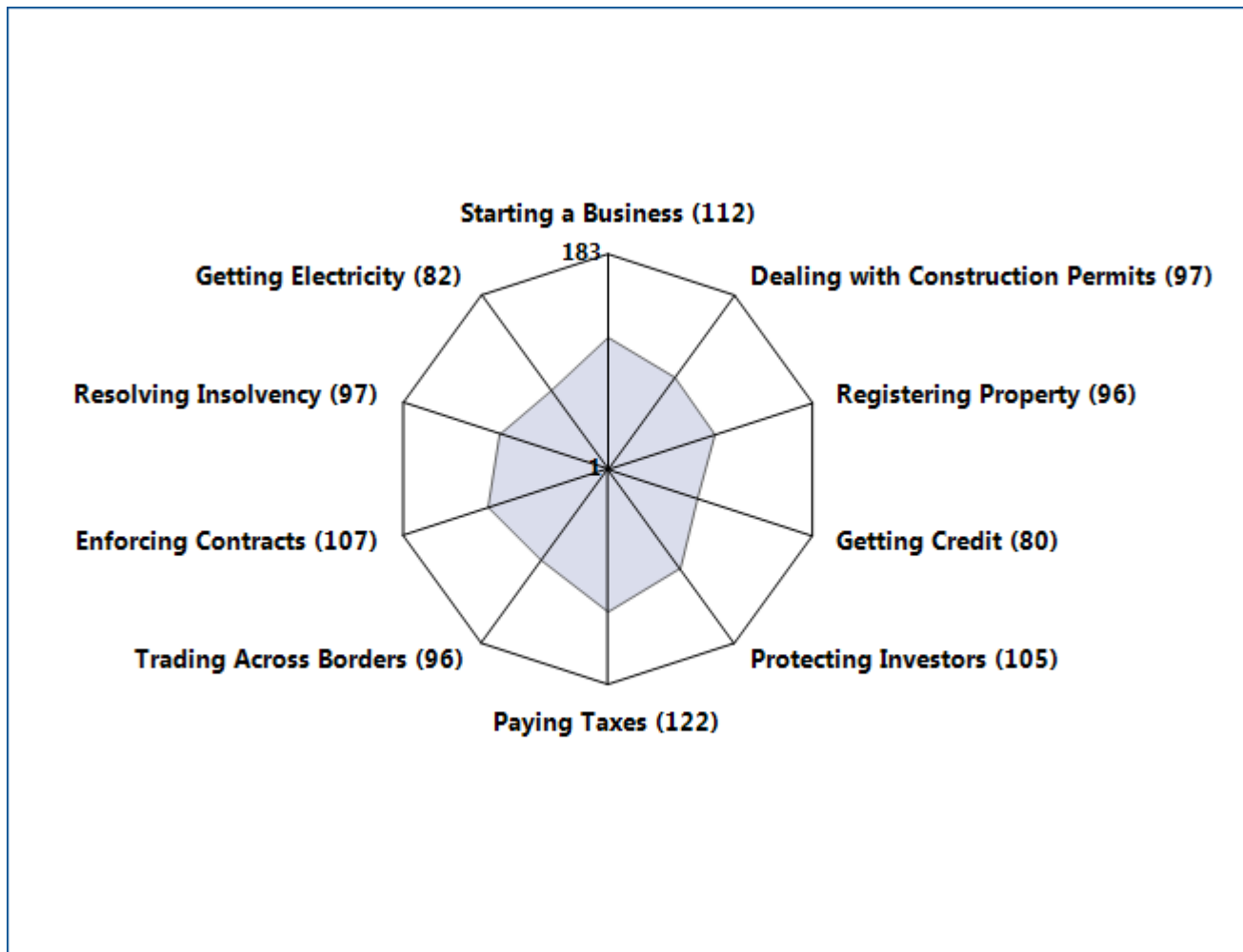
*The economy with the best performance globally is included as a benchmark. In some cases 2 or more economies share the top ranking on an indicator.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Figure 1.3 How Latin America ranks on *Doing Business* topics

Regional average ranking



Source: *Doing Business* database.

THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Just as the overall ranking on the ease of doing business tells only part of the story, so do changes in that ranking. Yearly movements in rankings can provide some indication of changes in an economy's regulatory environment for firms, but they are always relative. An economy's ranking might change because of developments in other economies. An economy that implemented business regulation reforms may fail to rise in the rankings (or may even drop) if it is passed by others whose business regulation reforms had a more significant impact as measured by *Doing Business*.

The absolute values of the indicators tell another part of the story (table 1.1). Policy makers can learn much by comparing the indicators for their economy with those for the lowest- and highest-scoring economies in the region as well as those for the best performers globally. These comparisons may reveal unexpected strengths in an area of business regulation—such as a regulatory process that can be completed with a small number of procedures in a few days and at a low cost.

Table 1.1 Summary of *Doing Business* indicators for Latin America

Indicator	Lowest regional performance	Best regional performance	Regional average	Best global performance
Starting a Business (rank)	173 (Suriname)	27 (Chile)	113	1 (New Zealand)
Procedures (number)	17 (Venezuela, RB)	5 (Peru)*	10	1 (Canada)*
Time (days)	694 (Suriname)	7 (Chile)*	71	1 (New Zealand)
Cost (% of income per capita)	115.0 (Suriname)	5.1 (Chile)	36.3	0 (Denmark)*
Paid-in Min. Capital (% of income per capita)	22.3 (Guatemala)	(11 Economies*)	3.0	(82 Economies*)
Dealing with Construction Permits (rank)	169 (Argentina)	9 (Belize)	97	1 (Hong Kong SAR, China)
Procedures (number)	33 (El Salvador)	8 (Colombia)*	16	5 (Denmark)
Time (days)	469 (Brazil)	46 (Colombia)	206	26 (Singapore)*
Cost (% of income per capita)	541.7 (Guatemala)	17.5 (Guyana)	177.0	1.1 (Qatar)
Getting Electricity (rank)	155 (Venezuela, RB)	7 (Uruguay)	82	1 (Iceland)
Procedures (number)	8 (Bolivia)*	4 (Uruguay)*	6	3 (Germany)*
Time (days)	165 (Colombia)	31 (Chile)	71	17 (Germany)
Cost (% of income per capita)	1,653.8 (Nicaragua)	15.4 (Panama)	573.3	0 (Japan)

Indicator	Lowest regional performance	Best regional performance	Regional average	Best global performance
Registering Property (rank)	170 (Suriname)	22 (Peru)	96	3 (New Zealand)
Procedures (number)	13 (Brazil)	4 (Peru)*	7	1 (Portugal)*
Time (days)	197 (Suriname)	7 (Peru)	49	1 (Portugal)
Cost (% of property value)	13.8 (Suriname)	0.9 (Guatemala)	4.3	0 (Slovak Republic)
Getting Credit (rank)	182 (Venezuela, RB)	8 (Guatemala)	80	1 (United Kingdom)*
Strength of legal rights index (0-10)	1 (Venezuela, RB)*	8 (Guatemala)*	5	10 (New Zealand)*
Depth of credit information index (0-6)	0 (Venezuela, RB)	(11 Economies*)	5	6 (Japan)*
Public registry coverage (% of adults)	10.5 (Nicaragua)	36.1 (Brazil)	14.3	86.2 (Portugal)
Private bureau coverage (% of adults)	8.9 (Guatemala)	100.0 (Uruguay)*	46.0	100 (New Zealand)*
Protecting Investors (rank)	181 (Suriname)	5 (Colombia)	106	1 (New Zealand)
Extent of disclosure index (0-10)	0 (Honduras)	8 (Chile)*	4	10 (France)*
Extent of director liability index (0-10)	0 (Suriname)*	8 (Colombia)	4	9 (Singapore)*
Ease of shareholder suits index (0-10)	2 (Venezuela, RB)*	9 (Colombia)*	6	10 (New Zealand)*
Strength of investor protection index (0-10)	2.0 (Suriname)	8.3 (Colombia)	4.7	9.7 (New Zealand)
Paying Taxes (rank)	183 (Venezuela, RB)	34 (Suriname)	122	8 (Canada)
Payments (number per year)	70 (Venezuela, RB)	6 (Mexico)	30	4 (Norway)
Time (hours per year)	2600 (Brazil)	147 (Belize)	497	59 (Luxembourg)
Trading Across Borders (rank)	166 (Venezuela, RB)	11 (Panama)	97	1 (Singapore)
Documents to export (number)	10 (Guatemala)	3 (Panama)	7	2 (France)
Time to export (days)	49 (Venezuela, RB)	9 (Panama)	19	5 (Hong Kong SAR, China)*
Cost to export (US\$ per container)	2590 (Venezuela, RB)	615 (Panama)	1323	450 (Malaysia)

Indicator	Lowest regional performance	Best regional performance	Regional average	Best global performance
Documents to import (number)	10 (Paraguay)	4 (Mexico)*	7	2 (France)
Time to import (days)	71 (Venezuela, RB)	9 (Panama)	22	4 (Singapore)
Cost to import (US\$ per container)	2868 (Venezuela, RB)	745 (Guyana)	1495	435 (Malaysia)
Enforcing Contracts (rank)	178 (Suriname)	45 (Argentina)	108	1 (Luxembourg)
Time (days)	1715 (Suriname)	409 (Nicaragua)	765	150 (Singapore)
Cost (% of claim)	50.0 (Panama)	16.5 (Argentina)*	30.1	0.1 (Bhutan)
Procedures (number)	51 (Belize)	30 (Venezuela, RB)	38	21 (Ireland)*
Resolving Insolvency (rank)	161 (Venezuela, RB)	12 (Colombia)	97	1 (Japan)
Time (years)	5.3 (Ecuador)	1.0 (Belize)	3.1	0.4 (Ireland)
Cost (% of estate)	38 (Venezuela, RB)	1 (Colombia)	16	1 (Singapore)*
Recovery rate (cents on the dollar)	6.2 (Venezuela, RB)	82.8 (Colombia)	31.8	92.7 (Japan)

Note: The methodology for the paying taxes indicators changed in *Doing Business 2012*; see the data notes for details. For these indicators, the best performer globally is the economy that has implemented the most efficient practices in its tax system and is not necessarily the one with the highest ranking.

* Two or more economies share the top ranking on this indicator. A number shown in place of an economy's name indicates the number of economies that share the top ranking on the indicator. For a list of these economies, see the *Doing Business* website (<http://www.doingbusiness.org>).

Source: *Doing Business* database.

STARTING A BUSINESS

Formal registration of companies has many immediate benefits for the companies and for business owners and employees. Legal entities can outlive their founders. Resources are pooled as several shareholders join forces to start a company. Formally registered companies have access to services and institutions from courts to banks as well as to new markets. And their employees can benefit from protections provided by the law. An additional benefit comes with limited liability companies. These limit the financial liability of company owners to their investments, so personal assets of the owners are not put at risk. Where governments make registration easy, more entrepreneurs start businesses in the formal sector, creating more good jobs and generating more revenue for the government.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business measures the ease of starting a business in an economy by recording all procedures that are officially required or commonly done in practice by an entrepreneur to start up and formally operate an industrial or commercial business—as well as the time and cost required to complete these procedures. It also records the paid-in minimum capital that companies must deposit before registration (or within 3 months). The ranking on the ease of starting a business is the simple average of the percentile rankings on the 4 component indicators: procedures, time, cost and paid-in minimum capital requirement.

To make the data comparable across economies, *Doing Business* uses several assumptions about the business and the procedures. It assumes that all information is readily available to the entrepreneur and that there has been no prior contact with officials. It also assumes that all government and nongovernment entities involved in the process function without corruption. And it assumes that the business:

- Is a limited liability company, located in the largest business city.
- Has between 10 and 50 employees.

WHAT THE STARTING A BUSINESS

INDICATORS MEASURE

Procedures to legally start and operate a company (number)

- Preregistration (for example, name verification or reservation, notarization)
- Registration in the economy's largest business city
- Postregistration (for example, social security registration, company seal)

Time required to complete each procedure (calendar days)

- Does not include time spent gathering information
- Each procedure starts on a separate day
- Procedure completed once final document is received
- No prior contact with officials

Cost required to complete each procedure (% of income per capita)

- Official costs only, no bribes
- No professional fees unless services required by law

Paid-in minimum capital (% of income per capita)

- Deposited in a bank or with a notary before registration (or within 3 months)

- Conducts general commercial or industrial activities.
- Has a start-up capital of 10 times income per capita.
- Has a turnover of at least 100 times income per capita.
- Does not qualify for any special benefits.
- Does not own real estate.
- Is 100% domestically owned.

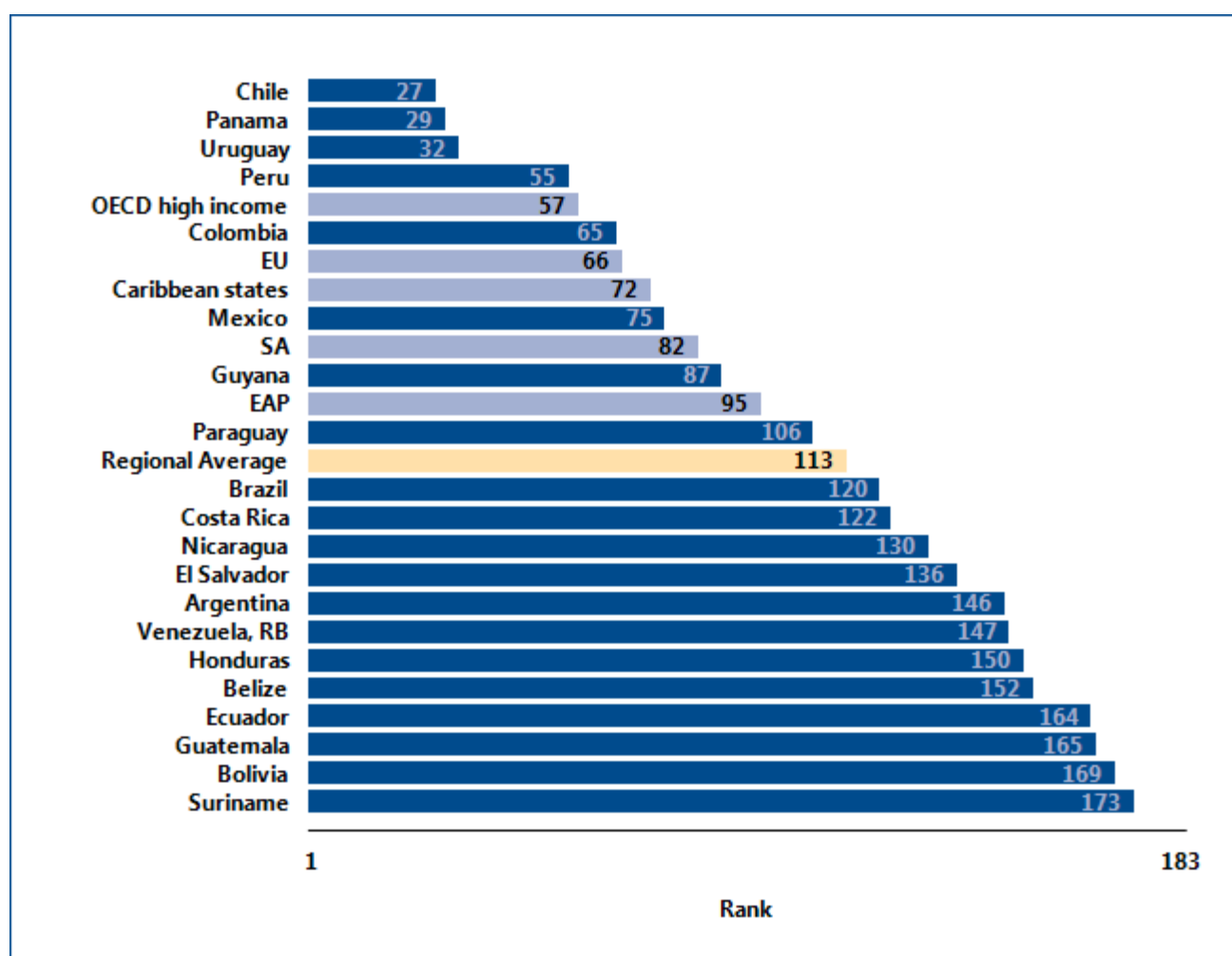
STARTING A BUSINESS

Where do the region's economies stand today?

How easy is it for entrepreneurs in economies in Latin America to start a business? The global rankings of these economies on the ease of starting a business

suggest an answer (figure 2.1). The average ranking of the region and comparator regions provide a useful benchmark.

Figure 2.1 How economies in Latin America rank on the ease of starting a business



Source: *Doing Business* database.

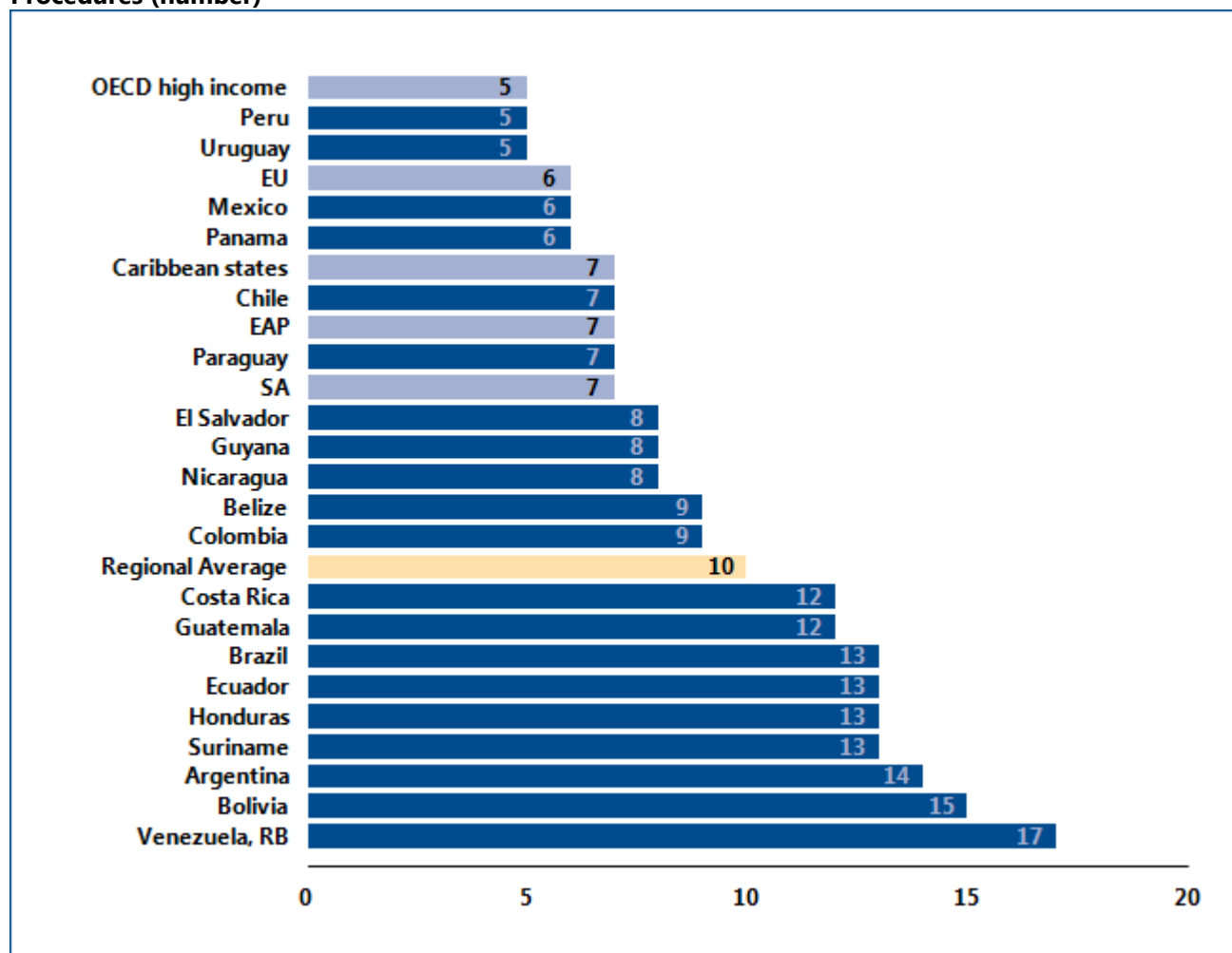
The indicators underlying the rankings may be more revealing. Data collected by *Doing Business* show what it takes to start a business in each economy in the region: the number of procedures, the time, the cost

and the paid-in minimum capital requirement (figure 2.2). Comparing these indicators across the region and with averages both for the region and for comparator regions can provide useful insights.

STARTING A BUSINESS

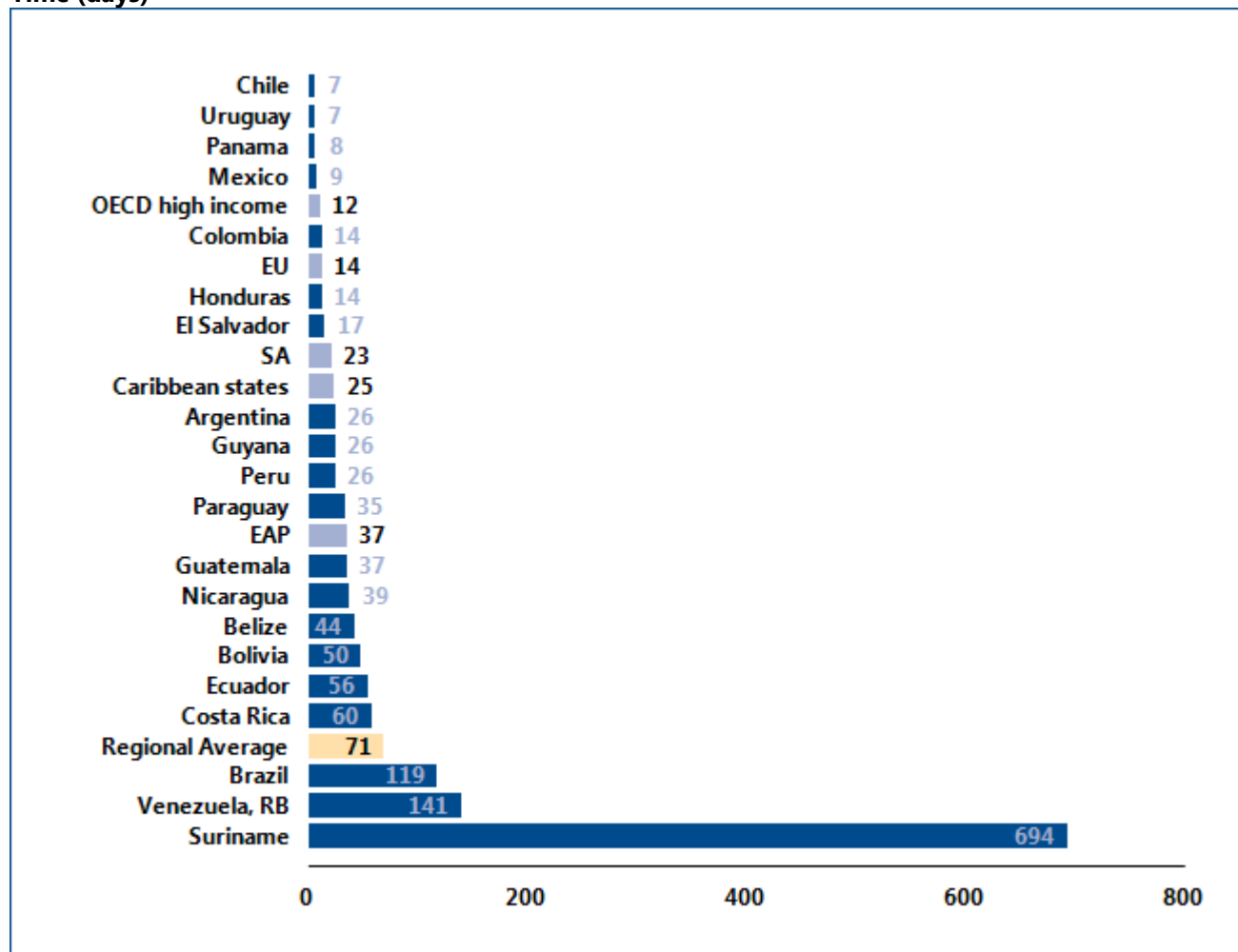
Figure 2.2 What it takes to start a business in economies in Latin America

Procedures (number)



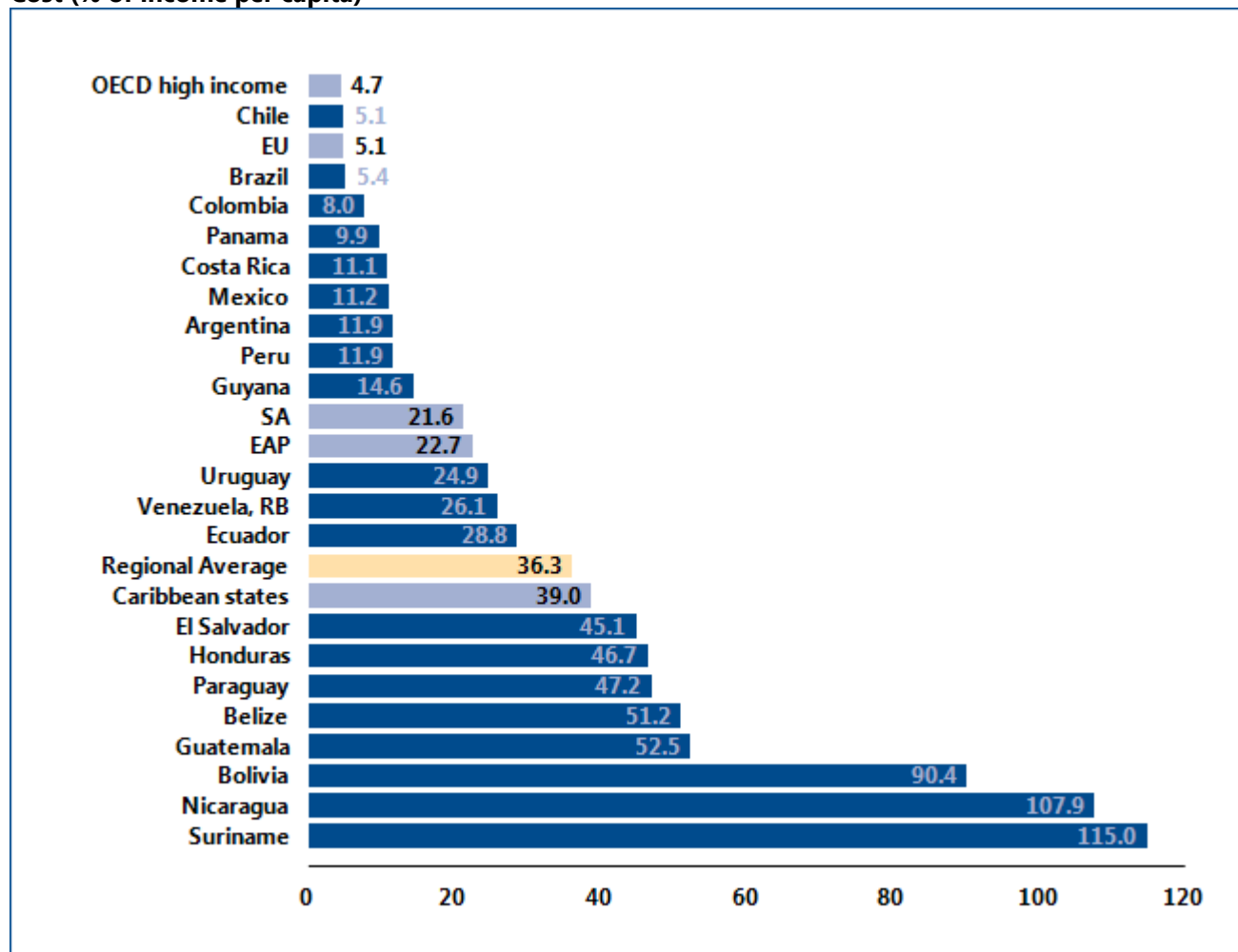
STARTING A BUSINESS

Time (days)



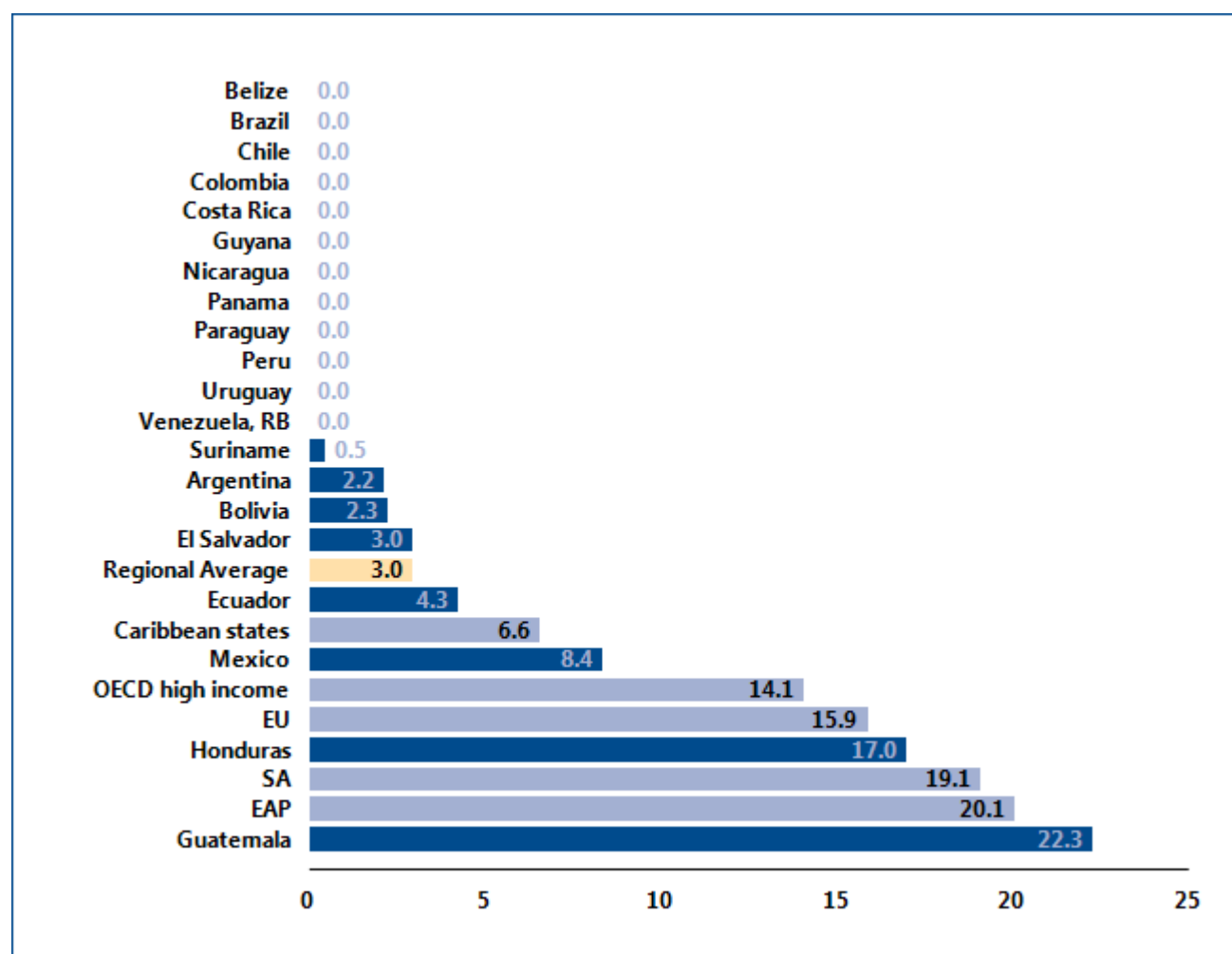
STARTING A BUSINESS

Cost (% of income per capita)



STARTING A BUSINESS

Paid-in minimum capital (% of income per capita)



Source: Doing Business database.

STARTING A BUSINESS

What are the changes over time?

Economies around the world have taken steps making it easier to start a business—streamlining procedures by setting up a one-stop shop, making procedures simpler or faster by introducing technology, and reducing or eliminating minimum capital requirements. Many have undertaken business registration reforms in

stages—and often as part of a larger regulatory reform program. Among the benefits have been greater firm satisfaction and savings and more registered businesses, financial resources and job opportunities.

What business registration reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Latin America (table 2.1)?

Table 2.1 How have economies in Latin America made starting a business easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2012	Chile	Chile made business start-up easier by starting to provide an immediate temporary operating license to new companies, eliminating the requirement for an inspection of premises by the tax authority before new companies can begin operations and allowing free online publication of the notice of a company's creation.
DB2012	Colombia	Colombia reduced the costs associated with starting a business, by no longer requiring upfront payment of the commercial license fee.
DB2012	Guyana	Guyana eased the process of starting a business by reducing the time needed for registering a new company and for obtaining a tax identification number.
DB2012	Panama	Panama extended the operating hours of the public registry, reducing the time required to register a new company.
DB2012	Peru	Peru made starting a business easier by eliminating the requirement for micro and small enterprises to deposit start-up capital in a bank before registration.
DB2012	Uruguay	Uruguay made starting a business easier by establishing a one-stop shop for general commercial companies.
DB2011	Brazil	Brazil eased business start-up by further enhancing the electronic synchronization between federal and state tax authorities.
DB2011	Chile	Chile made business start-up easier by introducing an online system for registration and for filing the request for publication.
DB2011	Ecuador	Ecuador made starting a business easier by introducing an online registration system for social security.

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2011	<i>Guyana</i>	Guyana eased business start-up by digitizing company records, which speeded up the process of company name search and reservation.
DB2011	<i>Mexico</i>	Mexico launched an online one-stop shop for initiating business registration.
DB2011	<i>Panama</i>	Panama eased business start-up by increasing efficiency at the registrar.
DB2011	<i>Peru</i>	Peru eased business start-up by simplifying the requirements for operating licenses and creating an online one-stop shop for business registration.
DB2011	<i>Venezuela, RB</i>	República Bolivariana de Venezuela made starting a business more difficult by introducing a new procedure for registering a company.
DB2010	<i>Argentina</i>	Business start-up was eased with an expedited publication process.
DB2010	<i>Brazil</i>	The process of starting a business was eased by removing the requirement to obtain a fire brigade license and inspection before obtaining an operational license from a municipality.
DB2010	<i>Colombia</i>	Business start-up was made easier by creating a public-private health provider that enables faster affiliation of employees and through a tool that allows online pre-enrollment with the social security office.
DB2010	<i>Guyana</i>	Business start-up was eased by applying a flat registration fee for all companies, regardless of their capital amount, and removing the duty payable on incorporation.
DB2010	<i>Honduras</i>	Business start-up was eased by creating a one-stop shop to make registration more efficient, improving the process of registering for taxes, and eliminating the need for lawyer services to obtain a municipal license.
DB2010	<i>Mexico</i>	Business start-up was eased by establishing an electronic platform for company registration, substantially reducing the number of days for registration, and eliminating the requirement to register with the statistical office.
DB2010	<i>Peru</i>	Business start-up was simplified by allowing submission of electronic payroll books online at no cost and making company forms available online.
DB2009	<i>Colombia</i>	The time and cost to start a business were reduced by simplifying registration formalities, including speeding up processes at the registry and eliminating the need to obtain a certificate of compliance with zoning regulations.
DB2009	<i>Costa Rica</i>	Tax registration records and company books were digitized, reducing the time required to start a business.

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2009	<i>El Salvador</i>	A new commercial code was implemented that simplified business start-up by reducing the minimum capital requirement, simplifying the legalization of accounting books, and publication requirements.
DB2009	<i>Panama</i>	An online system for company creation was introduced, greatly speeding business start-up.
DB2009	<i>Uruguay</i>	The minimum capital requirement was eliminated in July 2007, making it easier to start a business.
DB2008	<i>Guatemala</i>	With the full implementation of the one stop shop, procedures and time for new company registration were reduced.
DB2008	<i>Honduras</i>	The municipal licensing procedures were simplified, reducing the time start a business.
DB2008	<i>Paraguay</i>	A one-stop-shop linking multiple agencies was launched. The number of procedures to start a business was more than halved, and the time was reduced.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2005), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Regulation of construction is critical to protect the public. But it needs to be efficient, to avoid excessive constraints on a sector that plays an important part in every economy. Where complying with building regulations is excessively costly in time and money, many builders opt out. They may pay bribes to pass inspections or simply build illegally, leading to hazardous construction that puts public safety at risk. Where compliance is simple, straightforward and inexpensive, everyone is better off.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business records the procedures, time and cost for a business to obtain all the necessary approvals to build a simple commercial warehouse in the economy's largest business city, connect it to basic utilities and register the property so that it can be used as collateral or transferred to another entity.

The ranking on the ease of dealing with construction permits is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators: procedures, time and cost.

To make the data comparable across economies, *Doing Business* uses several assumptions about the business and the warehouse, including the utility connections.

The business:

- Is a limited liability company operating in the construction business and located in the largest business city.
- Is domestically owned and operated.
- Has 60 builders and other employees.

The warehouse:

- Is a new construction (there was no previous construction on the land).
- Has complete architectural and technical plans prepared by a licensed architect.

WHAT THE DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS INDICATORS MEASURE

Procedures to legally build a warehouse (number)

Submitting all relevant documents and obtaining all necessary clearances, licenses, permits and certificates

Completing all required notifications and receiving all necessary inspections

Obtaining utility connections for water, sewerage and a fixed telephone line

Registering the warehouse after its completion (if required for use as collateral or for transfer of the warehouse)

Time required to complete each procedure (calendar days)

Does not include time spent gathering information

Each procedure starts on a separate day

Procedure completed once final document is received

No prior contact with officials

Cost required to complete each procedure (% of income per capita)

Official costs only, no bribes

- Will be connected to water, sewerage (sewage system, septic tank or their equivalent) and a fixed telephone line. The connection to each utility network will be 10 meters (32 feet, 10 inches) long.
- Will be used for general storage, such as of books or stationery (not for goods requiring special conditions).
- Will take 30 weeks to construct (excluding all delays due to administrative and regulatory requirements).

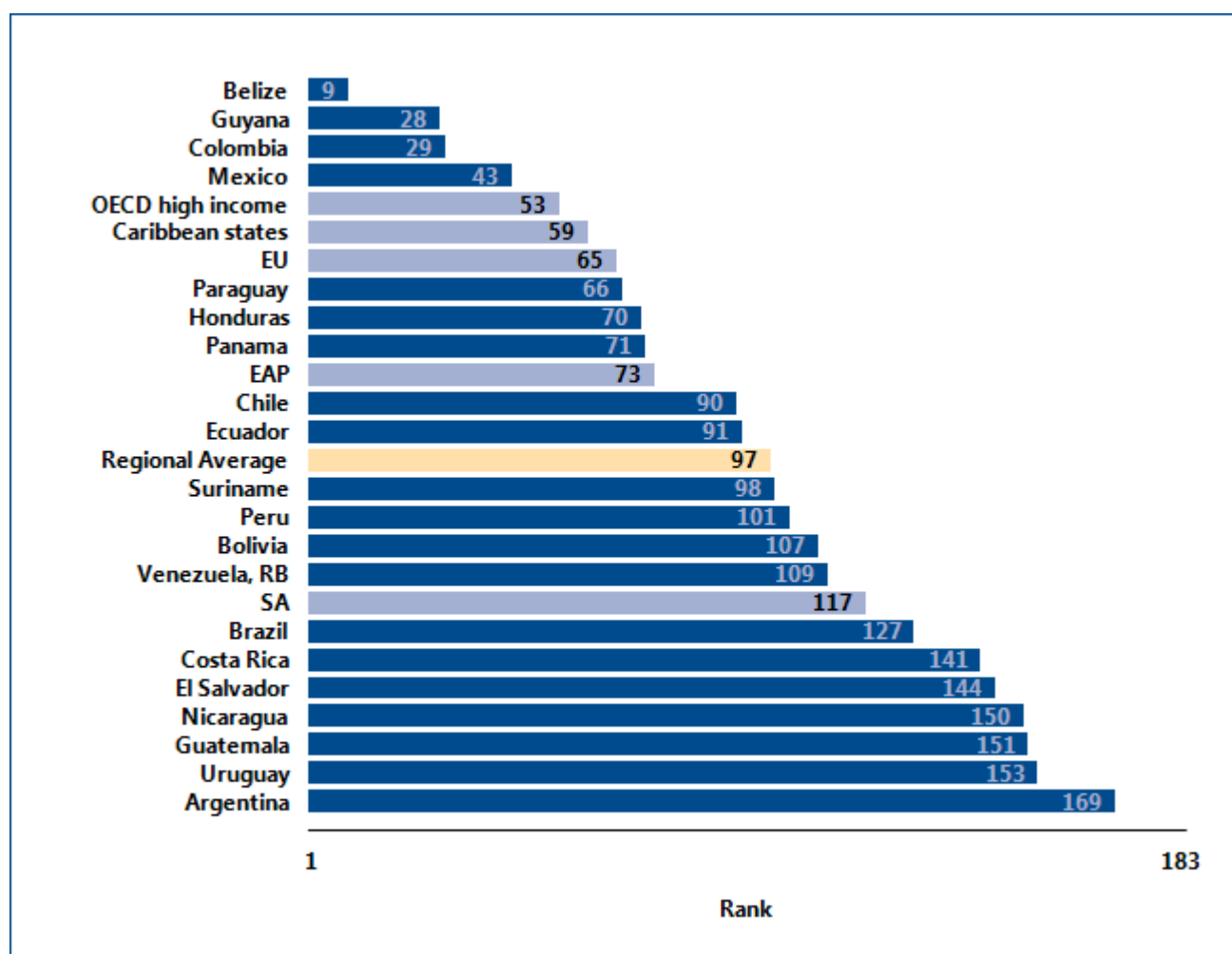
DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Where do the region's economies stand today?

How easy it is for entrepreneurs in economies in Latin America to legally build a warehouse? The global rankings of these economies on the ease of dealing

with construction permits suggest an answer (figure 3.1). The average ranking of the region and comparator regions provide a useful benchmark.

Figure 3.1 How economies in Latin America rank on the ease of dealing with construction permits



Source: *Doing Business* database.

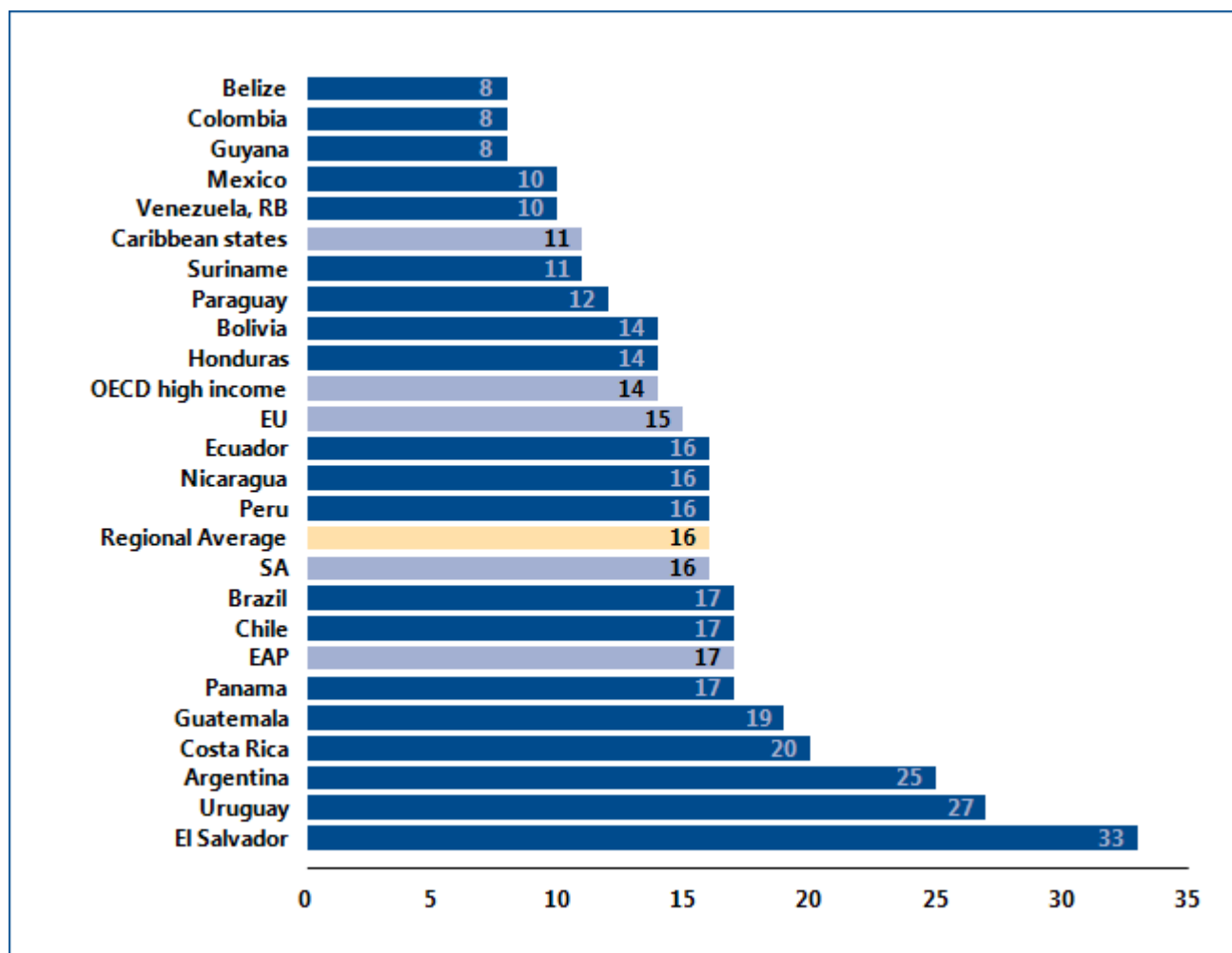
The indicators underlying the rankings may be more revealing. Data collected by *Doing Business* show what it takes to comply with formalities to build a warehouse in each economy in the region: the number

of procedures, the time and the cost (figure 3.2). Comparing these indicators across the region and with averages both for the region and for comparator regions can provide useful insights.

DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

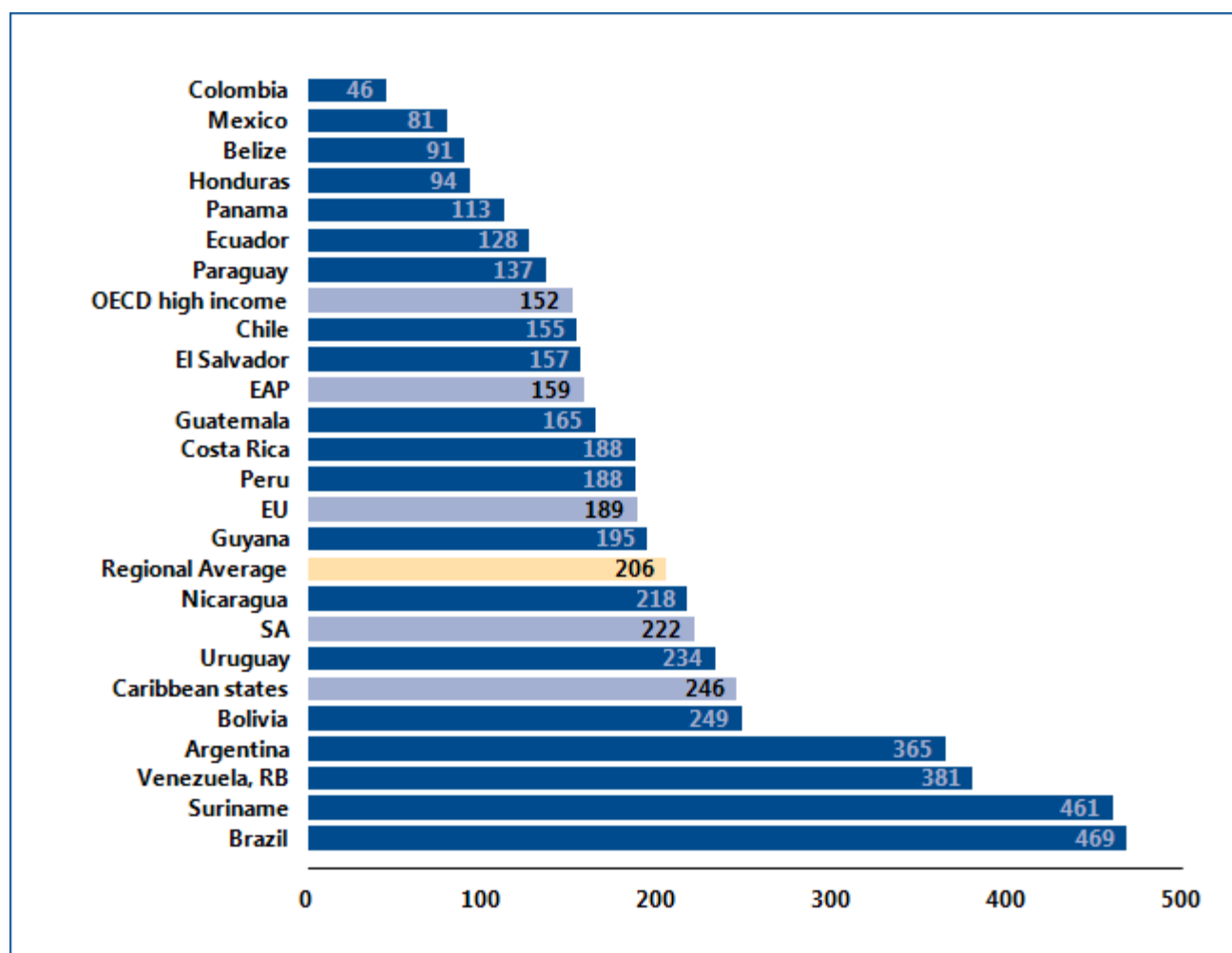
Figure 3.2 What it takes to comply with formalities to build a warehouse in economies in Latin America

Procedures (number)



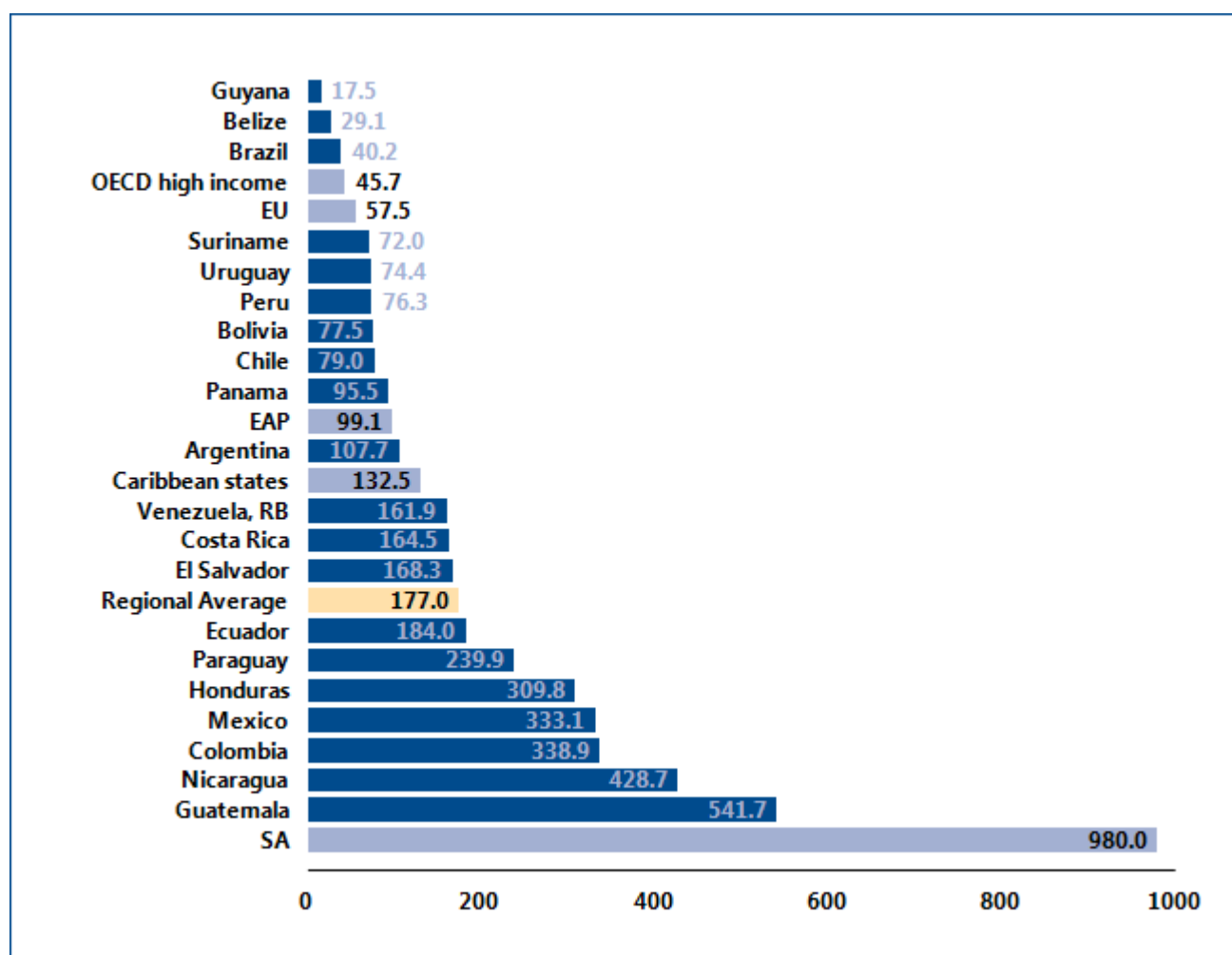
DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Time (days)



DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Cost (% of income per capita)



* Indicates a "no practice" mark. See the data notes for details.

Source: Doing Business database.

DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

What are the changes over time?

Smart regulation ensures that standards are met while making compliance easy and accessible to all. Coherent and transparent rules, efficient processes and adequate allocation of resources are especially important in sectors where safety is at stake. Construction is one of them. In an effort to ensure

building safety while keeping compliance costs reasonable, governments around the world have worked on consolidating permitting requirements. What construction permitting reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Latin America (table 3.1)?

Table 3.1 How have economies in Latin America made dealing with construction permits easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2012	<i>Mexico</i>	Mexico made dealing with construction permits faster by consolidating internal administrative procedures.
DB2012	<i>Paraguay</i>	Paraguay made dealing with construction permits easier by implementing a risk-based approval system and a single window for obtaining construction permits.
DB2011	<i>Colombia</i>	Colombia eased construction permitting by improving the electronic verification of prebuilding certificates.
DB2011	<i>Mexico</i>	Mexico improved construction permitting by merging and streamlining procedures related to zoning and utilities.
DB2011	<i>Paraguay</i>	Paraguay made dealing with construction permits easier by creating a new administrative structure and a better tracking system in the municipality of Asunción.
DB2011	<i>Peru</i>	Peru streamlined construction permitting by implementing administrative reforms.
DB2010	<i>Colombia</i>	The government eased the construction permit process with a new construction decree that categorizes building projects based on risk and allows electronic verification for certain documents.
DB2010	<i>Guatemala</i>	The construction permit process was eased with a new land management plan that simplified approvals based on risk assessments, while mixed zoning regimes made the approval process much faster.

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2010	<i>Honduras</i>	The construction permit process was eased through various administrative reforms that shortened the process by 19 days.
DB2010	<i>Panama</i>	The construction permit process was eased by eliminating and simplifying some procedures.
DB2009	<i>Colombia</i>	A silence-is-consent principle for building permits is now applied, reducing the total time for dealing with construction permits. A new unified application form was introduced.
DB2008	<i>Guatemala</i>	The decision processes for construction were expedited, reducing the time.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2005), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

GETTING ELECTRICITY

Access to reliable and affordable electricity is vital for businesses. To counter weak electricity supply, many firms in developing economies have to rely on self-supply, often at a prohibitively high cost. Whether electricity is reliably available or not, the first step for a customer is always to gain access by obtaining a connection.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business records all procedures required for a local business to obtain a permanent electricity connection and supply for a standardized warehouse, as well as the time and cost to complete them. These procedures include applications and contracts with electricity utilities, clearances from other agencies and the external and final connection works. The ranking on the ease of getting electricity is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators: procedures, time and cost. To make the data comparable across economies, several assumptions are used.

The warehouse:

- Is located in the economy's largest business city, in an area where other warehouses are located.
- Is not in a special economic zone where the connection would be eligible for subsidization or faster service.
- Has road access. The connection works involve the crossing of a road or roads but are carried out on public land.
- Is a new construction being connected to electricity for the first time.
- Has 2 stories, both above ground, with a total surface of about 1,300.6 square meters (14,000 square feet), and is built on a plot of 929 square meters (10,000 square feet).

The electricity connection:

- Is a 3-phase, 4-wire Y, 140-kilovolt-ampere (kVA) (subscribed capacity) connection.

WHAT THE GETTING ELECTRICITY INDICATORS MEASURE

Procedures to obtain an electricity connection (number)

Submitting all relevant documents and obtaining all necessary clearances and permits

Completing all required notifications and receiving all necessary inspections

Obtaining external installation works and possibly purchasing material for these works

Concluding any necessary supply contract and obtaining final supply

Time required to complete each procedure (calendar days)

Is at least 1 calendar day

Each procedure starts on a separate day

Does not include time spent gathering information

Reflects the time spent in practice, with little follow-up and no prior contact with officials

Cost required to complete each procedure (% of income per capita)

Official costs only, no bribes

Excludes value added tax

- Is 150 meters long.
- Is to either the low-voltage or the medium-voltage distribution network and either overhead or underground, whichever is more common in the economy and in the area where the warehouse is located. The length of any connection in the customer's private domain is negligible.
- Involves installing one electricity meter. The monthly electricity consumption will be 0.07 gigawatt-hour (GWh). The internal electrical wiring has been completed.

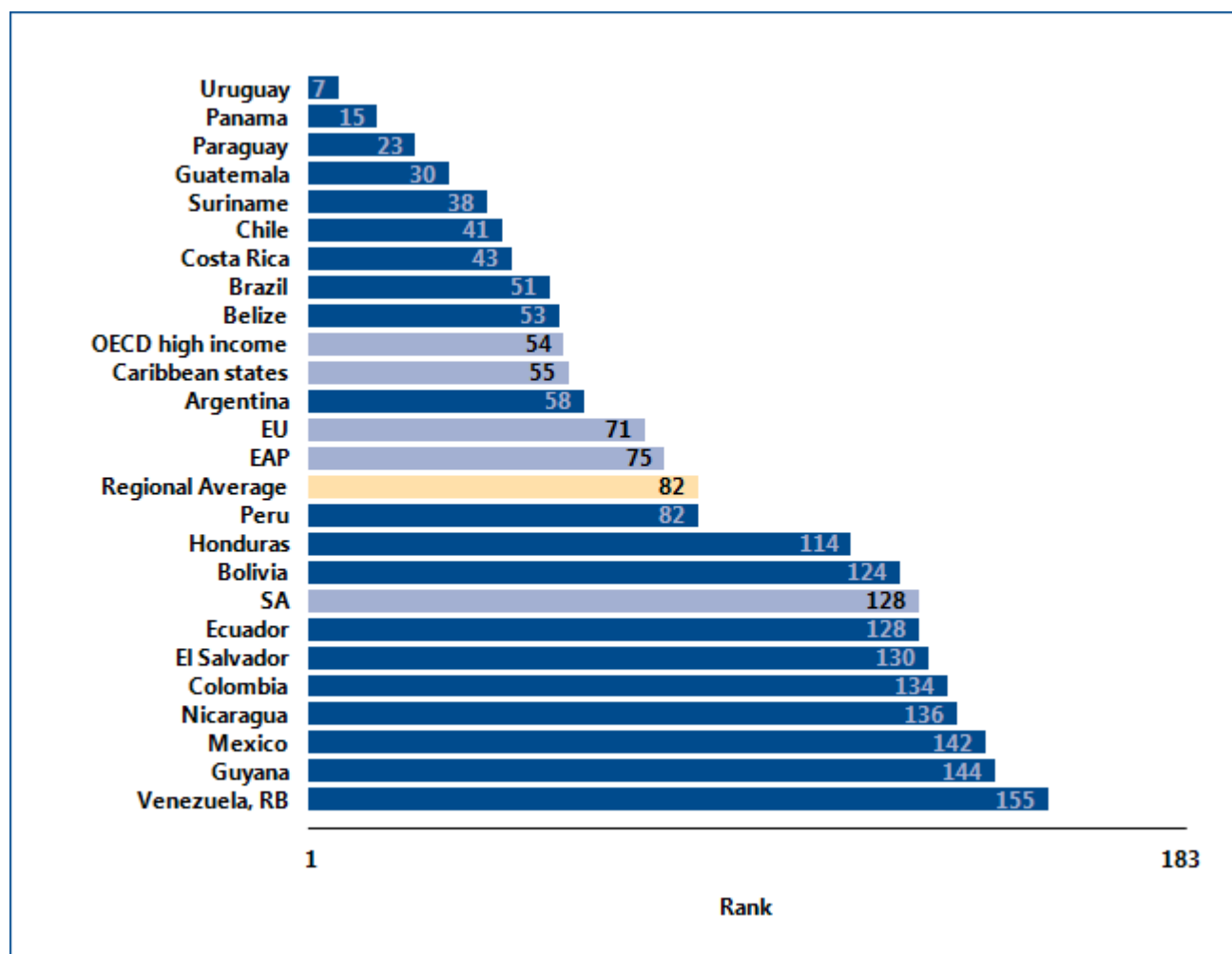
GETTING ELECTRICITY

Where do the region's economies stand today?

How easy is it for entrepreneurs in economies in Latin America to connect a warehouse to electricity? The global rankings of these economies on the ease of

getting electricity suggest an answer (figure 4.1). The average ranking of the region and comparator regions provide a useful benchmark.

Figure 4.1 How economies in Latin America rank on the ease of getting electricity



Source: *Doing Business* database.

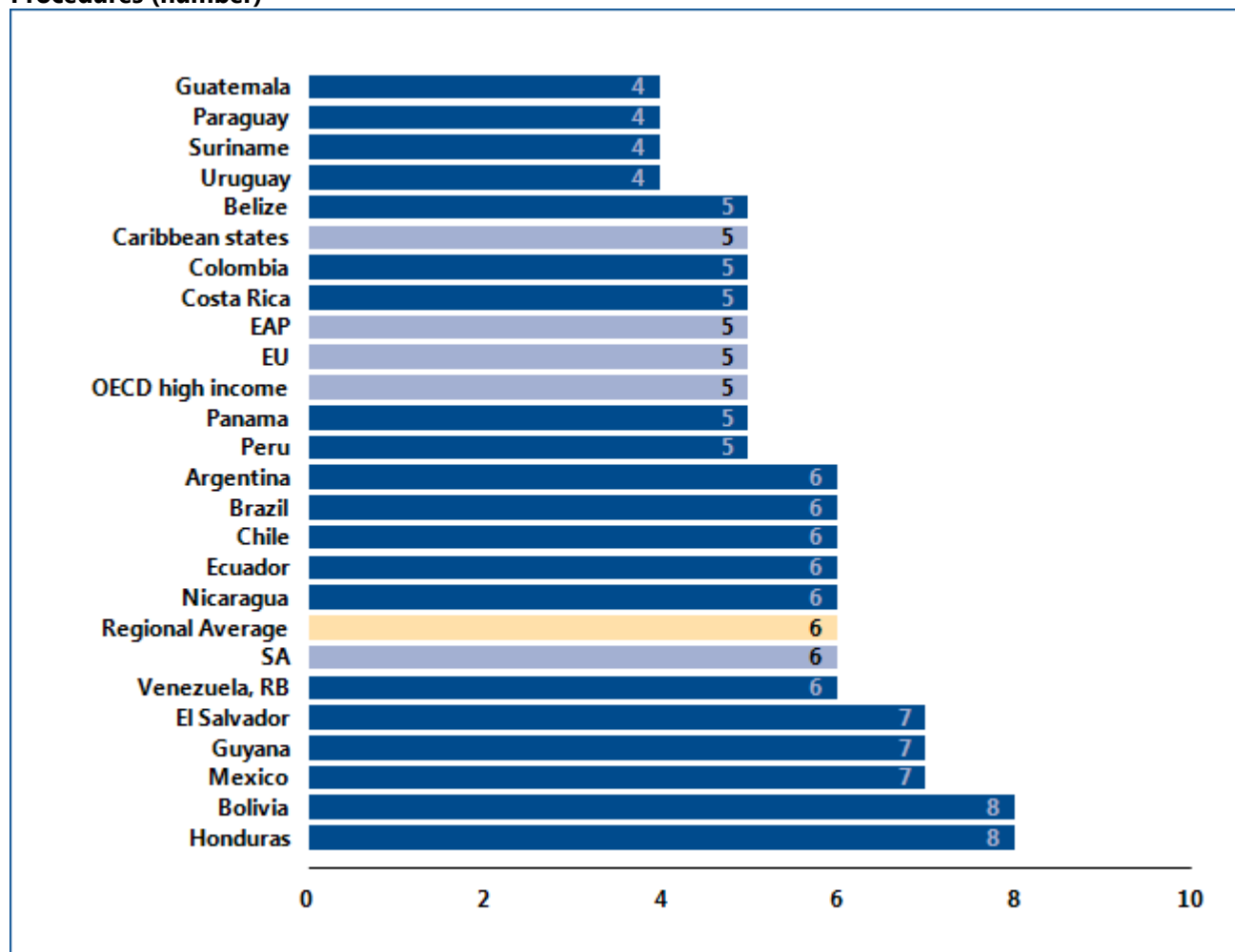
The indicators underlying the rankings may be more revealing. Data collected by *Doing Business* show what it takes to get a new electricity connection in each economy in the region: the number of procedures, the

time and the cost (figure 4.2). Comparing these indicators across the region and with averages both for the region and for comparator regions can provide useful insights.

GETTING ELECTRICITY

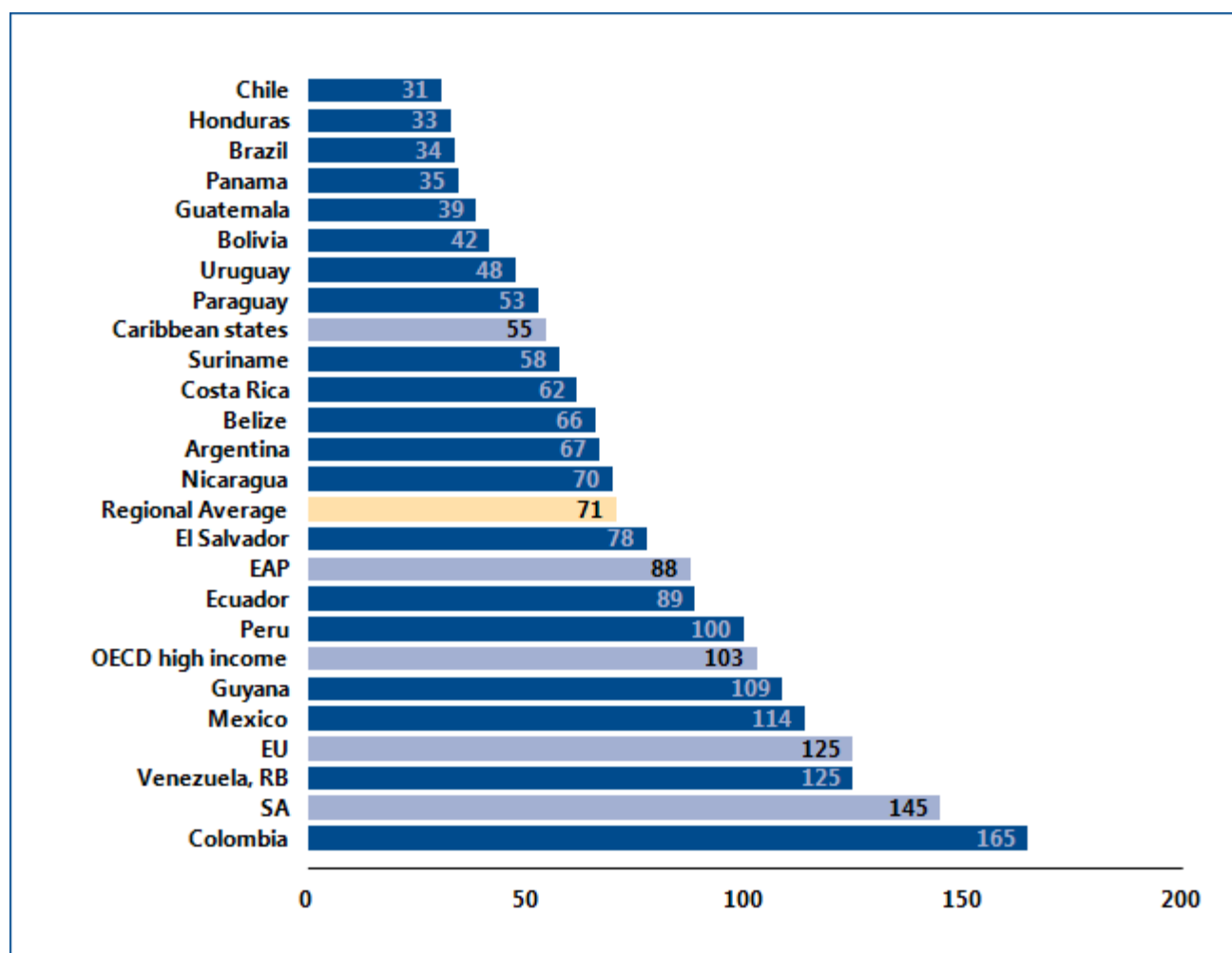
Figure 4.2 What it takes to get an electricity connection in economies in Latin America

Procedures (number)



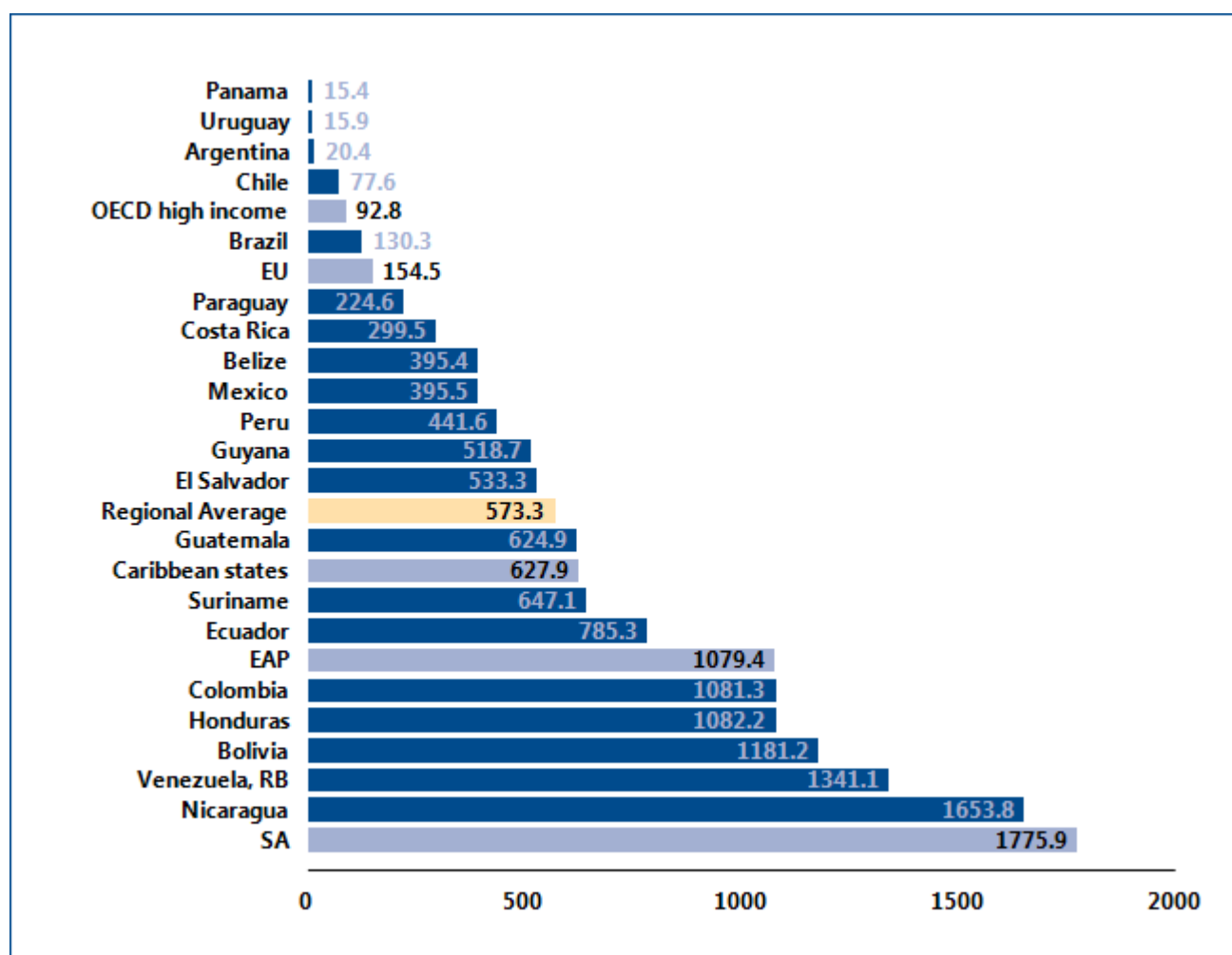
GETTING ELECTRICITY

Time (days)



GETTING ELECTRICITY

Cost (% of income per capita)



Source: Doing Business database.

REGISTERING PROPERTY

Ensuring formal property rights is fundamental. Effective administration of land is part of that. If formal property transfer is too costly or complicated, formal titles might go informal again. And where property is informal or poorly administered, it has little chance of being accepted as collateral for loans—limiting access to finance.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business records the full sequence of procedures necessary for a business to purchase property from another business and transfer the property title to the buyer's name. The transaction is considered complete when it is opposable to third parties and when the buyer can use the property, use it as collateral for a bank loan or resell it. The ranking on the ease of registering property is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators: procedures, time and cost.

To make the data comparable across economies, several assumptions about the parties to the transaction, the property and the procedures are used.

The parties (buyer and seller):

- Are limited liability companies, 100% domestically and privately owned.
- Are located in the periurban area of the economy's largest business city.
- Have 50 employees each, all of whom are nationals.
- Perform general commercial activities.

The property (fully owned by the seller):

- Has a value of 50 times income per capita. The sale price equals the value.
- Is registered in the land registry or cadastre, or both, and is free of title disputes.
- Is located in a periurban commercial zone, and no rezoning is required.

WHAT THE REGISTERING PROPERTY INDICATORS MEASURE

Procedures to legally transfer title on immovable property (number)

Preregistration (for example, checking for liens, notarizing sales agreement, paying property transfer taxes)

Registration in the economy's largest business city

Postregistration (for example, filing title with the municipality)

Time required to complete each procedure (calendar days)

Does not include time spent gathering information

Each procedure starts on a separate day

Procedure completed once final document is received

No prior contact with officials

Cost required to complete each procedure (% of property value)

Official costs only, no bribes

No value added or capital gains taxes included

- Has no mortgages attached and has been under the same ownership for the past 10 years.
- Consists of 557.4 square meters (6,000 square feet) of land and a 10-year-old, 2-story warehouse of 929 square meters (10,000 square feet). The warehouse is in good condition and complies with all safety standards, building codes and legal requirements. The property will be transferred in its entirety.

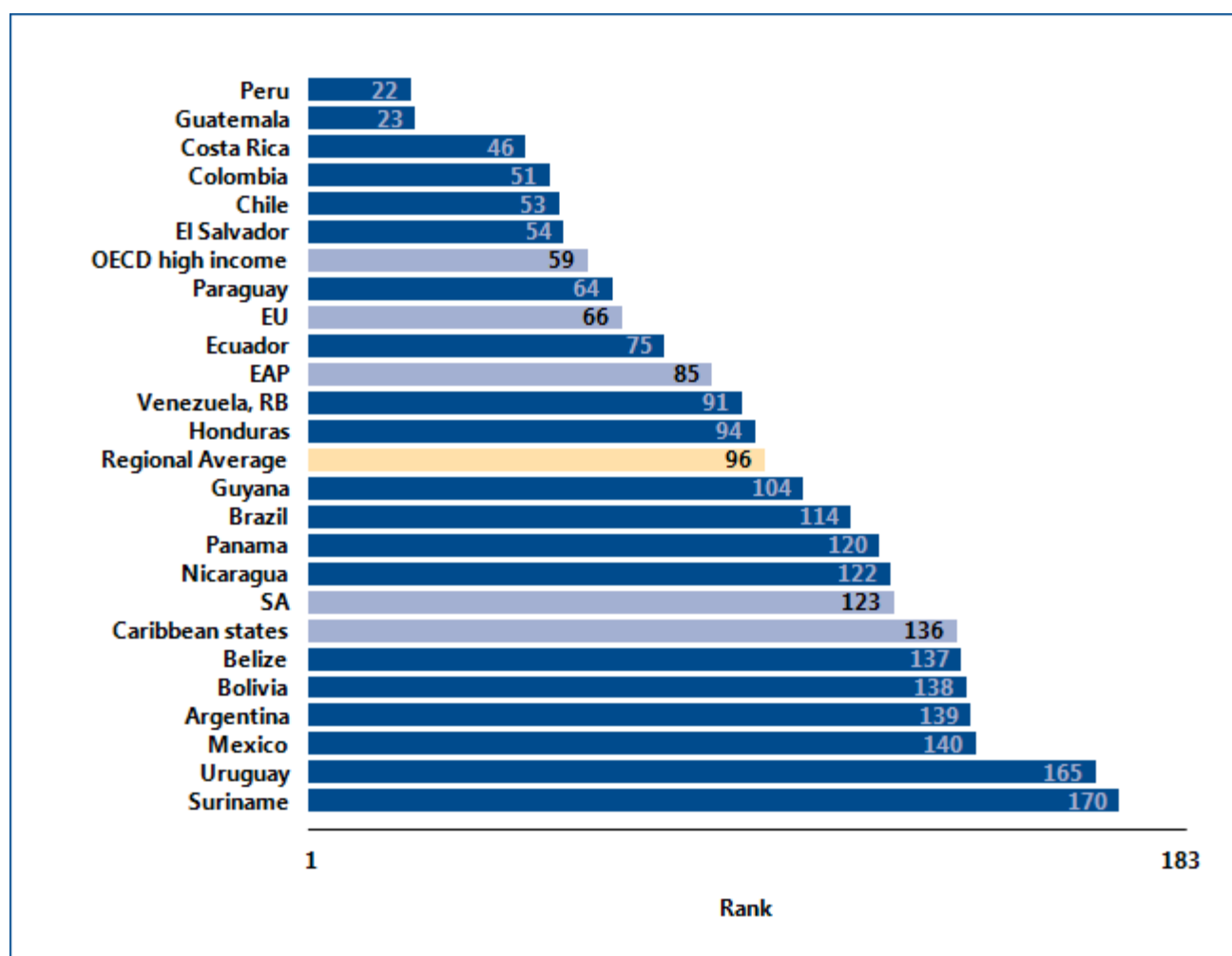
REGISTERING PROPERTY

Where do the region's economies stand today?

How easy is it for entrepreneurs in economies in Latin America to transfer property? The global rankings of these economies on the ease of registering property

suggest an answer (figure 5.1). The average ranking of the region and comparator regions provide a useful benchmark.

Figure 5.1 How economies in Latin America rank on the ease of registering property



Source: *Doing Business* database.

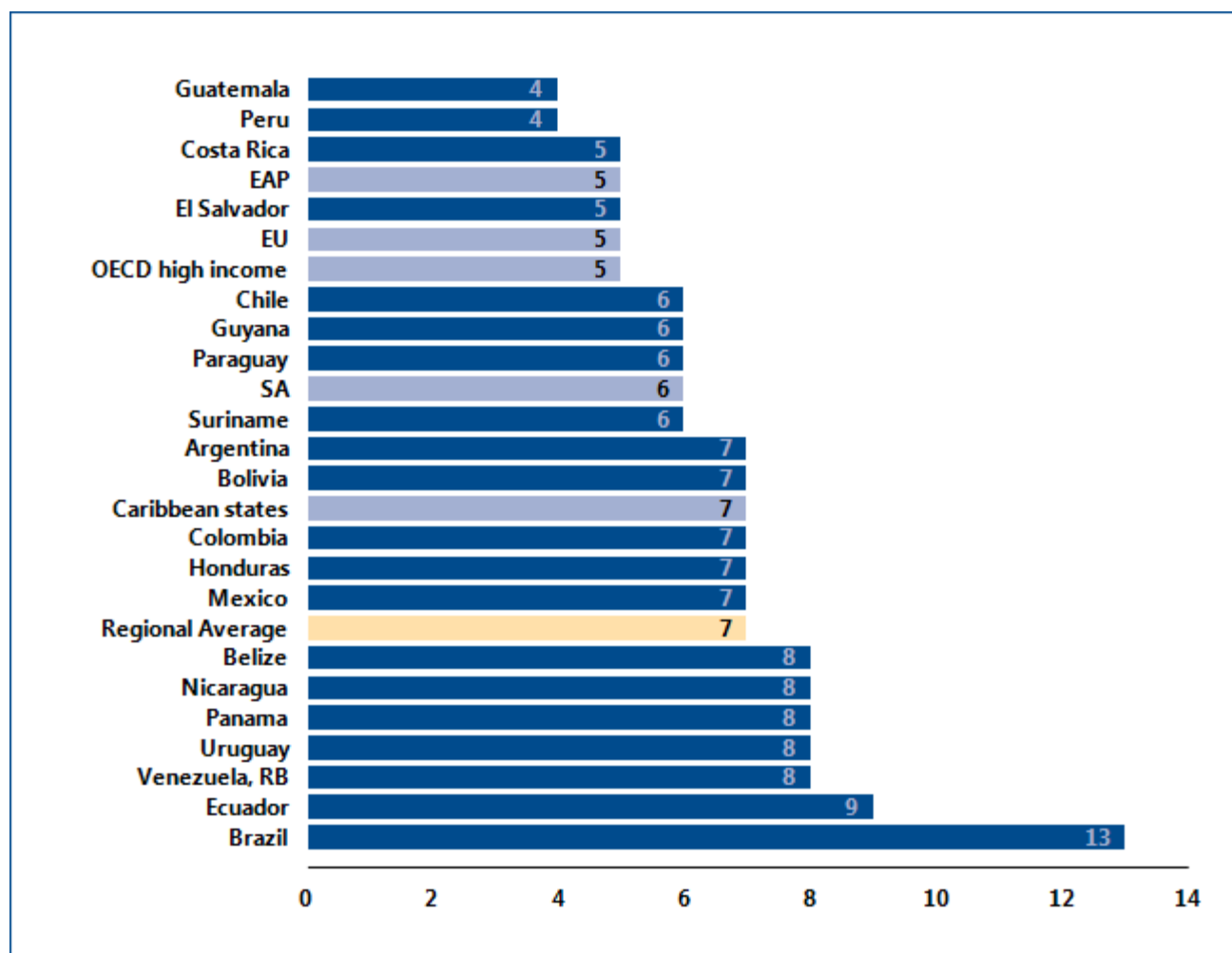
The indicators underlying the rankings may be more revealing. Data collected by *Doing Business* show what it takes to complete a property transfer in each economy in the region: the number of procedures, the

time and the cost (figure 5.2). Comparing these indicators across the region and with averages both for the region and for comparator regions can provide useful insights.

REGISTERING PROPERTY

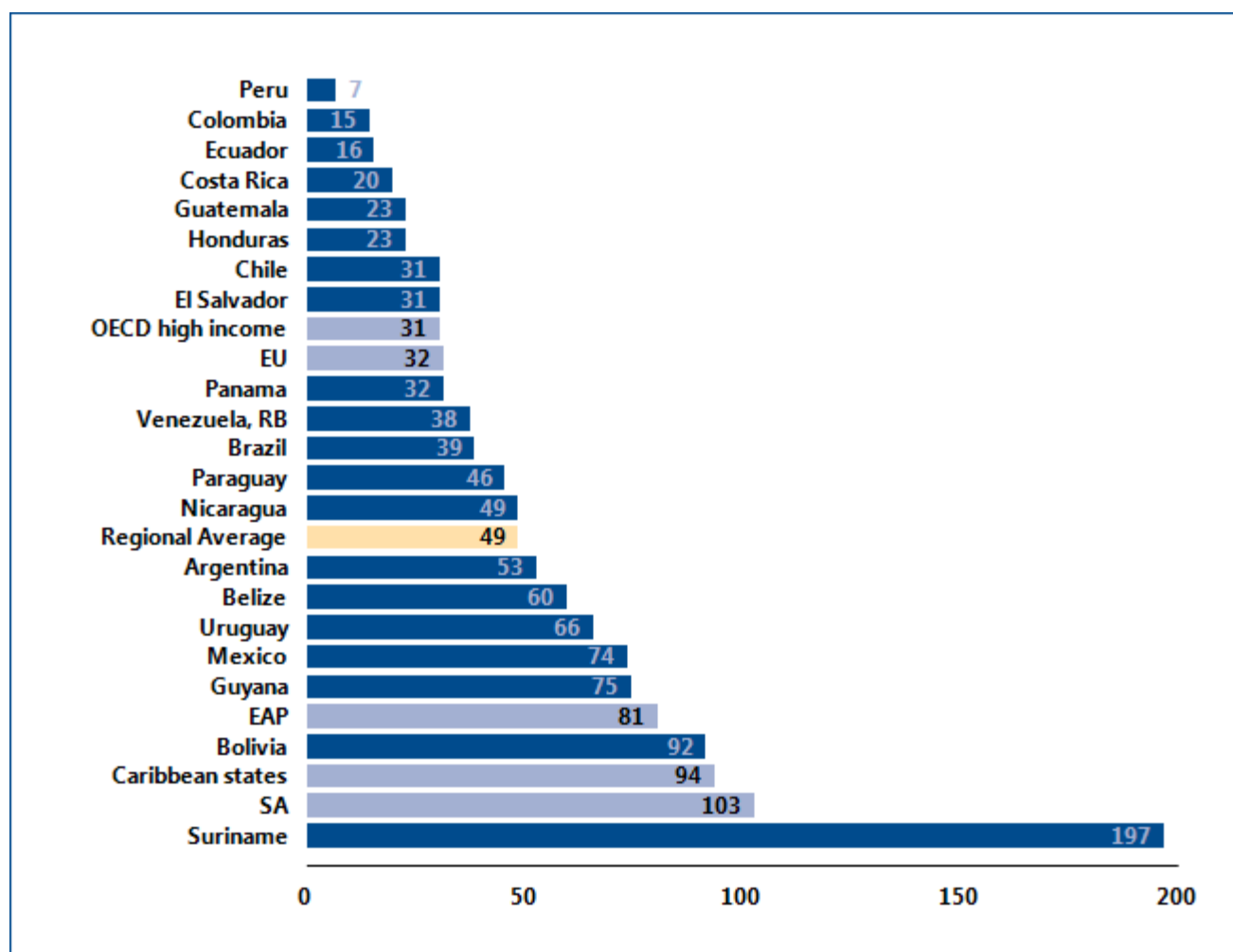
Figure 5.2 What it takes to register property in economies in Latin America

Procedures (number)



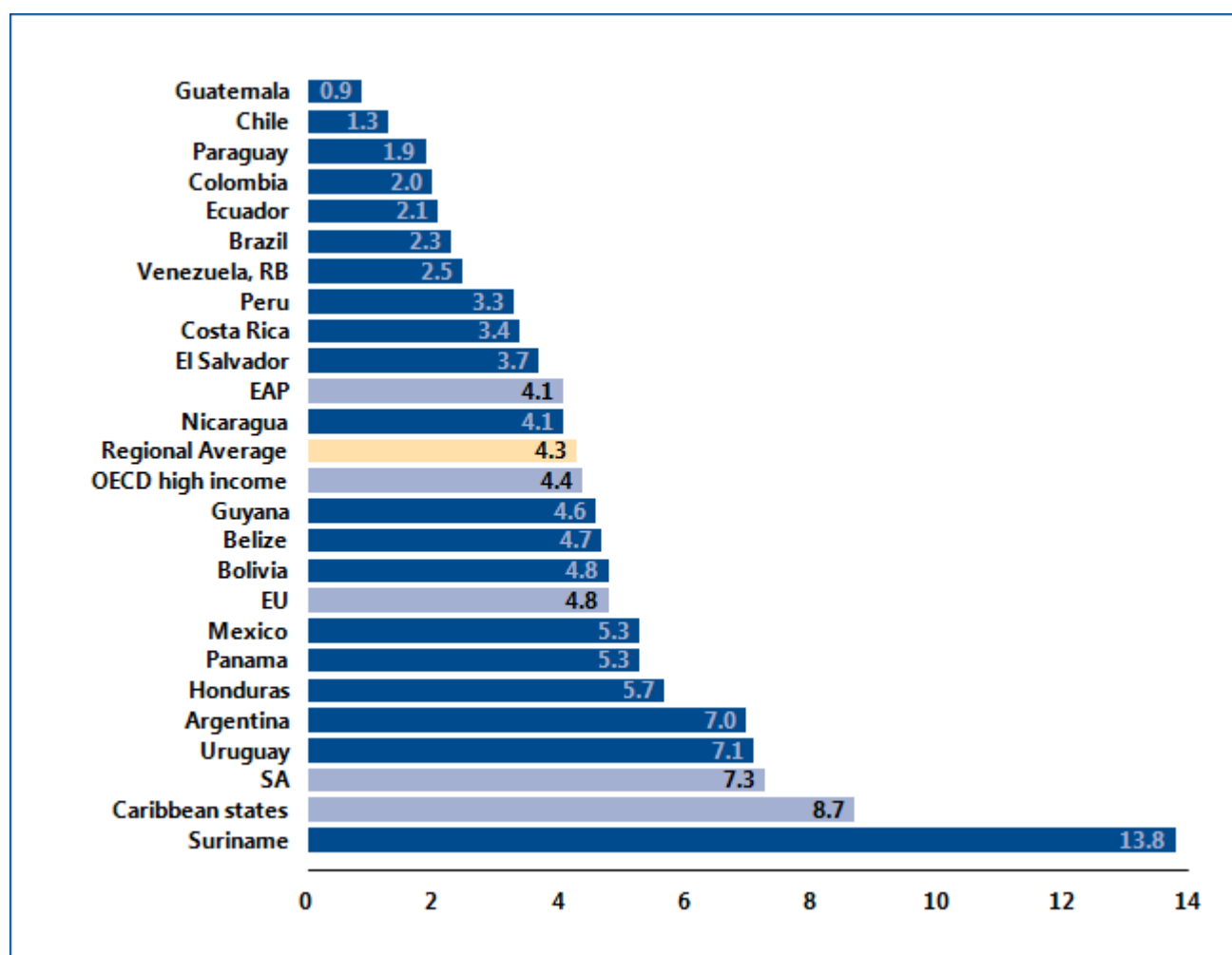
REGISTERING PROPERTY

Time (days)



REGISTERING PROPERTY

Cost (% of property value)



* Indicates a "no practice" mark. See the data notes for details.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

REGISTERING PROPERTY

What are the changes over time?

Economies worldwide have been making it easier for entrepreneurs to register and transfer property—such as by computerizing land registries, introducing time limits for procedures and setting low fixed fees. Many have cut the time required substantially—enabling

buyers to use or mortgage their property earlier. What property registration reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Latin America (table 5.1)?

Table 5.1 How have economies in Latin America made registering property easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2012	<i>Argentina</i>	Argentina made transferring property more difficult by adding a requirement that the notary obtain the tax agency's reference value for property before notarizing the sale deed.
DB2012	<i>Costa Rica</i>	Costa Rica made transferring property easier and quicker by making property certificates available online through a single website.
DB2012	<i>Guyana</i>	In Guyana transferring property became slower because of a lack of personnel at the deed registry.
DB2012	<i>Nicaragua</i>	Nicaragua made transferring property more efficient by introducing a fast-track procedure for registration.
DB2011	<i>Panama</i>	Panama made it more expensive to transfer property by requiring that an amount equal to 3% of the property value be paid upon registration.
DB2011	<i>Peru</i>	Peru introduced fast-track procedures at the land registry, cutting by half the time needed to register property.
DB2011	<i>Uruguay</i>	In Uruguay the Municipality of Montevideo made registering property easier by eliminating the need to obtain a mandatory waiver for preemption rights.
DB2010	<i>Argentina</i>	Registering property was made more difficult by requiring declarations for all transactions over AR\$300,000.

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2010	<i>Colombia</i>	Property registration was made easier by making it possible to obtain required certificates online and by making standard preliminary sale agreements available free of charge.
DB2010	<i>Guatemala</i>	Property registration was eased by centralizing more procedures at the cadastre, reorganizing operations, and making greater use of electronic services.
DB2010	<i>Peru</i>	Registering property has become easier with faster electronic processing and with an online connection between the tax agency and notaries that facilitates payment of municipal taxes.
DB2010	<i>Suriname</i>	New valuation requirements were implemented to ensure proper tax payments at the land registry, which increased the procedures, cost, and time required to register property.
DB2010	<i>Uruguay</i>	New online procedures make it easier to transfer property, and a new law assigned preemption rights to the municipality of Montevideo, adding a procedure to property transfers.
DB2008	<i>Guatemala</i>	By allowing registrars to submit electronic signatures, the time to register property has been reduced.
DB2008	<i>Honduras</i>	Registering property has become easier; the creation of time limits on certain procedures has sped up the process.
DB2008	<i>Mexico</i>	A new notary fee schedule was issued which reduced the costs of registering property.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2005), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

GETTING CREDIT

Two types of frameworks can facilitate access to credit and improve its allocation: credit information systems and the legal rights of borrowers and lenders in collateral and bankruptcy laws. Credit information systems enable lenders to view a potential borrower's financial history (positive or negative)—valuable information to consider when assessing risk. And they permit borrowers to establish a good credit history that will allow easier access to credit. Sound collateral laws enable businesses to use their assets, especially movable property, as security to generate capital—while strong creditors' rights have been associated with higher ratios of private sector credit to GDP.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business assesses the sharing of credit information and the legal rights of borrowers and lenders with respect to secured transactions through 2 sets of indicators. The depth of credit information index measures rules and practices affecting the coverage, scope and accessibility of credit information available through a public credit registry or a private credit bureau. The strength of legal rights index measures the degree to which collateral and bankruptcy laws protect the rights of borrowers and lenders and thus facilitate lending. *Doing Business* uses case scenarios to determine the scope of the secured transactions system, involving a secured borrower and a secured lender and examining legal restrictions on the use of movable collateral. These scenarios assume that the borrower:

- Is a private, limited liability company.
- Has its headquarters and only base of operations in the largest business city.

WHAT THE GETTING CREDIT INDICATORS MEASURE

Strength of legal rights index (0–10)

Protection of rights of borrowers and lenders through collateral laws

Protection of secured creditors' rights through bankruptcy laws

Depth of credit information index (0–6)

Scope and accessibility of credit information distributed by public credit registries and private credit bureaus

Public credit registry coverage (% of adults)

Number of individuals and firms listed in public credit registry as percentage of adult population

Private credit bureau coverage (% of adults)

Number of individuals and firms listed in largest private credit bureau as percentage of adult population

- Has 100 employees.
- Is 100% domestically owned, as is the lender.

The ranking on the ease of getting credit is based on the percentile rankings on its component indicators: the depth of credit information index (weighted at 37.5%) and the strength of legal rights index (weighted at 62.5%).

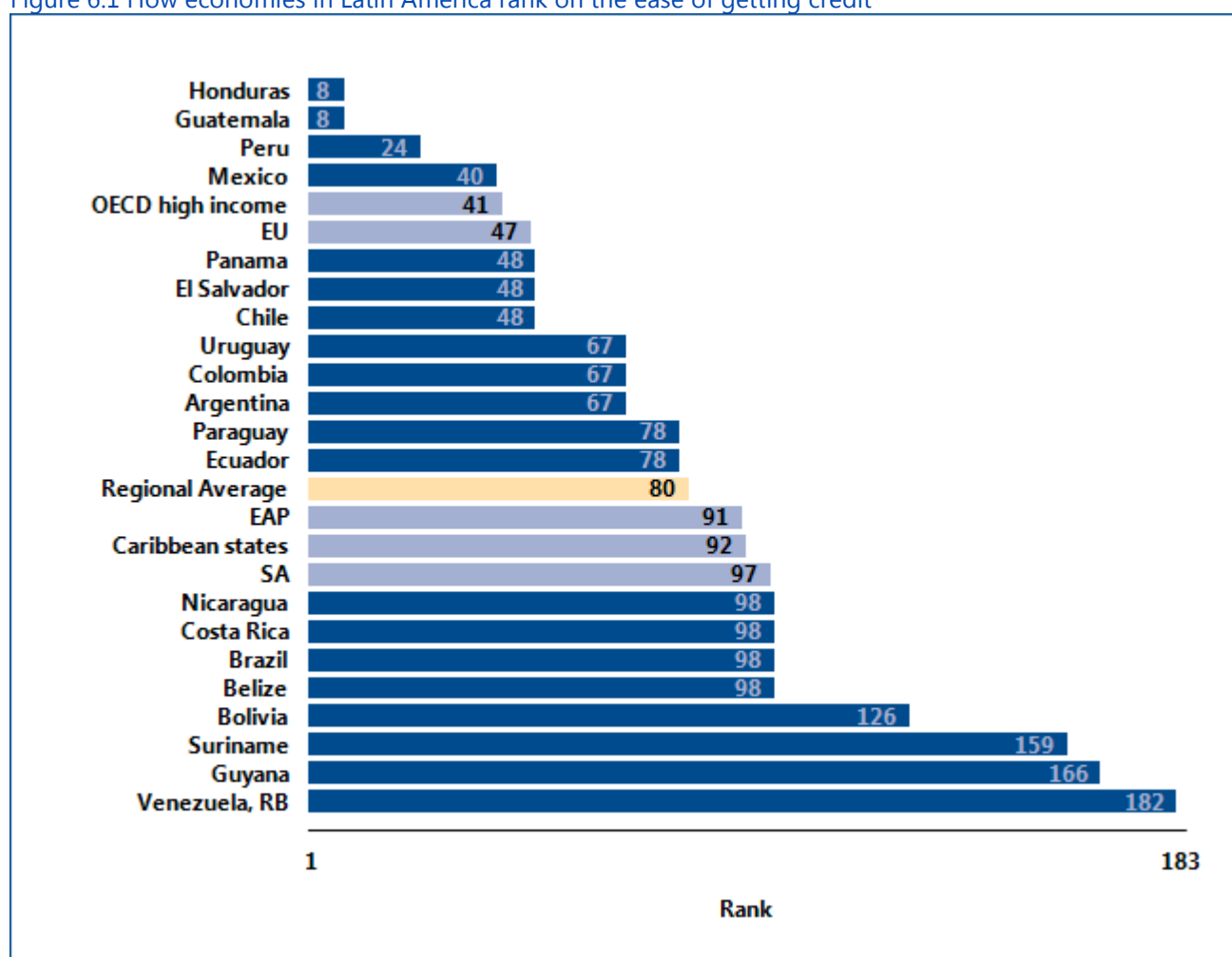
GETTING CREDIT

Where do the region's economies stand today?

How well do the credit information systems and collateral and bankruptcy laws in economies in Latin America facilitate access to credit? The global rankings of these economies on the ease of getting credit

suggest an answer (figure 6.1). The average ranking of the region and comparator regions provide a useful benchmark.

Figure 6.1 How economies in Latin America rank on the ease of getting credit



Source: Doing Business database.

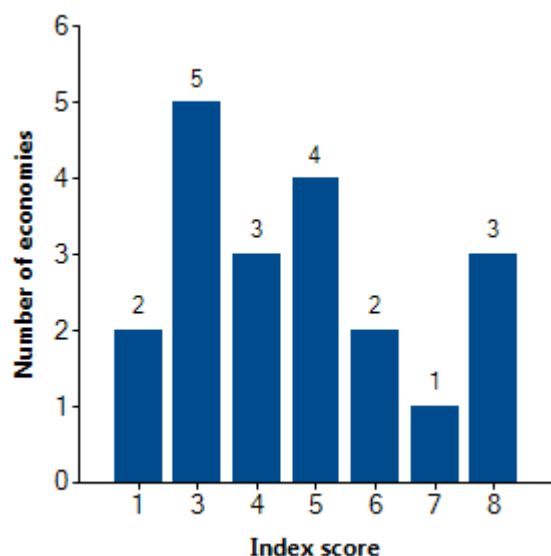
GETTING CREDIT

Another way to assess how well regulations and institutions support lending and borrowing in the region is to look at the distribution of its economies by their scores on the getting credit indicators. Figure 6.2 shows how many economies in the region received a

particular score on the strength of legal rights index. Figure 6.3 shows the same thing for the depth of credit information index. Higher scores indicate stronger legal rights for borrowers and lenders and more credit information.

Figure 6.2 How strong are legal rights for borrowers and lenders in economies in Latin America?

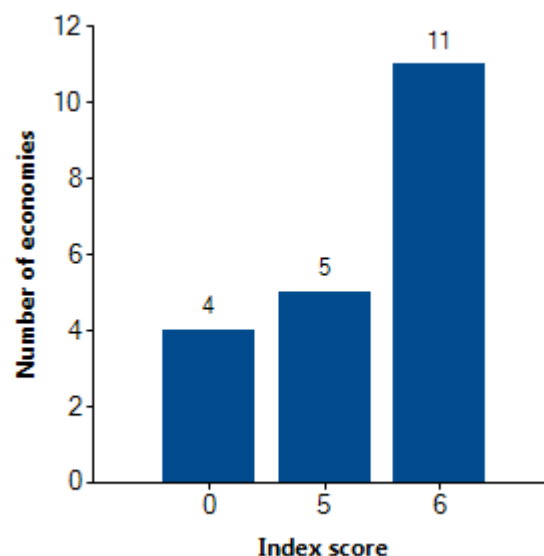
Number of economies in region with each score on strength of legal rights index (0–10)



Source: Doing Business database.

Figure 6.3 How extensive—and how accessible—is credit information in economies in Latin America?

Number of economies in region with each score on depth of credit information index (0–6)



Source: Doing Business database.

GETTING CREDIT

What are the changes over time?

When economies strengthen the legal rights of lenders and borrowers under collateral and bankruptcy laws, and increase the scope, coverage and accessibility of

credit information, they can increase entrepreneurs' access to credit. What credit reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Latin America (table 6.1)?

Table 6.1 How have economies in Latin America made getting credit easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2012	Brazil	Brazil improved its credit information system by allowing private credit bureaus to collect and share positive information.
DB2012	Chile	Chile strengthened its secured transactions system by implementing a unified collateral registry and a new legal framework for nonpossessory security interests.
DB2012	Honduras	Honduras strengthened its secured transactions system through a new decree establishing a centralized and computerized collateral registry and providing for out-of-court enforcement of collateral upon default.
DB2012	Mexico	Mexico strengthened its secured transactions system by implementing a centralized collateral registry with an electronic database that is accessible online.
DB2012	Paraguay	Paraguay improved its credit information system by establishing an online platform for financial institutions to exchange information with the public credit registry.
DB2012	Uruguay	Uruguay improved its credit information system by introducing a new online platform allowing access to credit reports for financial institutions, public utilities and borrowers.
DB2011	Guyana	Guyana enhanced access to credit by establishing a regulatory framework that allows the licensing of private credit bureaus and gives borrowers the right to inspect their data.
DB2010	Colombia	Access to credit improved thanks to a new credit information law that guarantees the right of borrowers to inspect their own data and new rules that make it mandatory for credit providers to consult and share information with credit bureaus.

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2010	<i>Guatemala</i>	The credit information system was strengthened with the adoption of a decree on access to public information that guarantees the right of borrowers to inspect their own data in any public institution. Access to credit and the regime for secured transactions were strengthened with a new collateral registry for movable assets that applies to all such assets and all types of creditors and debtors, and is searchable by debtor name.
DB2010	<i>Honduras</i>	A resolution was passed that enhances the operations of the public credit bureau; it classifies debtors into several groups and is designed to help banks manage risk.
DB2009	<i>Guatemala</i>	A new secured transactions law (Ley de Garantías Mobiliarias) was enacted, creating new forms of pledges over movable assets and a registry for the pledges. Under the new law, accounts receivable and inventory may be described in general terms when used as collateral and parties may agree to out-of-court enforcement of the security right at the time the security interest is created.
DB2008	<i>Honduras</i>	Access to credit was facilitated by allowing borrowers to access their data and obtain a free credit report once a year. In addition, parties to a security agreement can agree to enforce a security out of court by using a notary to take care of the out-of-court enforcement of collateral agreements.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2005), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

PROTECTING INVESTORS

Investor protections matter for the ability of companies to raise the capital they need to grow, innovate, diversify and compete. If the laws do not provide such protections, investors may be reluctant to invest unless they become the controlling shareholders. Strong regulations clearly define related-party transactions, promote clear and efficient disclosure requirements, require shareholder participation in major decisions of the company and set clear standards of accountability for company insiders.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business measures the strength of minority shareholder protections against directors' use of corporate assets for personal gain—or self-dealing. The indicators distinguish 3 dimensions of investor protections: transparency of related-party transactions (extent of disclosure index), liability for self-dealing (extent of director liability index) and shareholders' ability to sue officers and directors for misconduct (ease of shareholder suits index). The ranking on the strength of investor protection index is the simple average of the percentile rankings on these 3 indices. To make the data comparable across economies, a case study uses several assumptions about the business and the transaction.

The business (Buyer):

- Is a publicly traded corporation listed on the economy's most important stock exchange (or at least a large private company with multiple shareholders).
- Has a board of directors and a chief executive officer (CEO) who may legally act on behalf of Buyer where permitted, even if this is not specifically required by law.

The transaction involves the following details:

- Mr. James, a director and the majority shareholder of the company, proposes that the company purchase used trucks from another company he owns.

WHAT THE PROTECTING INVESTORS INDICATORS MEASURE

Extent of disclosure index (0–10)

Who can approve related-party transactions
Disclosure requirements in case of related-party transactions

Extent of director liability index (0–10)

Ability of shareholders to hold interested parties and members of the approving body liable in case of related-party transactions

Available legal remedies (damages, repayment of profits, fines, imprisonment and rescission of the transaction)

Ability of shareholders to sue directly or derivatively

Ease of shareholder suits index (0–10)

Documents and information available during trial

Access to internal corporate documents (directly or through a government inspector)

Strength of investor protection index (0–10)

Simple average of the extent of disclosure, extent of director liability and ease of shareholder suits indices

- The price is higher than the going price for used trucks, but the transaction goes forward.
- All required approvals are obtained, and all required disclosures made, though the transaction is prejudicial to Buyer.
- Shareholders sue the interested parties and the members of the board of directors.

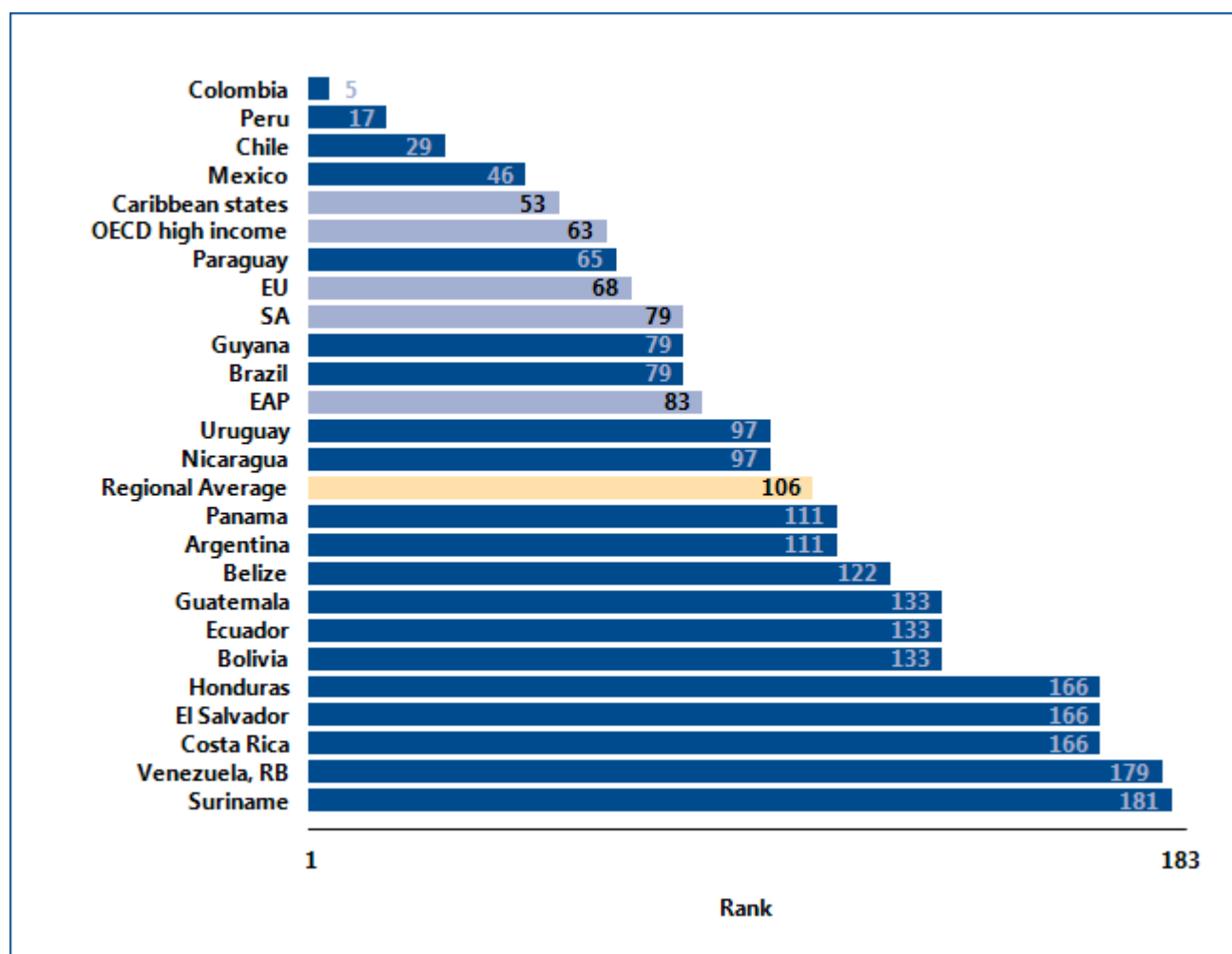
PROTECTING INVESTORS

Where do the region's economies stand today?

How strong are investor protections in economies in Latin America? The global rankings of these economies on the strength of investor protection index suggest an answer (figure 7.1). While the indicator does not

measure all aspects related to the protection of minority investors, a higher ranking does indicate that an economy's regulations offer stronger investor protections against self-dealing in the areas measured.

Figure 7.1 How economies in Latin America rank on the strength of investor protection index



Source: Doing Business database.

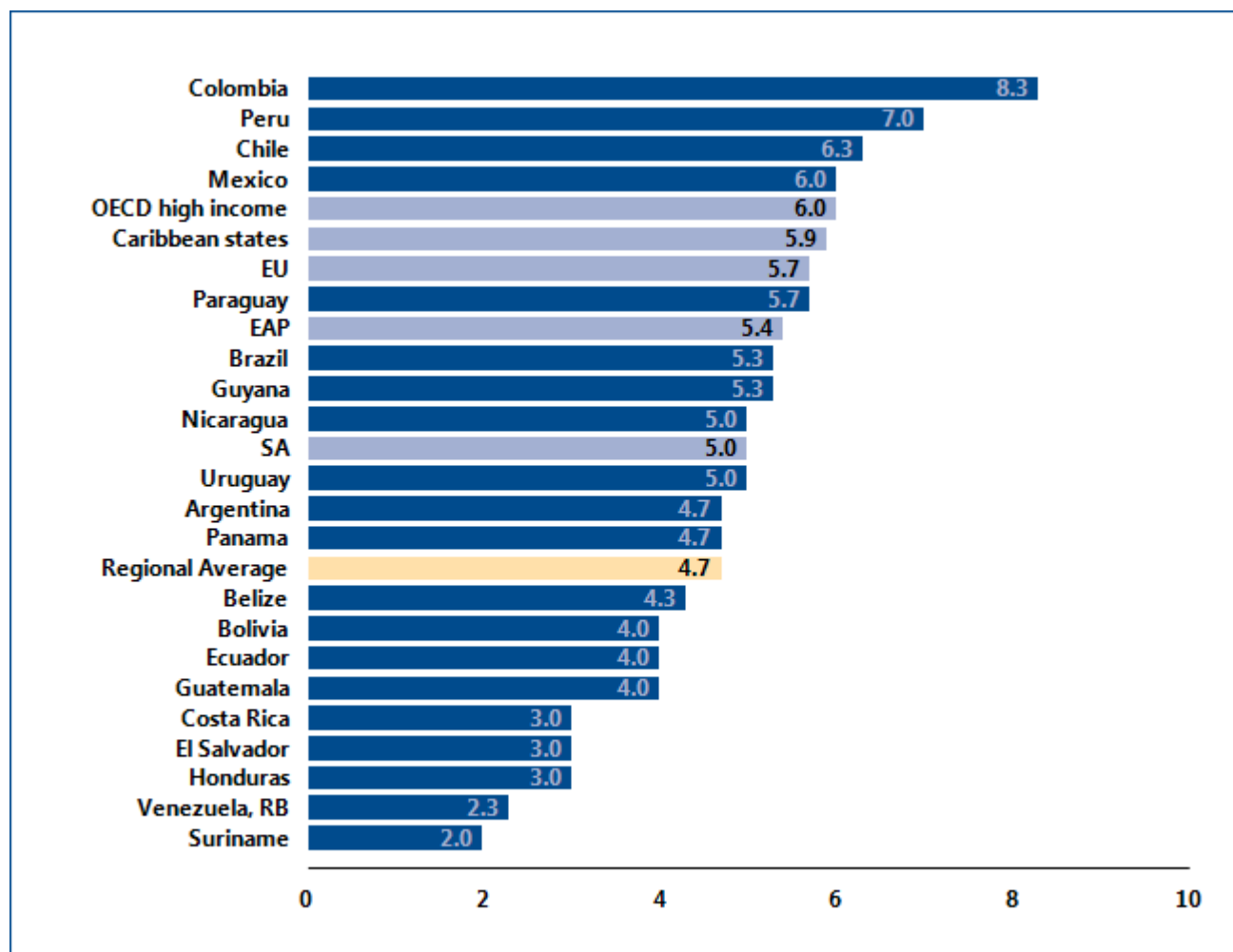
PROTECTING INVESTORS

But the overall ranking on the strength of investor protection index tells only part of the story. Economies may offer strong protections in some areas but not others. So the scores recorded for economies in Latin America on the extent of disclosure, extent of director liability and ease of shareholder suits indices may also

be revealing (figure 7.2). Higher scores indicate stronger investor protections. Comparing the scores across the region and with averages both for the region and for comparator regions can provide useful insights.

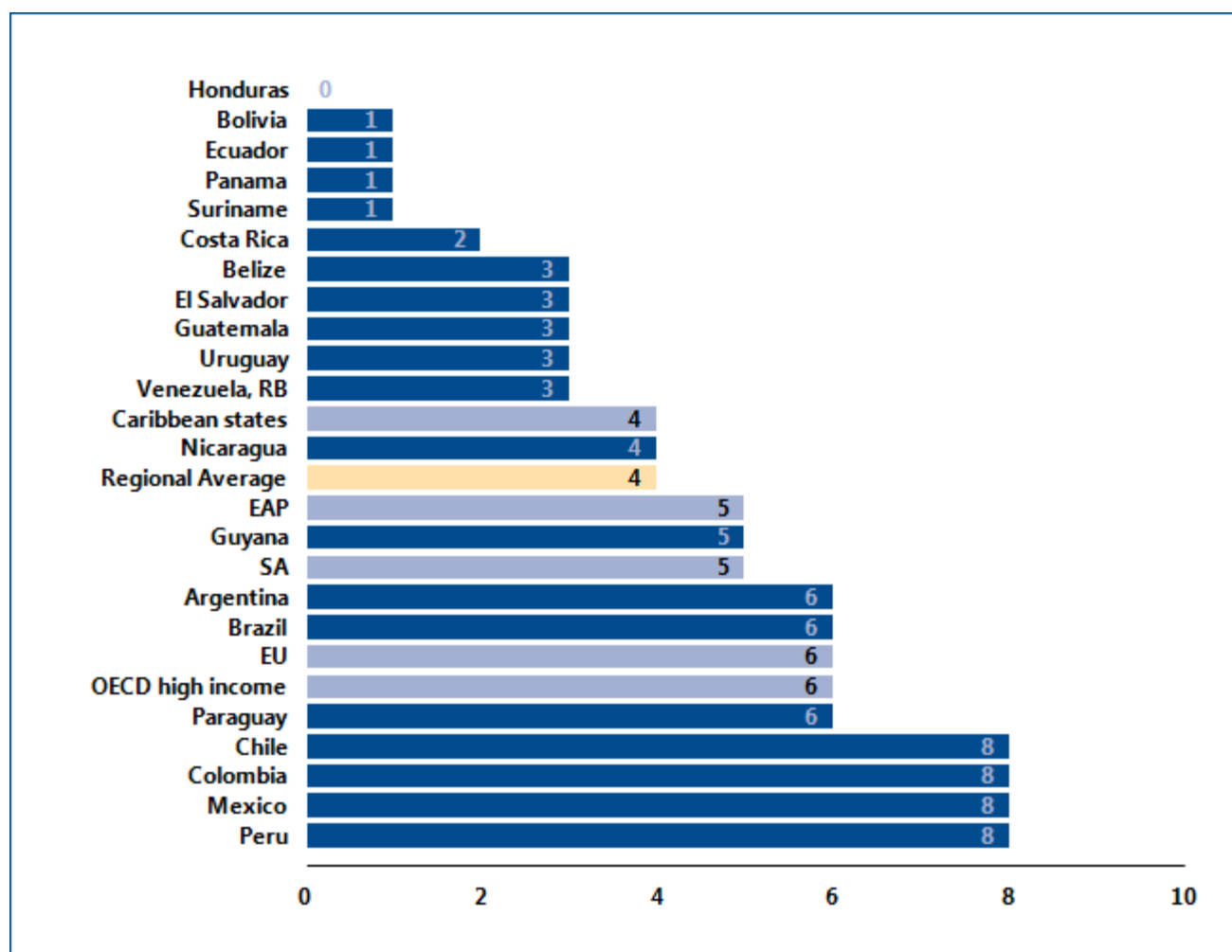
Figure 7.2 How strong are investor protections in economies in Latin America?

Strength of investor protection index (0–10)



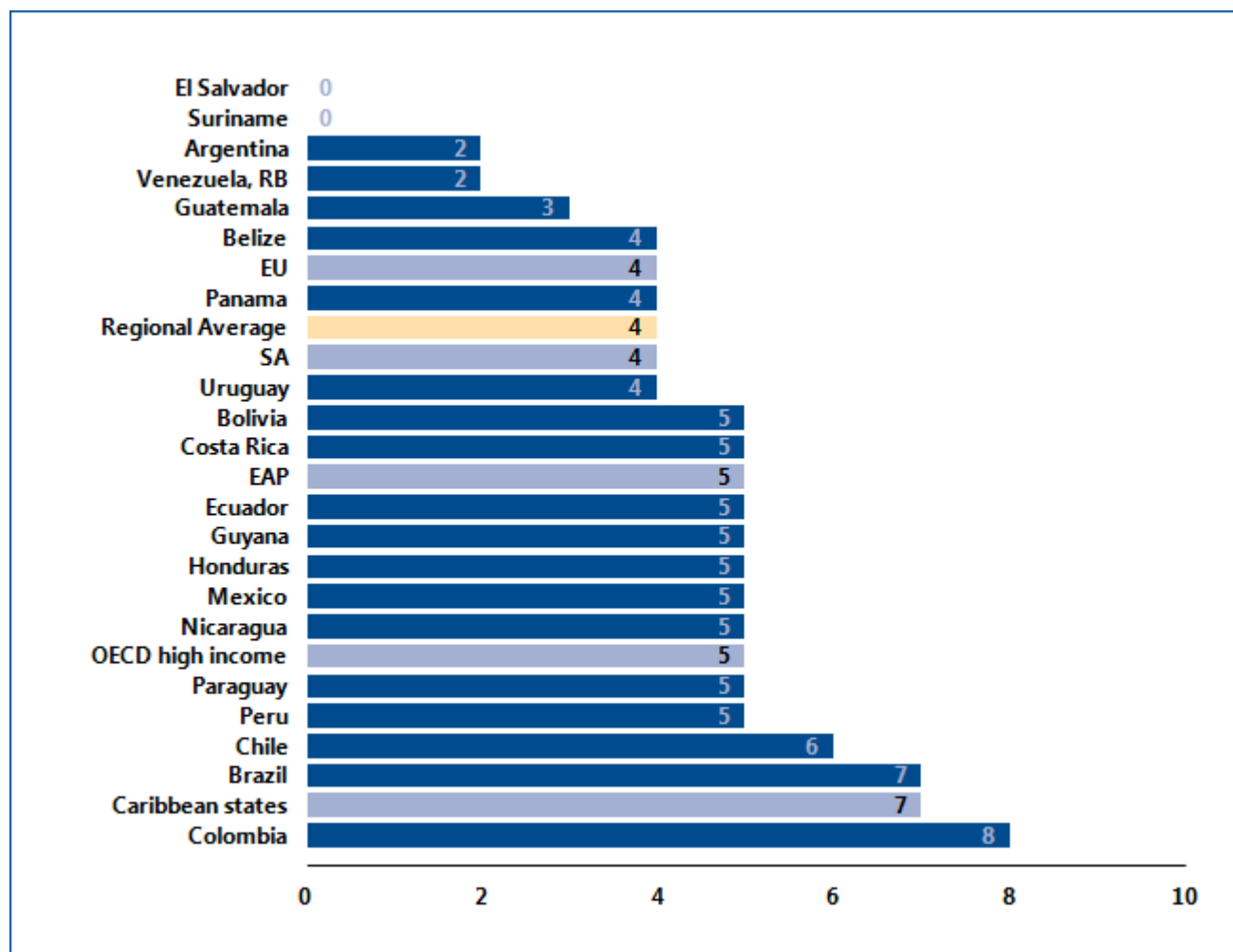
PROTECTING INVESTORS

Extent of disclosure index (0–10)



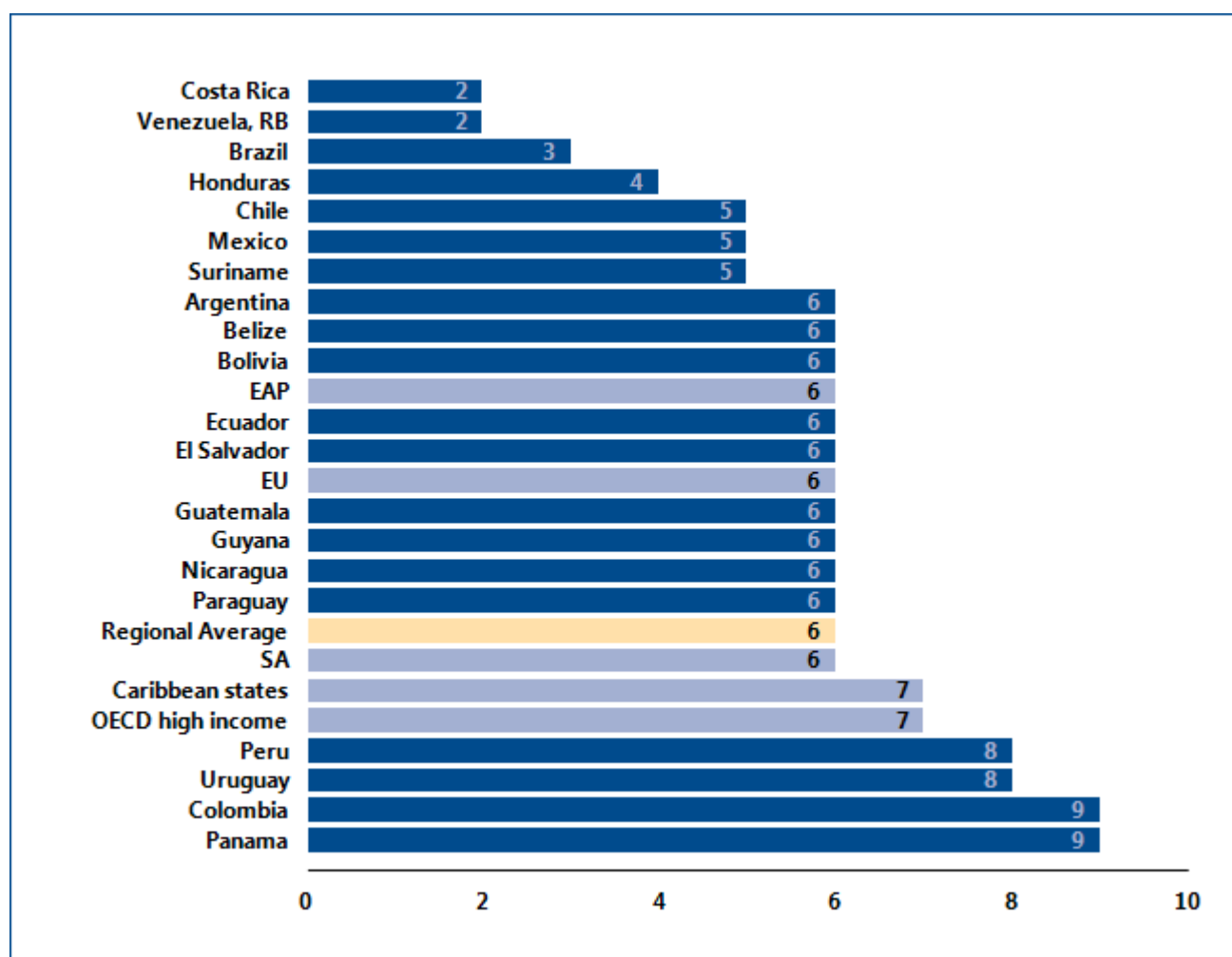
PROTECTING INVESTORS

Extent of director liability index (0–10)



PROTECTING INVESTORS

Ease of shareholder suits index (0–10)



Source: Doing Business database.

PROTECTING INVESTORS

What are the changes over time?

Economies with the strongest protections of minority investors from self-dealing require more disclosure and define clear duties for directors. They also have well-functioning courts and up-to-date procedural rules that give minority investors the means to prove their case and obtain a judgment within a reasonable

time. So reforms to strengthen investor protections may move ahead on different fronts—such as through new or amended company laws or revisions to court procedures. What investor protection reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Latin America (table 7.1)?

Table 7.1 How have economies in Latin America strengthened investor protections—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2012	<i>El Salvador</i>	El Salvador strengthened investor protections by allowing greater access to corporate information during the trial.
DB2012	<i>Peru</i>	Peru strengthened investor protections through a new law allowing minority shareholders to request access to nonconfidential corporate documents.
DB2011	<i>Chile</i>	An amendment to Chile's securities law strengthened investor protections by requiring greater corporate disclosure and regulating the approval of transactions between interested parties.
DB2010	<i>Colombia</i>	An amendment to the Company Law strengthened investor protections by making it easier to sue directors in cases of prejudicial transactions between interested parties.
DB2008	<i>Colombia</i>	Investor protection was strengthened by a decree requiring increasing disclosure requirements for related-party transactions.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2005), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

PAYING TAXES

Taxes are essential. They fund the public amenities, infrastructure and services that are crucial for a properly functioning economy. But the level of tax rates needs to be carefully chosen—and needless complexity in tax rules avoided. According to *Doing Business* data, in economies where it is more difficult and costly to pay taxes, larger shares of economic activity end up in the informal sector—where businesses pay no taxes at all.

What do the indicators cover?

Using a case scenario, *Doing Business* measures the taxes and mandatory contributions that a medium-size company must pay in a given year as well as the administrative burden of paying taxes and contributions. This case scenario uses a set of financial statements and assumptions about transactions made over the year. Information is also compiled on the frequency of filing and payments as well as time taken to comply with tax laws. The ranking on the ease of paying taxes is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators: number of annual payments, time and total tax rate, with a threshold being applied to the total tax rate.² To make the data comparable across economies, several assumptions about the business and the taxes and contributions are used.

- TaxpayerCo is a medium-size business that started operations on January 1, 2009.
- The business starts from the same financial position in each economy. All the taxes and mandatory contributions paid during the second year of operation are recorded.
- Taxes and mandatory contributions are measured at all levels of government.

WHAT THE PAYING TAXES INDICATORS MEASURE

Tax payments for a manufacturing company in 2010 (number per year adjusted for electronic or joint filing and payment)

Total number of taxes and contributions paid, including consumption taxes (value added tax, sales tax or goods and service tax)

Method and frequency of filing and payment

Time required to comply with 3 major taxes (hours per year)

Collecting information and computing the tax payable

Completing tax return forms, filing with proper agencies

Arranging payment or withholding

Preparing separate tax accounting books, if required

Total tax rate (% of profit before all taxes)

Profit or corporate income tax

Social contributions and labor taxes paid by the employer

Property and property transfer taxes

Dividend, capital gains and financial transactions taxes

Waste collection, vehicle, road and other taxes

- Taxes and mandatory contributions include corporate income tax, turnover tax and all labor taxes and contributions paid by the company.
- A range of standard deductions and exemptions are also recorded.

² The threshold is defined as the highest total tax rate among the top 30% of economies in the ranking on the total tax rate. It will be calculated and adjusted on a yearly basis. The threshold is not based on any underlying theory. Instead, it is intended to mitigate the effect of very low tax rates on the ranking on the ease of paying taxes.

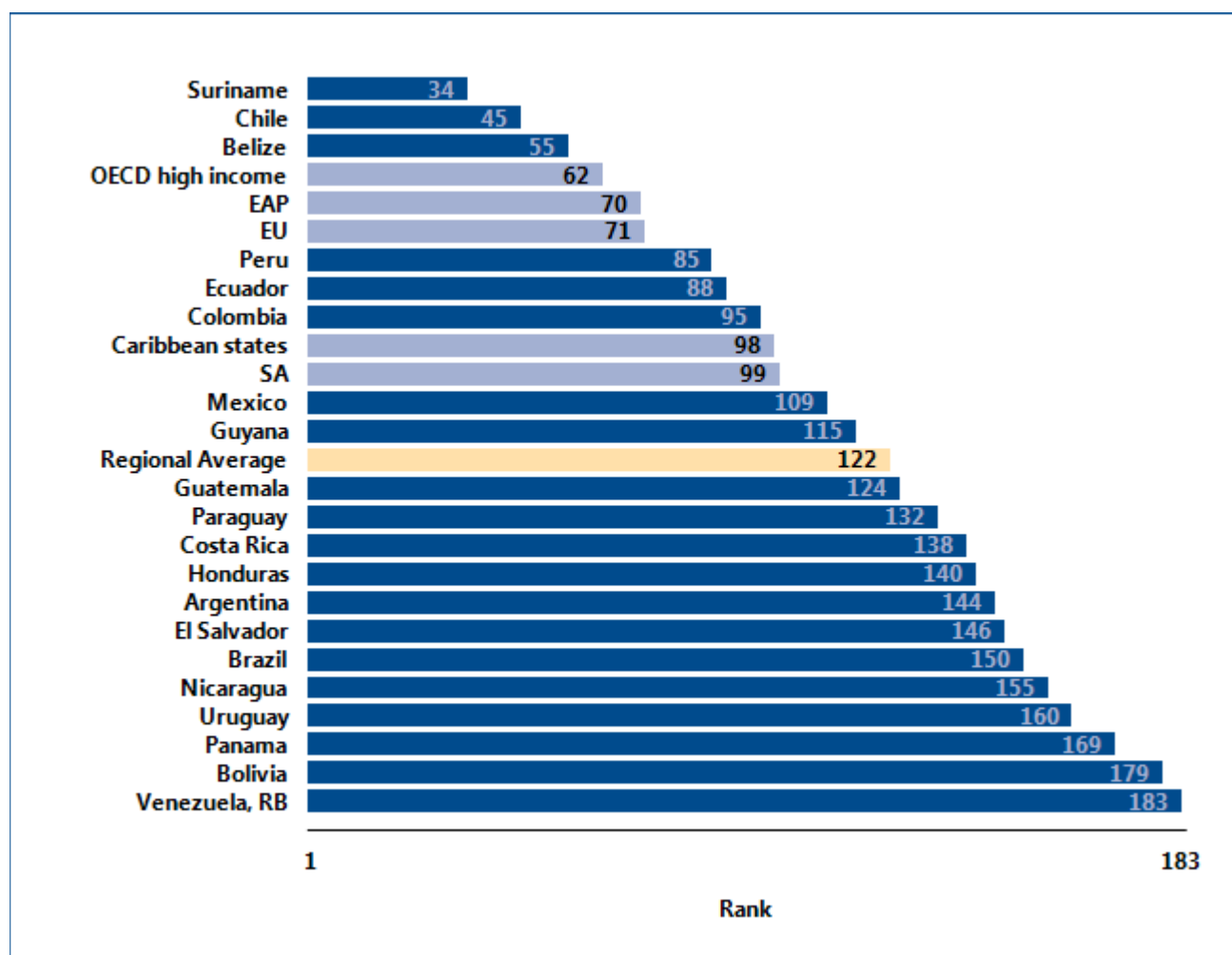
PAYING TAXES

Where do the region's economies stand today?

What is the administrative burden of complying with taxes in economies in Latin America—and how much do firms pay in taxes? The global rankings of these economies on the ease of paying taxes offer useful

information for assessing the tax compliance burden for businesses (figure 8.1). The average ranking of the region and comparator regions provide a useful benchmark.

Figure 8.1 How economies in Latin America rank on the ease of paying taxes



Note: DB2012 rankings reflect changes to the methodology. For all economies with a total tax rate below the threshold of 32.5% applied in DB2012, the total tax rate is set at 32.5% for the purpose of calculating the ranking on the ease of paying taxes.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

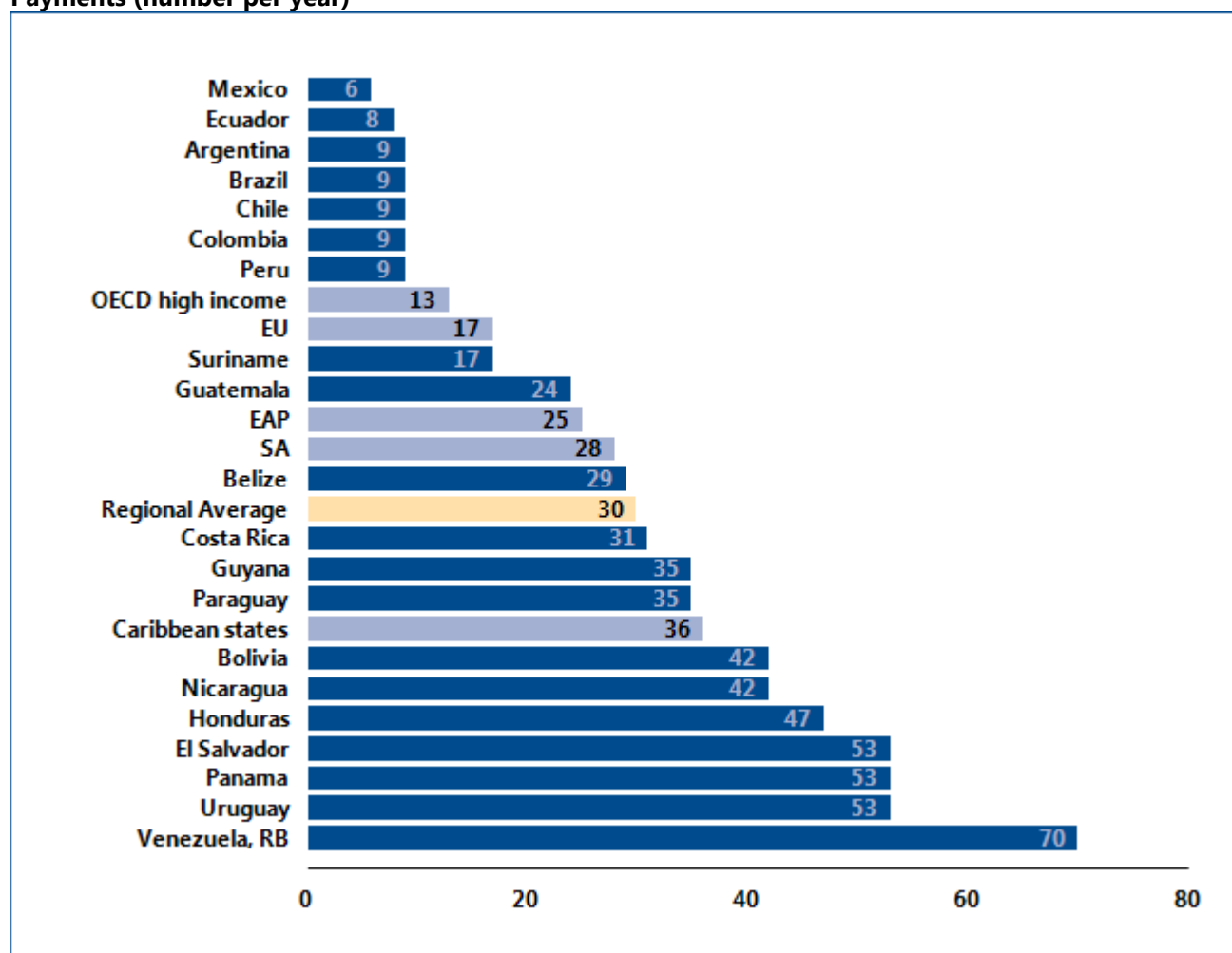
PAYING TAXES

The indicators underlying the rankings may be more revealing. Data collected by *Doing Business* show what it takes to comply with tax regulations in each economy in the region—the number of payments per year and the time required to prepare and file taxes—

as well as the total tax rate (figure 8.2). Comparing these indicators across the region and with averages both for the region and for comparator regions can provide useful insights.

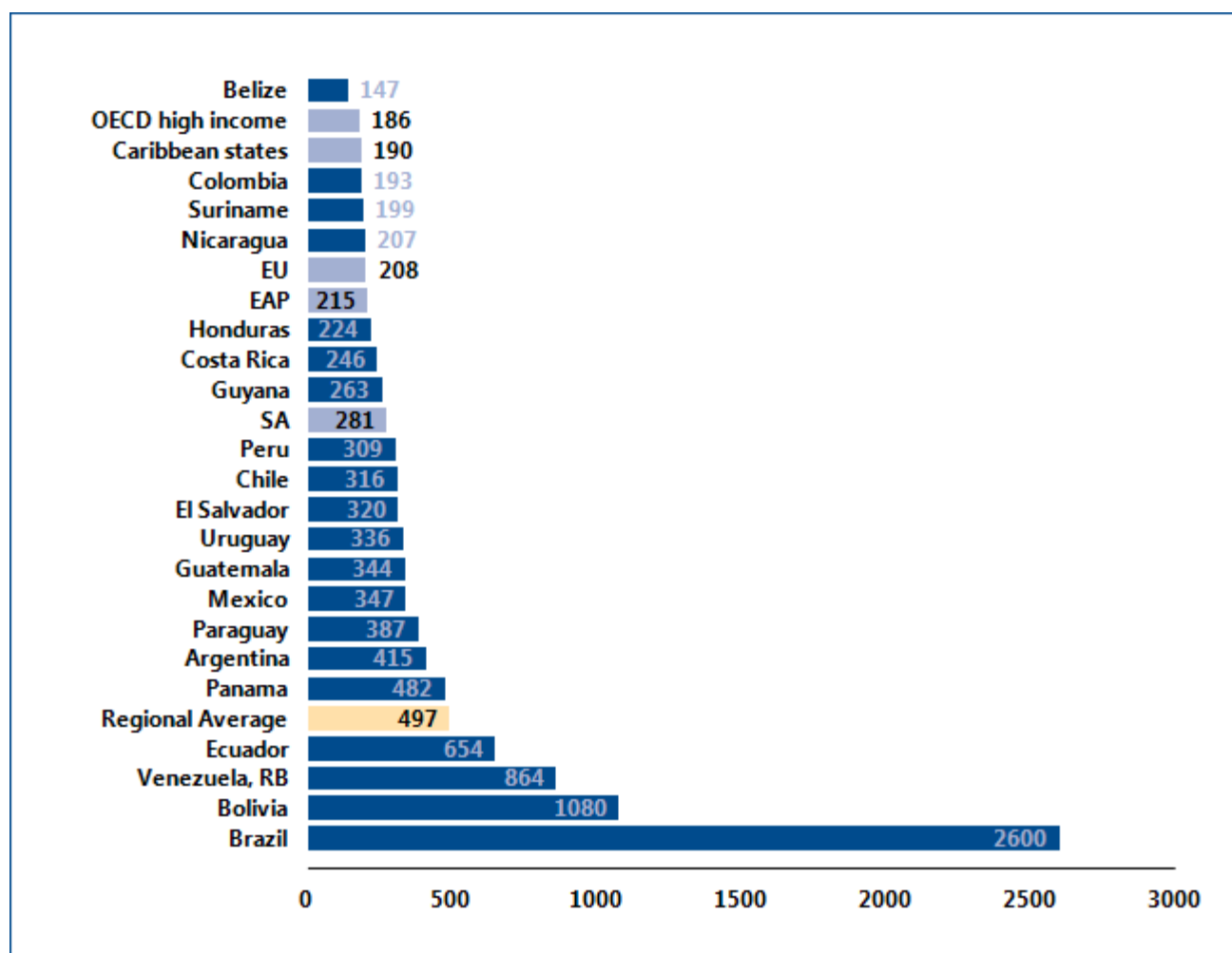
Figure 8.2 How easy is it to pay taxes in economies in Latin America—and what are the total tax rates?

Payments (number per year)



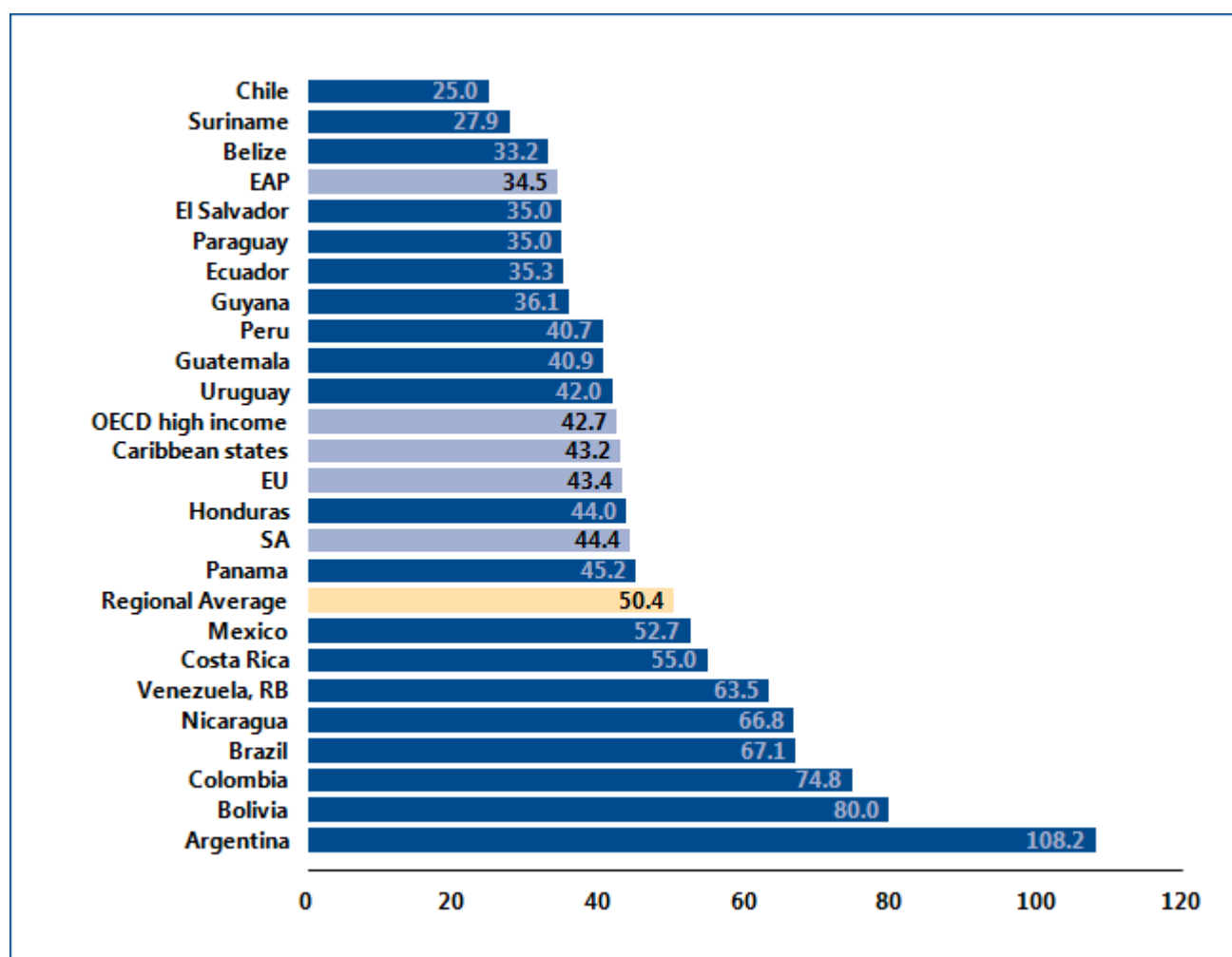
PAYING TAXES

Time (hours per year)



PAYING TAXES

Total tax rate (% of profit)



Note: DB2012 rankings reflect changes to the methodology. For all economies with a total tax rate below the threshold of 32.5% applied in DB2012, the total tax rate is set at 32.5% for the purpose of calculating the ranking on the ease of paying taxes.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

PAYING TAXES

What are the changes over time?

Economies around the world have made paying taxes faster and easier for businesses—such as by consolidating filings, reducing the frequency of payments or offering electronic filing and payment. Many have lowered tax rates. Changes have brought

concrete results. Some economies simplifying tax payment and reducing rates have seen tax revenue rise. What tax reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Latin America (table 8.1)?

Table 8.1 How have economies in Latin America made paying taxes easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2012	<i>Belize</i>	Belize made paying taxes easier for firms by improving electronic filing and payment for social security contributions, an option now used by the majority of taxpayers.
DB2012	<i>Bolivia</i>	Bolivia raised social security contribution rates for employers.
DB2012	<i>Colombia</i>	Colombia eased the administrative burden of paying taxes for firms by establishing mandatory electronic filing and payment for some of the major taxes.
DB2012	<i>Costa Rica</i>	In Costa Rica online payment of social security contributions is now widespread and used by the majority of taxpayers.
DB2012	<i>Honduras</i>	Honduras made paying taxes costlier for firms by raising the solidarity tax rate.
DB2012	<i>Mexico</i>	Mexico continued to ease the administrative burden of paying taxes for firms by ending the requirement to file a yearly value added tax return and reduced filing requirements for other taxes
DB2012	<i>Nicaragua</i>	Nicaragua made paying taxes easier for companies by promoting electronic filing and payment of the major taxes, an option now used by the majority of taxpayers.
DB2012	<i>Paraguay</i>	Paraguay made paying taxes more burdensome for companies by introducing new tax declarations that must be filed monthly.

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2012	<i>Peru</i>	Peru made paying taxes easier for companies by improving electronic filing and payment of the major taxes and promoting the use of the electronic option among the majority of taxpayers.
DB2012	<i>Venezuela, RB</i>	República Bolivariana de Venezuela made paying taxes costlier for firms by doubling the municipal economic activities tax (sales tax).
DB2011	<i>Mexico</i>	Mexico increased taxes on companies by raising several tax rates, including the corporate income tax and the rate on cash deposits. At the same time, the administrative burden was reduced slightly with more options for online payment and increased use of accounting software.
DB2011	<i>Nicaragua</i>	Nicaragua increased taxes on firms by raising social security contribution rates and introducing a 10% withholding tax on the gross interest accrued from deposits. It also improved electronic payment of taxes through bank transfer.
DB2011	<i>Panama</i>	Panama reduced the corporate income tax rate, modified various taxes and created a new tax court of appeals.
DB2011	<i>Venezuela, RB</i>	República Bolivariana de Venezuela abolished the tax on financial transactions.
DB2010	<i>Colombia</i>	The tax burden on businesses was eased with the introduction of electronic tax filing and payment, and some payments were reduced.
DB2010	<i>Guatemala</i>	The government eased payment of and filing for value added and corporate income taxes by increasing electronic compliance thresholds and extending the electronic system to most banks.
DB2010	<i>Mexico</i>	Taxpaying was eased by introducing electronic payment systems for payroll, property, and social security taxes.

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2010	<i>Peru</i>	Taxpaying was made easier with the use of software, distributed free of charge, for value added taxes. Additionally the cash flow of businesses was eased by reducing the check tax and accelerating depreciation.
DB2010	<i>Venezuela, RB</i>	Two new taxes were introduced, increasing the tax burden on businesses.
DB2009	<i>Colombia</i>	Colombia made electronic social security contributions mandatory for companies with more than 30 employees and created unified electronic forms for filing taxes.
DB2009	<i>Honduras</i>	The efficiency of its tax system was improved by introducing electronic filing and payment.
DB2009	<i>Mexico</i>	A new tax law was introduced that abolishes the asset tax (IMPAC) and the possible eventual amalgamation of income tax applicable to corporations and individuals with business activities. A new withholding tax on cash deposit interest is being implemented, and new reporting rules were introduced for value-added tax.
DB2009	<i>Uruguay</i>	A new tax law abolished COFIS (a 3% sales tax) and reduced the value-added tax from 23% to 22%.
DB2009	<i>Venezuela, RB</i>	A tax on financial transactions was reintroduced, which is levied at a rate of 1.5% on all payments made to third parties. The tax, which had been abolished in February 2006, was levied at a rate of 0.5% before.
DB2008	<i>Colombia</i>	Paying taxes is now quicker and the corporate tax rate of 35% is progressively being reduced to 34% in 2007 and 33% in 2008. With the simplification of accounting rules, 188 hours were cut, a reduction of 41%.
DB2008	<i>Mexico</i>	The corporate tax rate was reduced from 33% in 2004 to 30% in 2005, to 29% in 2006 and to 28% for 2007 and subsequent years.

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2008	<i>Uruguay</i>	The corporate income tax was reduced and various contributions made by employers were simplified to a single rate.
DB2008	<i>Venezuela, RB</i>	The number of payments and the total tax rate were both increased.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2005), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

In today's globalized world, making trade between economies easier is increasingly important for business. Excessive document requirements, burdensome customs procedures, inefficient port operations and inadequate infrastructure all lead to extra costs and delays for exporters and importers, stifling trade potential. Research shows that exporters in developing countries gain more from a 10% drop in their trading costs than from a similar reduction in the tariffs applied to their products in global markets.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business measures the time and cost (excluding tariffs) associated with exporting and importing a standard shipment of goods by ocean transport, and the number of documents necessary to complete the transaction. The indicators cover procedural requirements such as documentation requirements and procedures at customs and other regulatory agencies as well as at the port. They also cover trade logistics, including the time and cost of inland transport to the largest business city. The ranking on the ease of trading across borders is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators: documents, time and cost to export and import.

To make the data comparable across economies, *Doing Business* uses several assumptions about the business and the traded goods.

The business:

- Is of medium size and employs 60 people.
- Is located in the periurban area of the economy's largest business city.
- Is a private, limited liability company, domestically owned, formally registered and operating under commercial laws and regulations of the economy.

The traded goods:

- Are not hazardous nor do they include military items.

WHAT THE TRADING ACROSS BORDERS INDICATORS MEASURE

Documents required to export and import (number)

- Bank documents
- Customs clearance documents
- Port and terminal handling documents
- Transport documents

Time required to export and import (days)

- Obtaining all the documents
- Inland transport and handling
- Customs clearance and inspections
- Port and terminal handling
- Does not include ocean transport time

Cost required to export and import (US\$ per container)

- All documentation
- Inland transport and handling
- Customs clearance and inspections
- Port and terminal handling
- Official costs only, no bribes

- Do not require refrigeration or any other special environment.
- Do not require any special phytosanitary or environmental safety standards other than accepted international standards.
- Are one of the economy's leading export or import products.
- Are transported in a dry-cargo, 20-foot full container load.

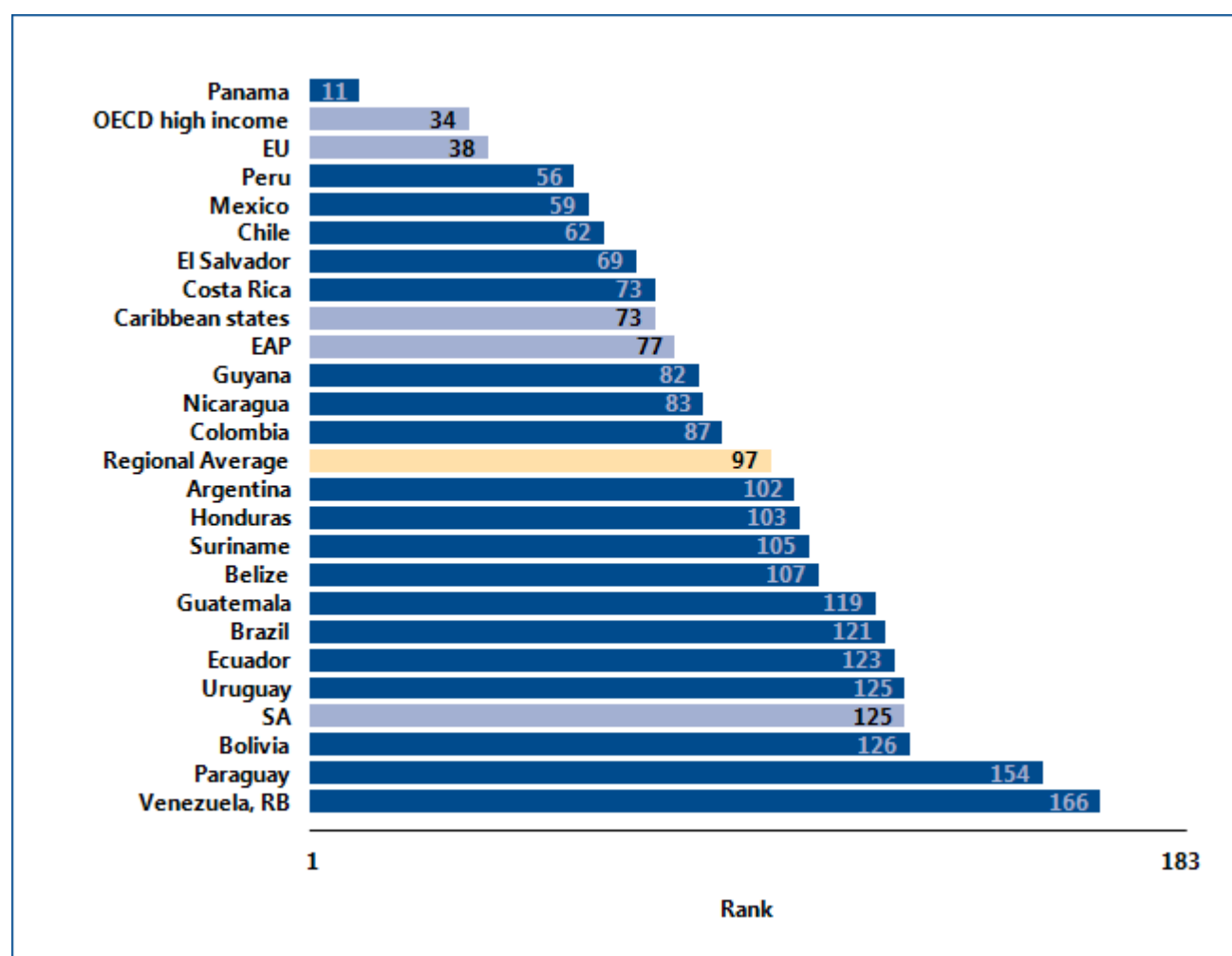
TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

Where do the region's economies stand today?

How easy it is for businesses in economies in Latin America to export and import goods? The global rankings of these economies on the ease of trading

across borders suggest an answer (figure 9.1). The average ranking of the region and comparator regions provide a useful benchmark.

Figure 9.1 How economies in Latin America rank on the ease of trading across borders



Source: *Doing Business* database.

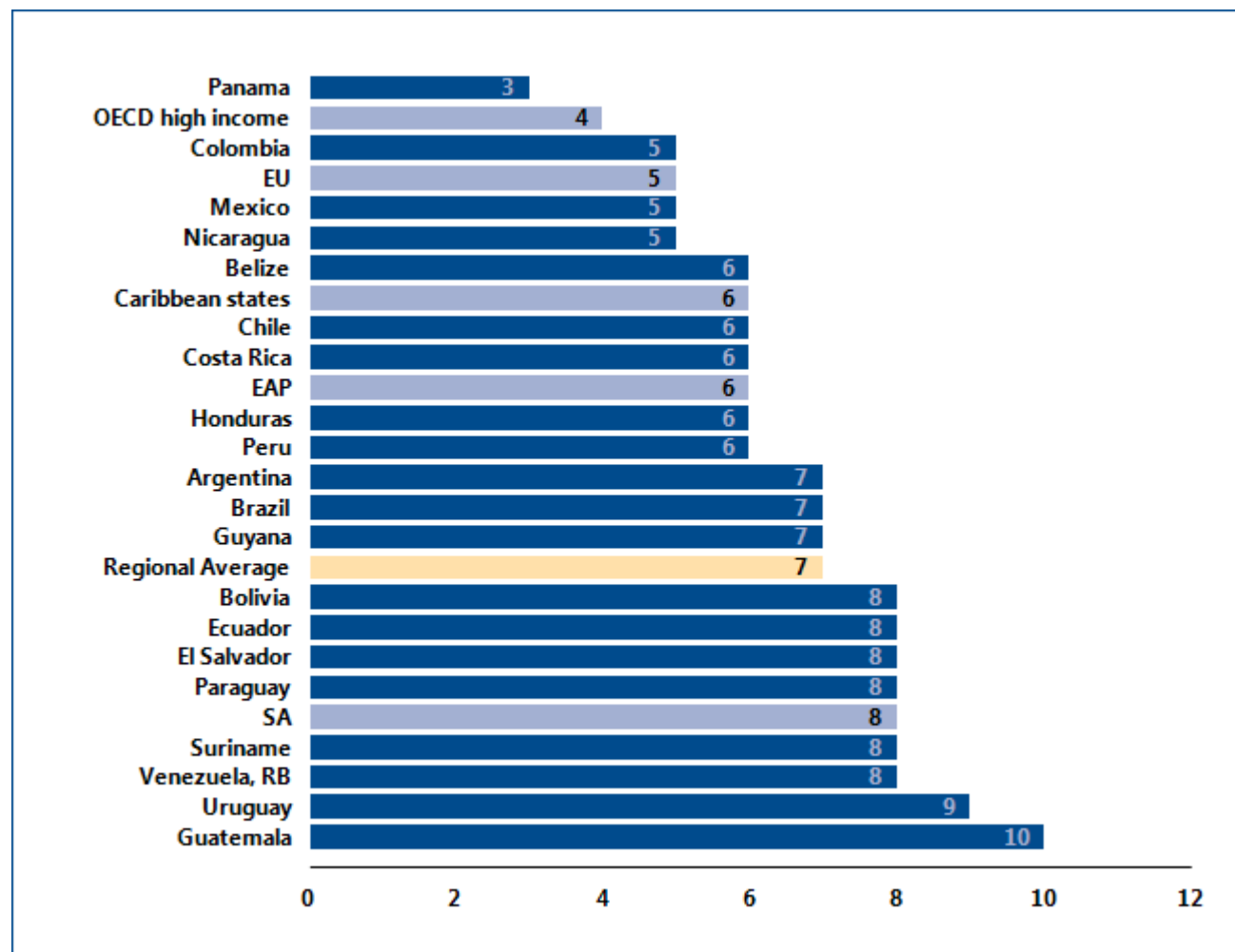
The indicators underlying the rankings may be more revealing. Data collected by *Doing Business* show what it takes to export or import a standard container of goods in each economy in the region: the number of

documents, the time and the cost (figure 9.2). Comparing these indicators across the region and with averages both for the region and for comparator regions can provide useful insights.

TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

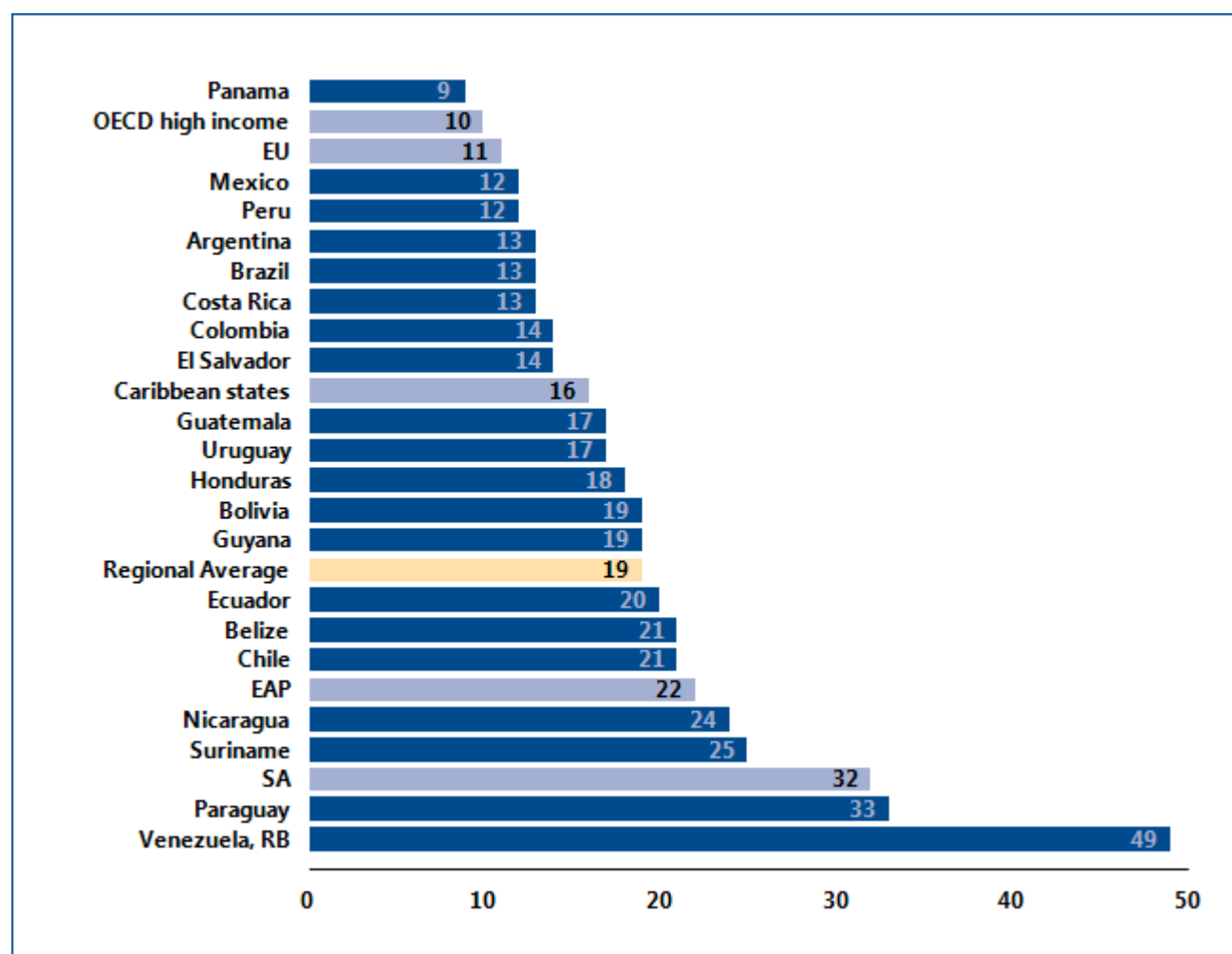
Figure 9.2 What it takes to trade across borders in economies in Latin America

Documents to export (number)



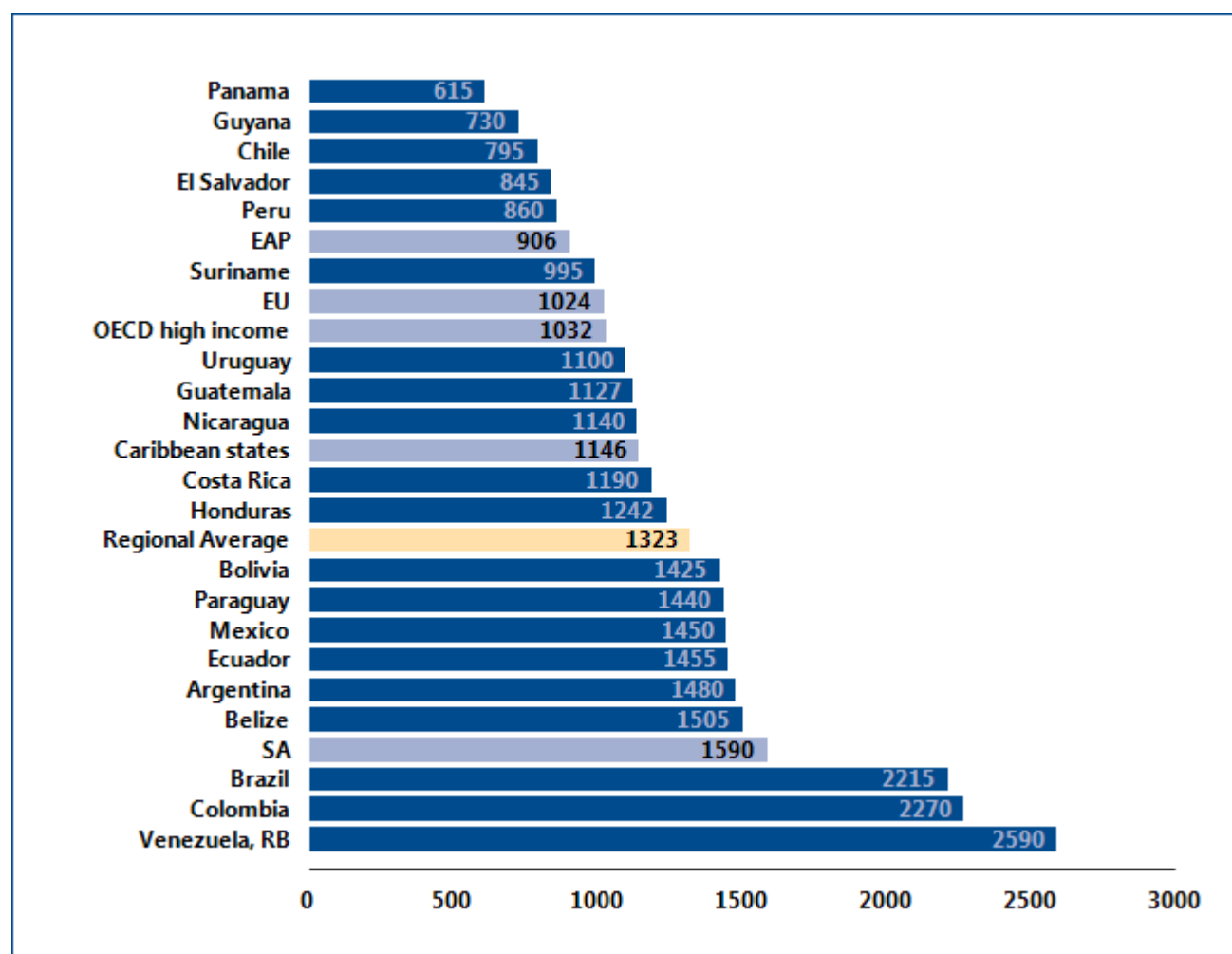
TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

Time to export (days)



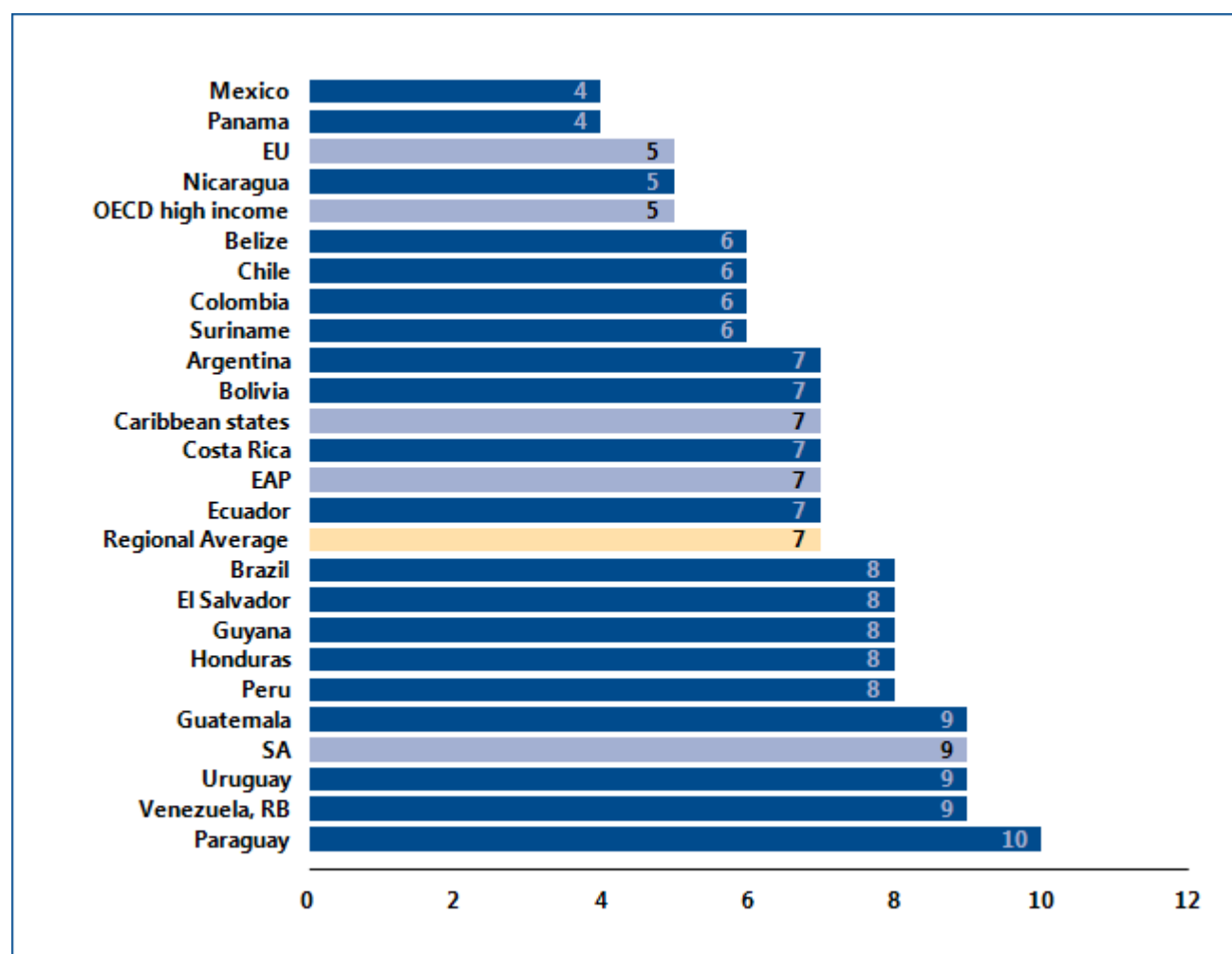
TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

Cost to export (US\$ per container)



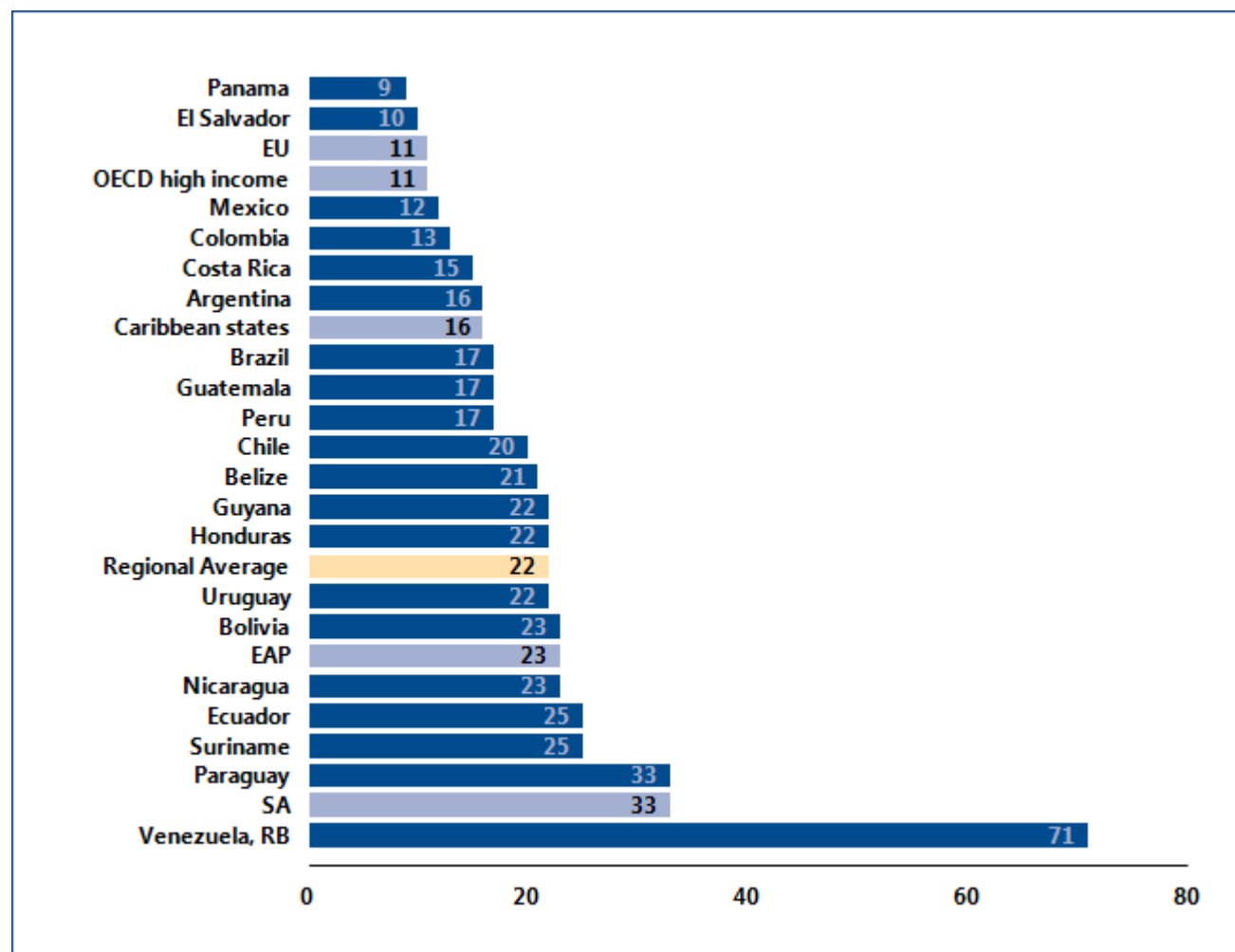
TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

Documents to import (number)



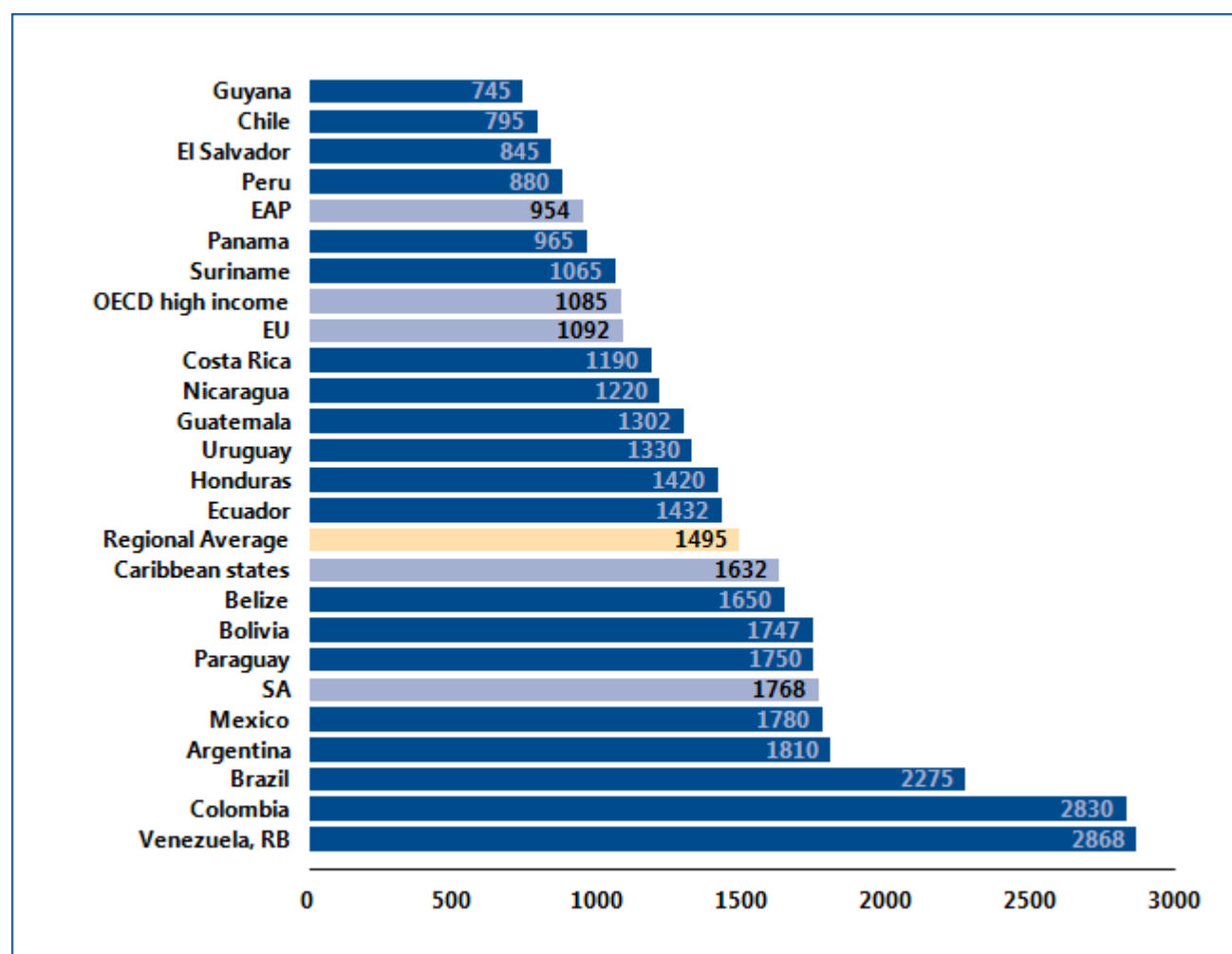
TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

Time to import (days)



TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

Cost to import (US\$ per container)



Source: Doing Business database.

TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

What are the changes over time?

In economies around the world, trading across borders as measured by *Doing Business* has become faster and easier over the years. Governments have introduced tools to facilitate trade—including single windows, risk-based inspections and electronic data interchange

systems. These changes help improve the trading environment and boost firms' international competitiveness. What trade reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Latin America (table 9.1)?

Table 9.1 How have economies in Latin America made trading across borders easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2012	Chile	Chile made trading across borders faster by implementing an online electronic data interchange system for customs operations.
DB2012	Honduras	Honduras made trading across borders faster by implementing a web-based electronic data interchange system and X-ray machines at the port of Puerto Cortes.
DB2011	Guyana	Guyana improved its risk profiling system for customs inspection, reducing physical inspections of shipments and the time to trade.
DB2011	Nicaragua	Nicaragua expedited trade by migrating to a new electronic data interchange system for customs, setting up a physical one-stop shop for exports and investing in new equipment at the port of Corinto.
DB2011	Peru	Peru made trading easier by implementing a new web-based electronic data interchange system, risk-based inspections and payment deferrals.
DB2010	Colombia	Implementation of an electronic declaration system has expedited customs clearance.
DB2010	Guyana	Registration with the tax authorities was streamlined with the introduction of a single tax identification number for corporate, value added, and labor taxes. Implementation of an electronic declaration system reduced customs clearance times for exports and imports.

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2010	<i>Paraguay</i>	Trading times were reduced with the implementation of an electronic export system and improvements to the risk-based inspection system.
DB2010	<i>Peru</i>	Additional cranes have expedited port and terminal handling activities.
DB2009	<i>Brazil</i>	The time to export was reduced by four days. Authorities merged the current manifest reporting system, "Merchante" (for imports) and "Siscomex" (for exports) into a new and unique system, "Siscomex Carga." Due to an increase in the shares of traders allotted "green line" status, the number of inspections was reduced, speeding up the customs process.
DB2009	<i>Colombia</i>	Trading across borders was expedited: better banking services and the implementation of e-payments, electronic data interchange, and coordinated inspections in customs reduced the time to import and export.
DB2009	<i>Ecuador</i>	The trade process was streamlined through improvements in port infrastructure and banking services and a reduction in the number of documents required. The changes reduced the time to import and export.
DB2009	<i>El Salvador</i>	El Salvador reduced time to import and export through modernization of its customs system and physical inspections, increased traffic control, implementation of a single window, and improvements in the banking sector.
DB2009	<i>Honduras</i>	Importing was made easier by abolishing a requirement for consular legalization of trade documents.
DB2009	<i>Uruguay</i>	In trade, the country implemented electronic data interchange and improved its banking system, reducing the time to export by five days and the time to import.
DB2008	<i>Brazil</i>	In 'trading across borders', Brazil has also upgraded their EDI system and reduced importing delays.

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2008	<i>Colombia</i>	By extending port operating hours, adopting more selective customs inspections, time for ports and terminal handling activities has been reduced.
DB2008	<i>Costa Rica</i>	Traders were allowed to directly transmit customs declarations electronically and improved the capacity of the customs services resulting in reduced cross border trade.
DB2008	<i>El Salvador</i>	A one-stop shop for importers was established thereby facilitating the documentation and approval process.
DB2008	<i>Guatemala</i>	The implementation of a new Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) system for electronic submission of customs declarations and the introduction of risk-based inspection regime decreased the time for exporting procedures one day.
DB2008	<i>Venezuela, RB</i>	Further hurdles were added to cross border trading procedures by requiring traders to obtain permits for each shipment leading to an increase time.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2005), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

ENFORCING CONTRACTS

Well-functioning courts help businesses expand their network and markets. Without effective contract enforcement, people might well do business only with family, friends and others with whom they have established relationships. Where contract enforcement is efficient, firms are more likely to engage with new borrowers or customers, and they have greater access to credit.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business measures the efficiency of the judicial system in resolving a commercial dispute before local courts. Following the step-by-step evolution of a standardized case study, it collects data relating to the time, cost and procedural complexity of resolving a commercial lawsuit. The ranking on the ease of enforcing contracts is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators: procedures, time and cost.

The dispute in the case study involves the breach of a sales contract between 2 domestic businesses. The case study assumes that the court hears an expert on the quality of the goods in dispute. This distinguishes the case from simple debt enforcement. To make the data comparable across economies, *Doing Business* uses several assumptions about the case:

- The seller and buyer are located in the economy's largest business city.
- The buyer orders custom-made goods, then fails to pay.
- The seller sues the buyer before a competent court.
- The value of the claim is 200% of income per capita.
- The seller requests a pretrial attachment to secure the claim.

WHAT THE ENFORCING CONTRACTS

INDICATORS MEASURE

Procedures to enforce a contract through the courts (number)

Any interaction between the parties in a commercial dispute, or between them and the judge or court officer

Steps to file and serve the case

Steps for trial and judgment

Steps to enforce the judgment

Time required to complete procedures (calendar days)

Time to file and serve the case

Time for trial and obtaining judgment

Time to enforce the judgment

Cost required to complete procedures (% of claim)

No bribes

Average attorney fees

Court costs, including expert fees

Enforcement costs

- The dispute on the quality of the goods requires an expert opinion.
- The judge decides in favor of the seller; there is no appeal.
- The seller enforces the judgment through a public sale of the buyer's movable assets.

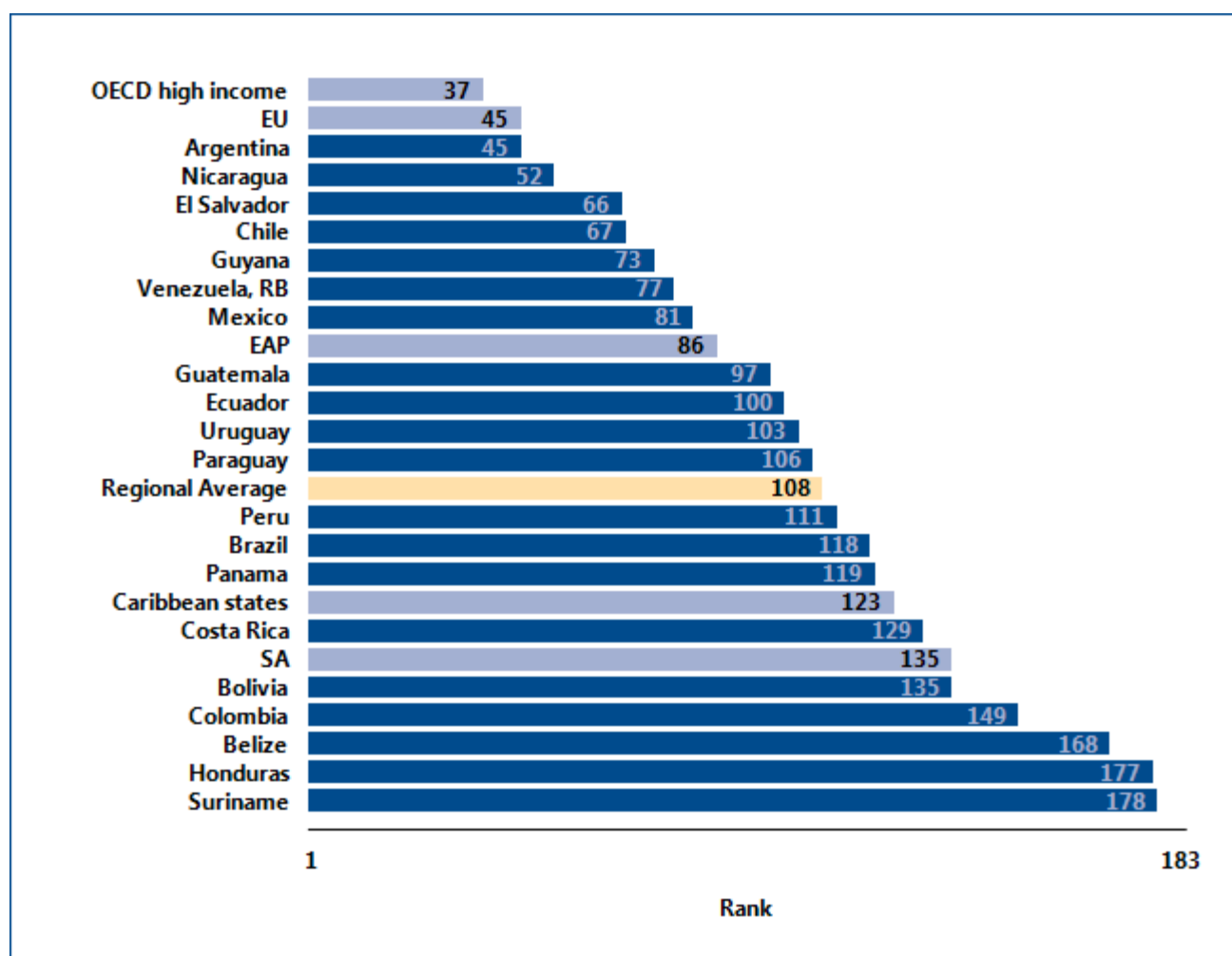
ENFORCING CONTRACTS

Where do the region's economies stand today?

How efficient is the process of resolving a commercial dispute through the courts in economies in Latin America? The global rankings of these economies on

the ease of enforcing contracts suggest an answer (figure 10.1). The average ranking of the region and comparator regions provide a useful benchmark.

Figure 10.1 How economies in Latin America rank on the ease of enforcing contracts



Source: *Doing Business* database.

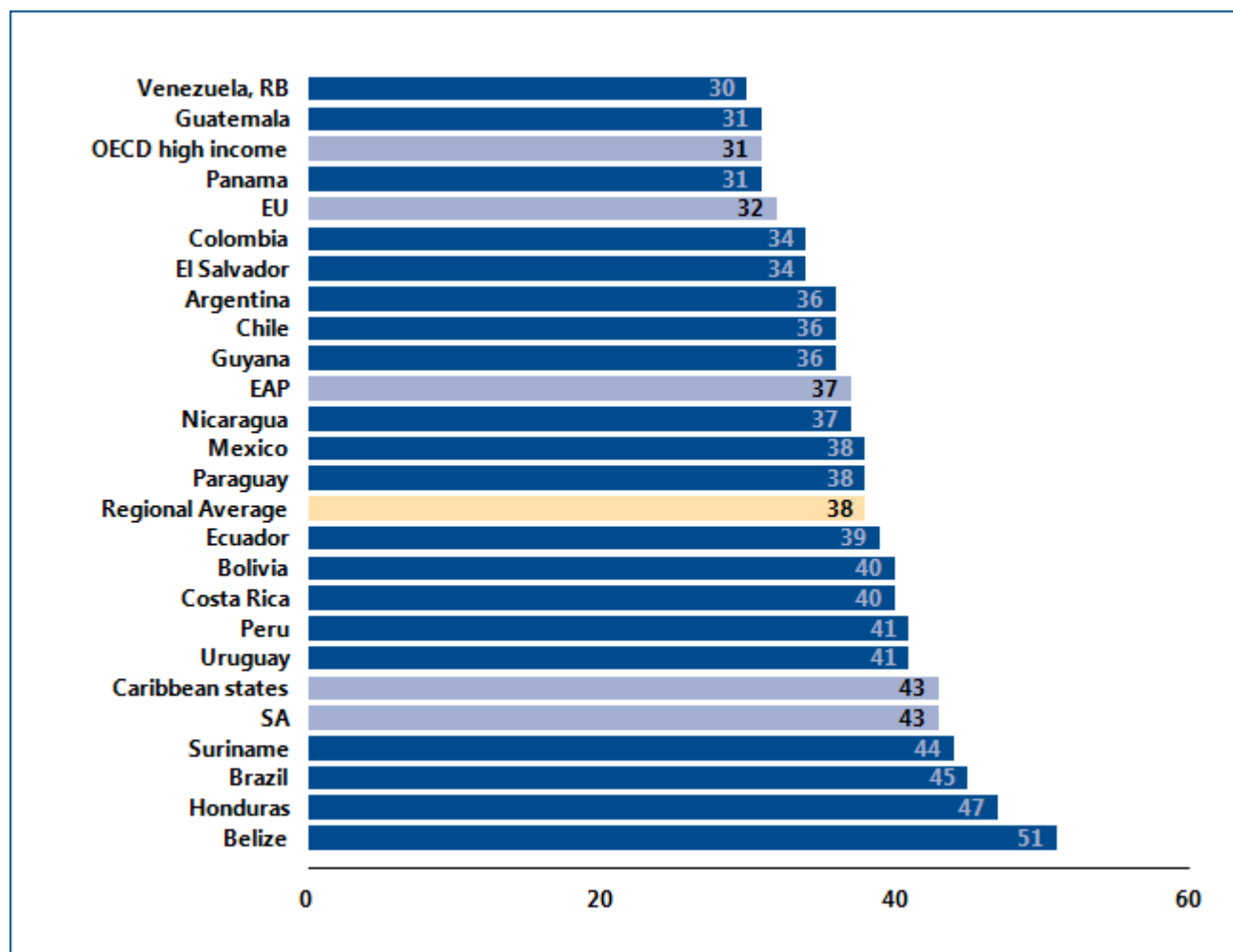
The indicators underlying the rankings may also be revealing. Data collected by *Doing Business* show what it takes to enforce a contract through the courts in each economy in the region: the number of

procedures, the time and the cost (figure 10.2). Comparing these indicators across the region and with averages both for the region and for comparator regions can provide useful insights.

ENFORCING CONTRACTS

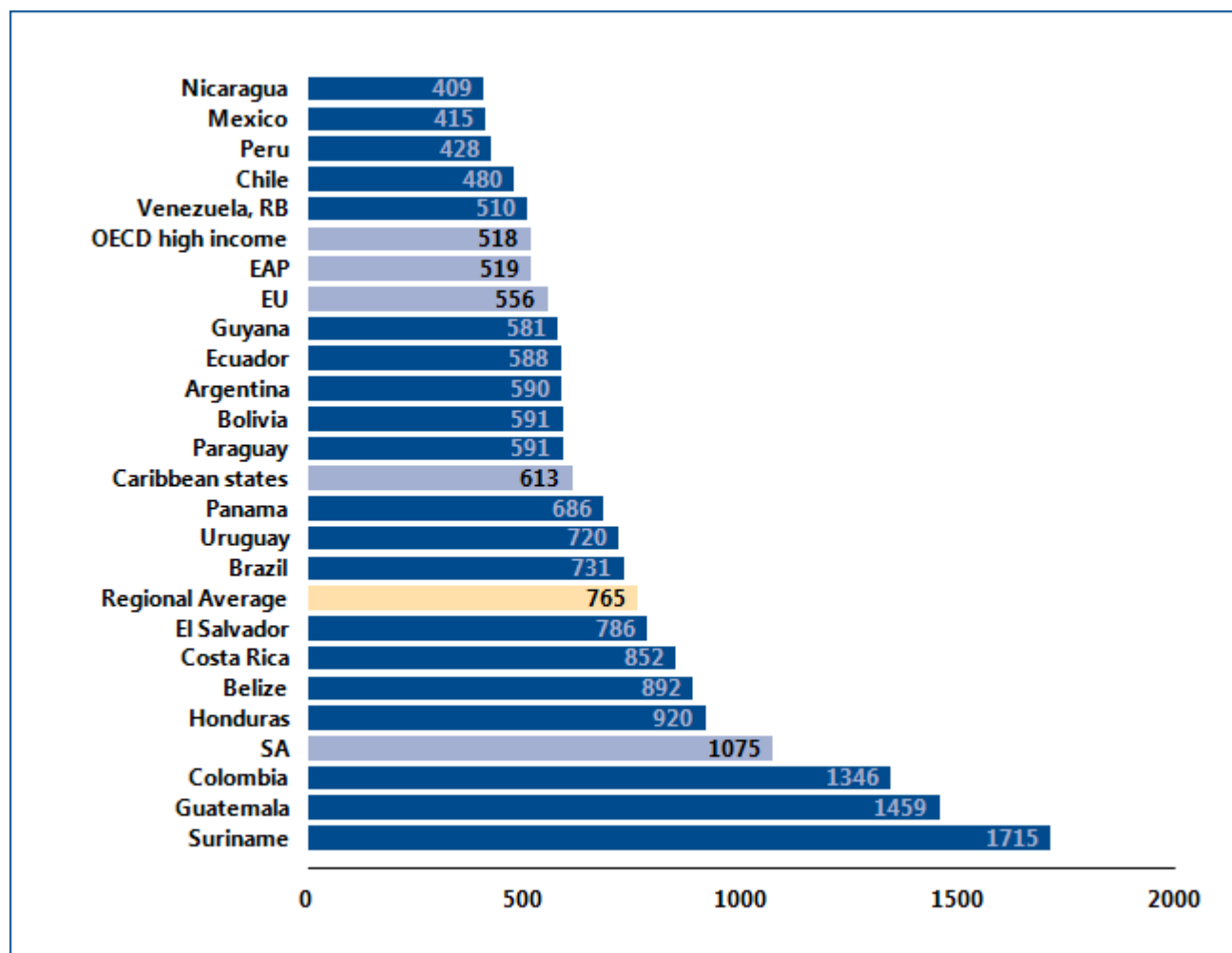
Figure 10.2 What it takes to enforce a contract through the courts in economies in Latin America

Procedures (number)



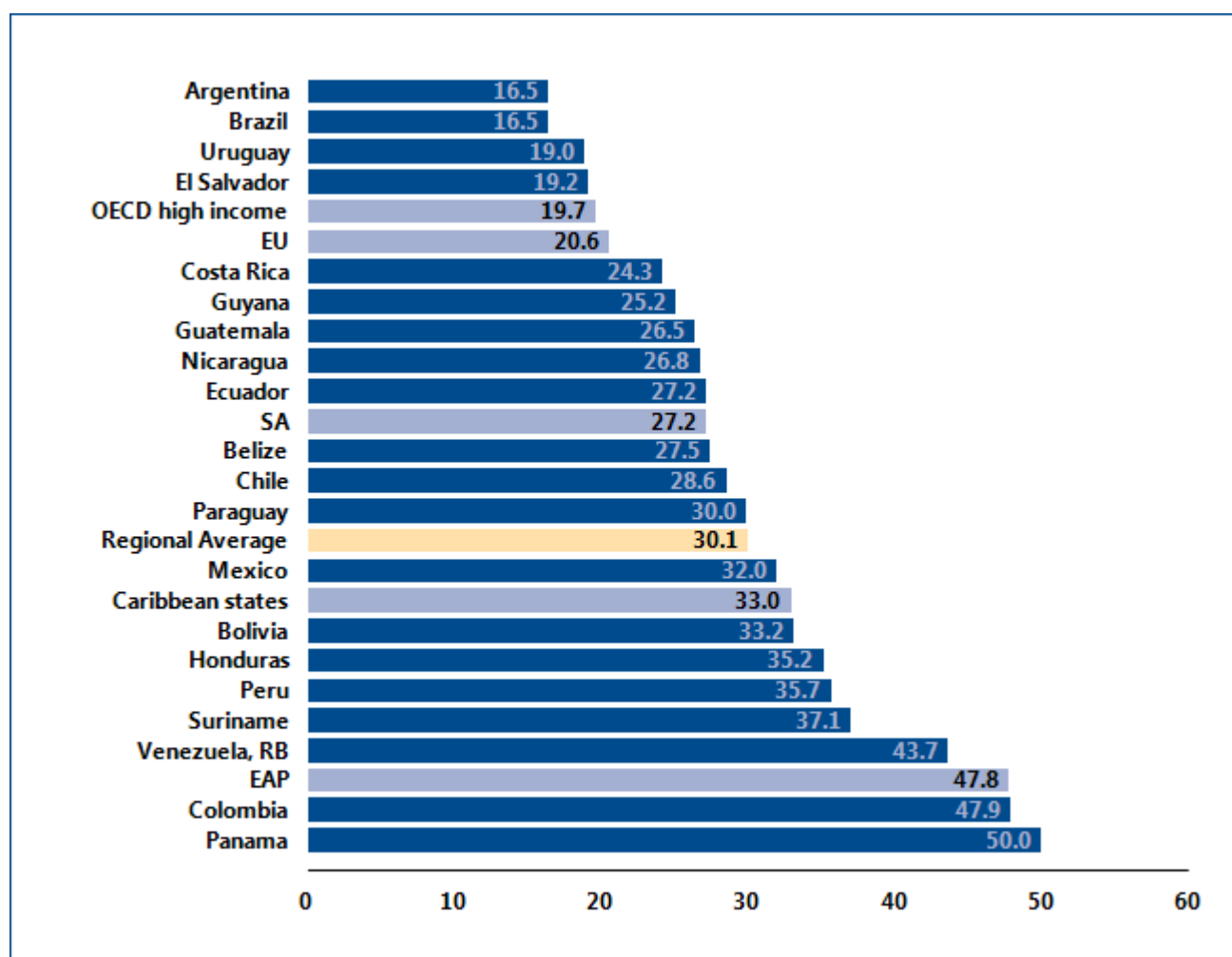
ENFORCING CONTRACTS

Time (days)



ENFORCING CONTRACTS

Cost (% of claim)



Source: Doing Business database.

ENFORCING CONTRACTS

What are the changes over time?

Economies in all regions have improved contract enforcement in recent years. A judiciary can be improved in different ways. Higher-income economies tend to look for ways to enhance efficiency by introducing new technology. Lower-income economies often work on reducing backlogs by introducing

periodic reviews to clear inactive cases from the docket and by making procedures faster. What reforms making it easier (or more difficult) to enforce contracts has *Doing Business* recorded in Latin America (table 10.1)?

Table 10.1 How have economies in Latin America made enforcing contracts easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2012	<i>Honduras</i>	Honduras adopted a new civil procedure code that modified litigation procedures for enforcing a contract.
DB2012	<i>Nicaragua</i>	Nicaragua raised the monetary threshold for commercial claims that can be brought to the Managua local civil court, leaving lower-value claims in the local courts, where proceedings are simpler and faster.
DB2010	<i>Costa Rica</i>	Contract enforcement was improved by authorizing new modes for service of process and simplified auction procedures by allowing publication of a single auction notice.
DB2010	<i>Peru</i>	The government eased contract enforcement by introducing deadlines for filing evidence and contesting enforcement procedures. In addition, electronic judicial notices are permissible in lieu of publication in the official gazette.
DB2008	<i>Brazil</i>	Several amendments were made to the Code of Civil Procedure to reform the rules on enforcing judgments and to make debt collection easier for creditors. Debtors are now forced to cooperate in the disclosure of their assets for attachment and can be fined if they do not cooperate. Last year, Brazil also restricted the number of cases that can go to the Supreme Court and introduced electronic filing of documents in court.
DB2008	<i>Guatemala</i>	Courts were reformed, increasing the number of cases to be decided by justices of peace hereby expanding their small claims courts.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2005), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

RESOLVING INSOLVENCY

A robust bankruptcy system functions as a filter, ensuring the survival of economically efficient companies and reallocating the resources of inefficient ones. Fast and cheap insolvency proceedings result in the speedy return of businesses to normal operation and increase returns to creditors. By improving the expectations of creditors and debtors about the outcome of insolvency proceedings, well-functioning insolvency systems can facilitate access to finance, save more viable businesses and thereby improve growth and sustainability in the economy overall.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business studies the time, cost and outcome of insolvency proceedings involving domestic entities. It does not measure insolvency proceedings of individuals and financial institutions. The data are derived from survey responses by local insolvency practitioners and verified through a study of laws and regulations as well as public information on bankruptcy systems.

The ranking on the ease of resolving insolvency is based on the recovery rate, which is recorded as cents on the dollar recouped by creditors through reorganization, liquidation or debt enforcement (foreclosure) proceedings. The recovery rate is a function of time, cost and other factors, such as lending rate and the likelihood of the company continuing to operate.

To make the data comparable across economies, *Doing Business* uses several assumptions about the business and the case. It assumes that the company:

- Is a domestically owned, limited liability company operating a hotel.
- Operates in the economy's largest business city.

WHAT THE RESOLVING INSOLVENCY INDICATORS MEASURE

Time required to recover debt (years)

Measured in calendar years

Appeals and requests for extension are included

Cost required to recover debt (% of debtor's estate)

Measured as percentage of estate value

Court fees

Fees of insolvency administrators

Lawyers' fees

Assessors' and auctioneers' fees

Other related fees

Recovery rate for creditors (cents on the dollar)

Measures the cents on the dollar recovered by creditors

Present value of debt recovered

Official costs of the insolvency proceedings are deducted

Depreciation of furniture is taken into account

Outcome for the business (survival or not) affects the maximum value that can be recovered

- Has 201 employees, 1 main secured creditor and 50 unsecured creditors.
- Has a higher value as a going concern—and the efficient outcome is either reorganization or sale as a going concern, not piecemeal liquidation.

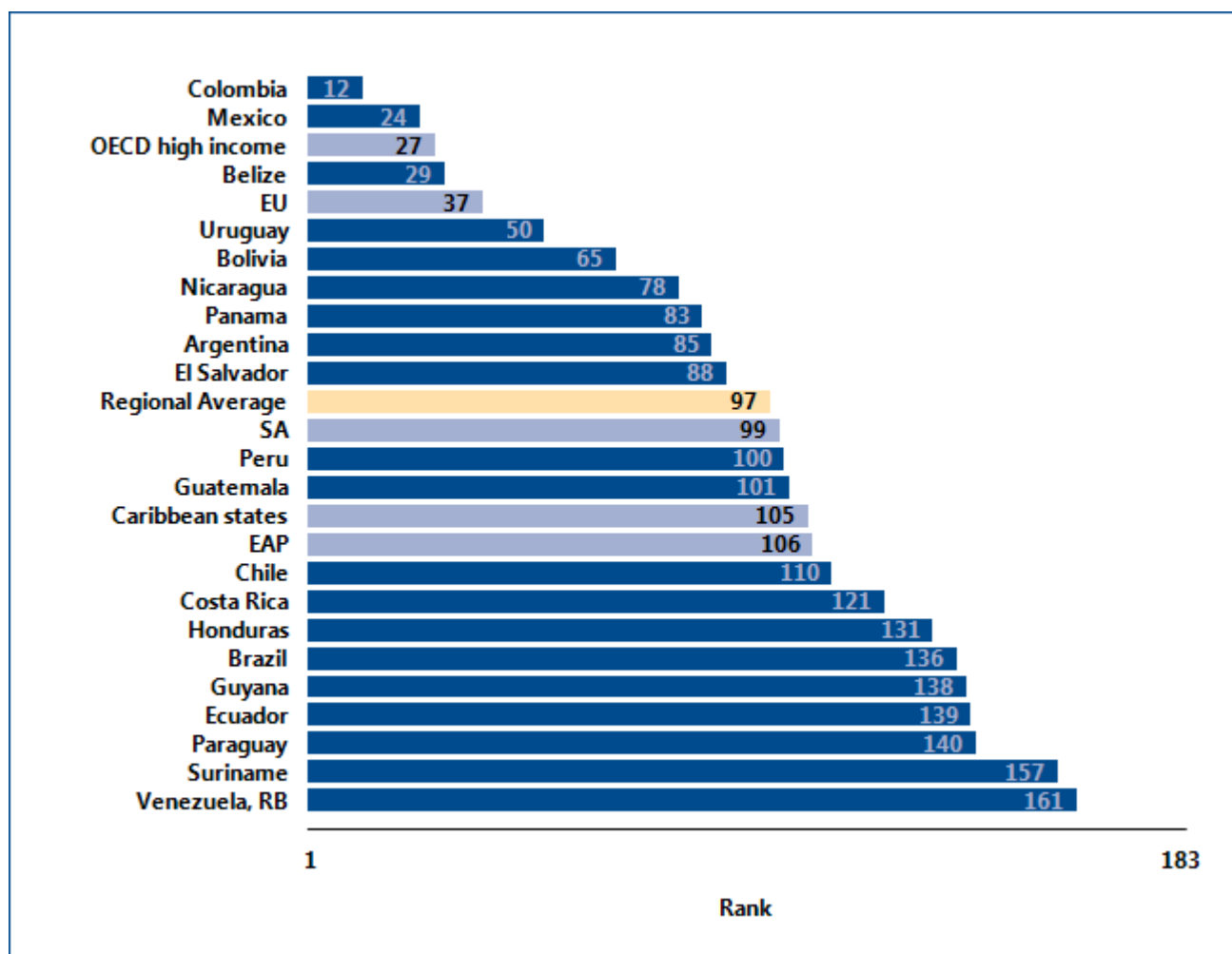
RESOLVING INSOLVENCY

Where do the region's economies stand today?

How efficient are insolvency proceedings in economies in Latin America? The global rankings of these economies on the ease of resolving insolvency suggest an answer (figure 11.1). The average ranking of the region and comparator regions provide a useful

benchmark for assessing the efficiency of insolvency proceedings. Speed, low costs and continuation of viable businesses characterize the top-performing economies.

Figure 11.1 How economies in Latin America rank on the ease of resolving insolvency



Source: *Doing Business* database.

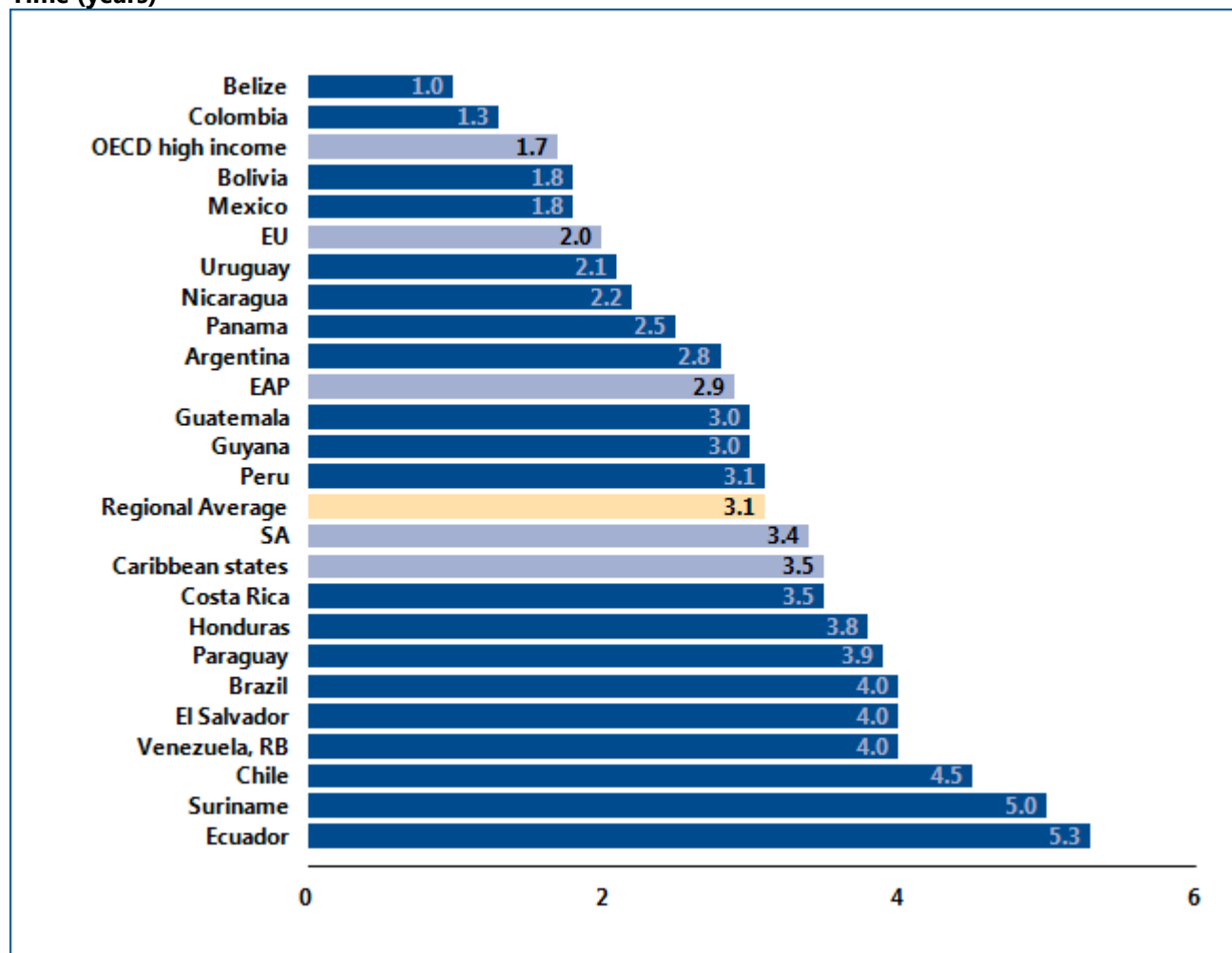
The indicators underlying the rankings may be more revealing. Data collected by *Doing Business* show the average time and cost required to resolve insolvency as well as the average recovery rate (figure 11.2).

Comparing these indicators across the region and with averages both for the region and for comparator regions can provide useful insights.

RESOLVING INSOLVENCY

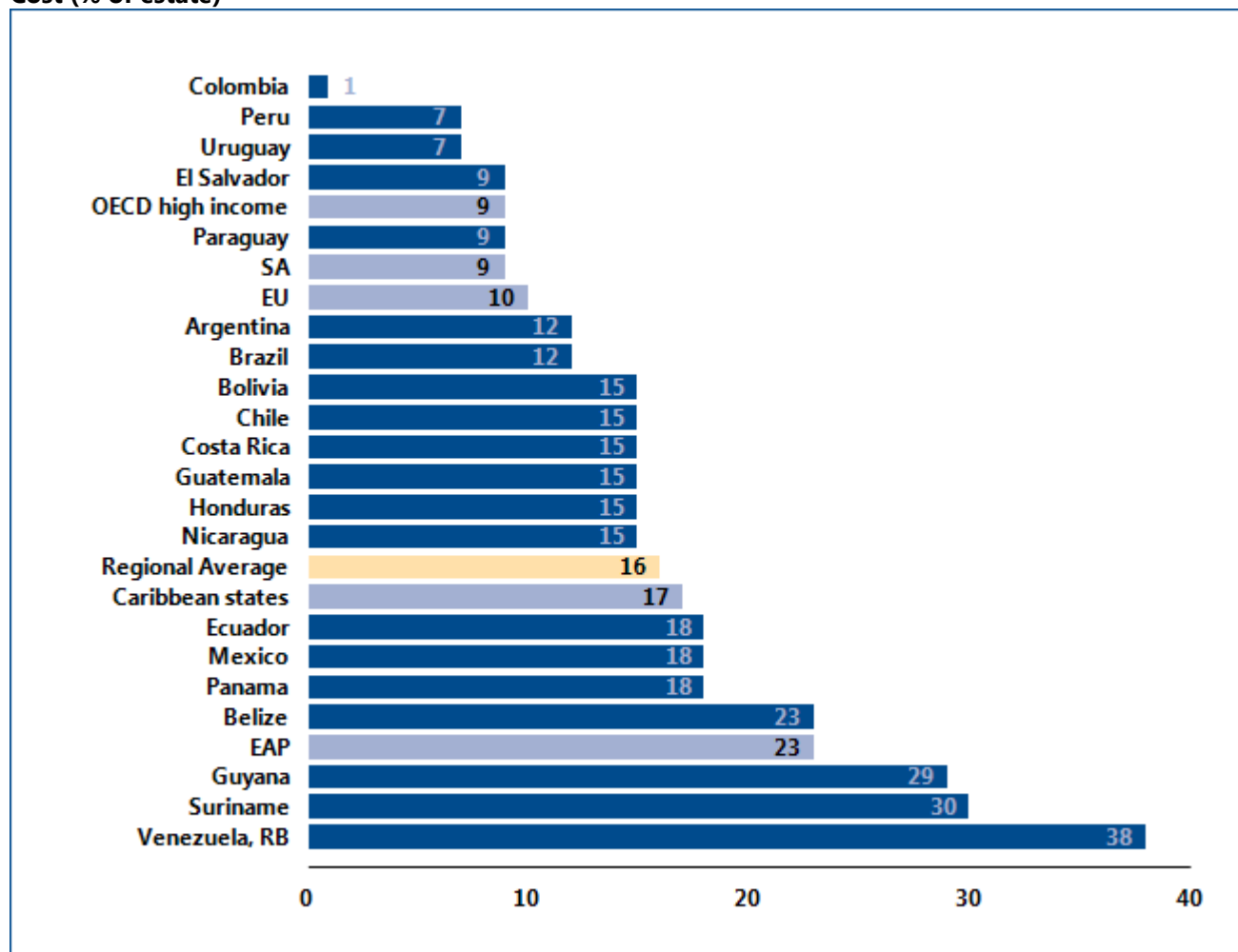
Figure 11.2 How efficient is the insolvency process in economies in Latin America

Time (years)



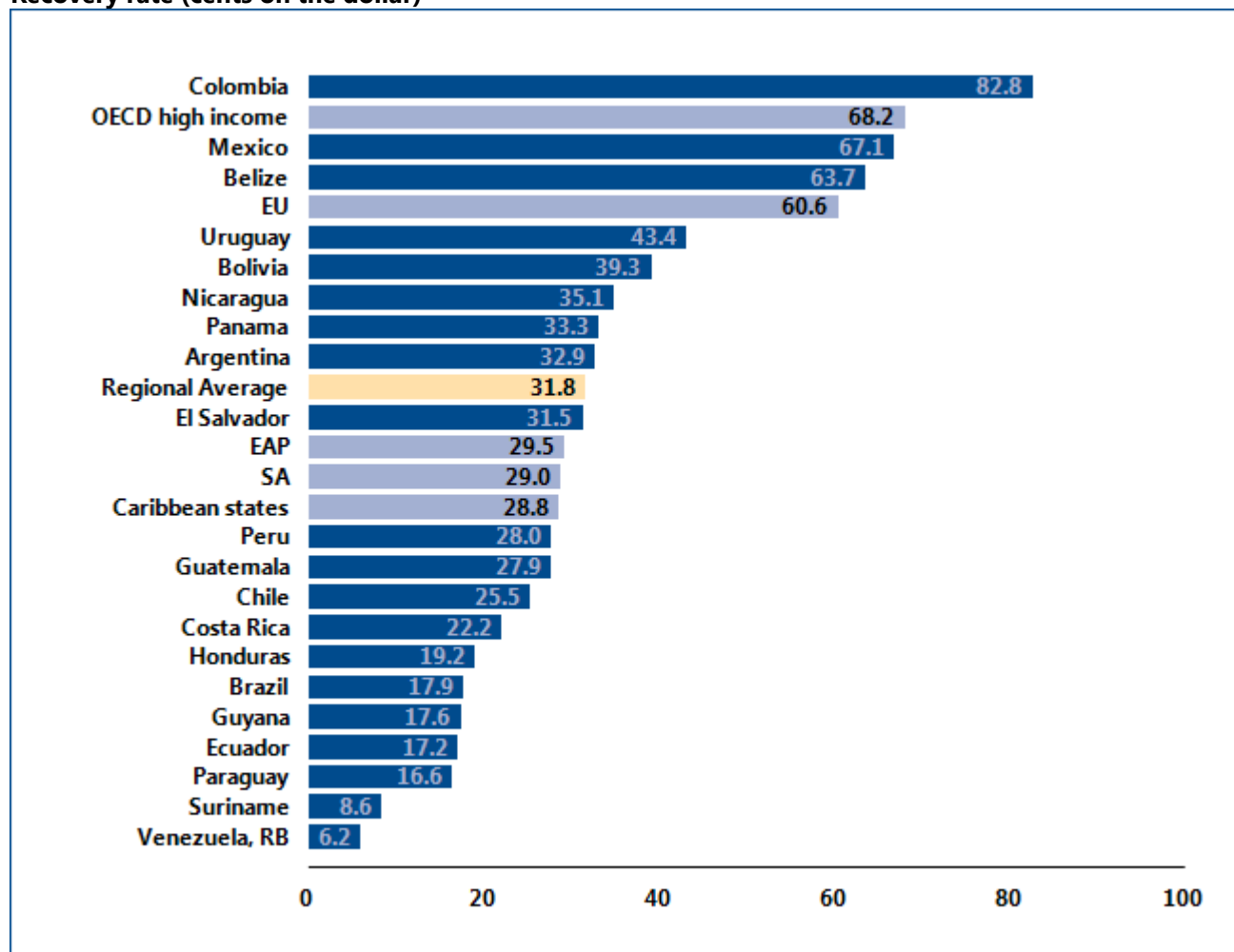
RESOLVING INSOLVENCY

Cost (% of estate)



RESOLVING INSOLVENCY

Recovery rate (cents on the dollar)



* Indicates a "no practice" mark. See the data notes for details.

Source: Doing Business database.

RESOLVING INSOLVENCY

What are the changes over time?

A well-balanced bankruptcy system distinguishes companies that are financially distressed but economically viable from inefficient companies that should be liquidated. But in some insolvency systems even viable businesses are liquidated. This is starting to

change. Many recent reforms of bankruptcy laws have been aimed at helping more of the viable businesses survive. What insolvency reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Latin America (table 11.1)?

Table 11.1 How have economies in Latin America made resolving insolvency easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Economy	Reform
DB2012	Colombia	Colombia amended regulations governing insolvency proceedings to simplify the proceedings and reduce their time and cost
DB2010	Colombia	Several decrees were passed continuing efforts to regulate the profession of insolvency administrators.
DB2010	Uruguay	An insolvency law was enacted aimed at keeping distressed companies operating as going concerns.
DB2009	Bolivia	Applications for voluntary restructuring of financially distressed companies were suspended. The only option now is a lengthy bankruptcy procedure that typically takes years.
DB2009	Colombia	Authorities also introduced two new insolvency proceedings: a reorganization procedure to restructure insolvent companies and a mandatory liquidation procedure. Its new insolvency law tightens time limits for negotiating reorganization agreements. Before, the term allowed was six months, with a possible extension of eight months. The new law limits the term to four months, and the extension to two.
DB2009	Mexico	The bankruptcy law was amended to make reorganization more accessible. Now debtors and creditors may enter into a reorganization agreement at any stage of the insolvency procedure, which is expected to speed the process.
DB2008	Argentina	Bankruptcy judges were stripped of jurisdiction over labor lawsuits and exempted such claims from the automatic stay applicable to claims, which are to be continued and concluded at the labor courts before presentation to the bankruptcy court for verification. Also, a company must now set aside 1% of their gross revenues to satisfy labor claims - even if the company did not turn a profit.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2005), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: Doing Business database.

DATA NOTES

The indicators presented and analyzed in *Doing Business* measure business regulation and the protection of property rights—and their effect on businesses, especially small and medium-size domestic firms. First, the indicators document the complexity of regulation, such as the number of procedures to start a business or to register and transfer commercial property. Second, they gauge the time and cost of achieving a regulatory goal or complying with regulation, such as the time and cost to enforce a contract, go through bankruptcy or trade across borders. Third, they measure the extent of legal protections of property, for example, the protections of investors against looting by company directors or the range of assets that can be used as collateral according to secured transactions laws. Fourth, a set of indicators documents the tax burden on businesses. Finally, a set of data covers different aspects of employment regulation.

The data for all sets of indicators in *Doing Business 2012* are for June 2011.³

Methodology

The *Doing Business* data are collected in a standardized way. To start, the *Doing Business* team, with academic advisers, designs a questionnaire. The questionnaire uses a simple business case to ensure comparability across economies and over time—with assumptions about the legal form of the business, its size, its location and the nature of its operations. Questionnaires are administered through more than 9,028 local experts, including lawyers, business consultants, accountants, freight forwarders, government officials and other professionals routinely administering or advising on legal and regulatory requirements. These experts have several rounds of interaction with the *Doing Business* team, involving conference calls, written correspondence and visits by the team. For *Doing Business 2012* team members visited 40 economies to verify data and recruit respondents. The data from questionnaires are subjected to numerous rounds of verification, leading to revisions or expansions of the information collected.

³ The data for paying taxes refer to January – December 2010.

ECONOMY CHARACTERISTICS

Gross national income (GNI) per capita

Doing Business 2012 reports 2010 income per capita as published in the World Bank's *World Development Indicators 2011*. Income is calculated using the Atlas method (current US\$). For cost indicators expressed as a percentage of income per capita, 2010 GNI in U.S. dollars is used as the denominator. Data were not available from the World Bank for Afghanistan; Australia; The Bahamas; Bahrain; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Cyprus; Djibouti; the Islamic Republic of Iran; Kuwait; New Zealand; Oman; Puerto Rico (territory of the United States); Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Suriname; Taiwan, China; the United Arab Emirates; West Bank and Gaza; and the Republic of Yemen. In these cases GDP or GNP per capita data and growth rates from the International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook database and the Economist Intelligence Unit were used.

Region and income group

Doing Business uses the World Bank regional and income group classifications, available at <http://www.worldbank.org/data/countryclass>. The World Bank does not assign regional classifications to high-income economies. For the purpose of the *Doing Business* report, high-income OECD economies are assigned the "regional" classification *OECD high income*. Figures and tables presenting regional averages include economies from all income groups (low, lower middle, upper middle and high income).

Population

Doing Business 2012 reports midyear 2010 population statistics as published in *World Development Indicators 2011*.

The *Doing Business* methodology offers several advantages. It is transparent, using factual information about what laws and regulations say and allowing multiple interactions with local respondents to clarify potential misinterpretations of questions. Having representative samples of respondents is not an issue; *Doing Business* is not a statistical survey, and the texts of the relevant laws and regulations are collected and answers checked for accuracy. The methodology is inexpensive and easily replicable, so data can be collected in a large sample of economies. Because standard assumptions are used in the data collection, comparisons and benchmarks are valid across economies. Finally, the data not only highlight the extent of specific regulatory obstacles to business but also identify their source and point to what might be reformed.

Information on the methodology for each *Doing Business* topic can be found on the *Doing Business* website at <http://www.doingbusiness.org/methodology/>.

Limits to what is measured

The *Doing Business* methodology has 5 limitations that should be considered when interpreting the data. First, the collected data refer to businesses in the economy's largest business city and may not be representative of regulation in other parts of the economy. To address this limitation, subnational *Doing Business* indicators were created (see the section on subnational *Doing Business* indicators). Second, the data often focus on a specific business form—generally a limited liability company (or its legal equivalent) of a specified size—and may not be representative of the regulation on other businesses, for example, sole proprietorships. Third, transactions described in a standardized case scenario refer to a specific set of issues and may not represent the full set of issues a business encounters. Fourth, the measures of time involve an element of judgment by the expert respondents. When sources indicate different estimates, the time indicators reported in *Doing Business* represent the median values of several responses given under the assumptions of the standardized case.

Finally, the methodology assumes that a business has full information on what is required and does not waste time when completing procedures. In practice, completing a procedure may take longer if the

business lacks information or is unable to follow up promptly. Alternatively, the business may choose to disregard some burdensome procedures. For both reasons the time delays reported in *Doing Business 2012* would differ from the recollection of entrepreneurs reported in the World Bank Enterprise Surveys or other perception surveys.

Subnational *Doing Business* indicators

This year *Doing Business* published a subnational study for the Philippines and a regional report for Southeast Europe covering 7 economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia) and 22 cities. It also published a city profile for Juba, in the Republic of South Sudan.

The subnational studies point to differences in business regulation and its implementation—as well as in the pace of regulatory reform—across cities in the same economy. For several economies subnational studies are now periodically updated to measure change over time or to expand geographic coverage to additional cities. This year that is the case for the subnational studies in the Philippines; the regional report in Southeast Europe; the ongoing studies in Italy, Kenya and the United Arab Emirates; and the projects implemented jointly with local think tanks in Indonesia, Mexico and the Russian Federation.

Besides the subnational *Doing Business* indicators, *Doing Business* conducted a pilot study this year on the second largest city in 3 large economies to assess within-country variations. The study collected data for Rio de Janeiro in addition to São Paulo in Brazil, for Beijing in addition to Shanghai in China and for St. Petersburg in addition to Moscow in Russia.

Changes in what is measured

The methodology for 3 of the *Doing Business* topics was updated this year—getting credit, dealing with construction permits and paying taxes.

First, for getting credit, the scoring of one of the 10 components of the strength of legal rights index was amended to recognize additional protections of secured creditors and borrowers. Previously the highest score of 1 was assigned if secured creditors

were not subject to an automatic stay or moratorium on enforcement procedures when a debtor entered a court-supervised reorganization procedure. Now the highest score of 1 is also assigned if the law provides secured creditors with grounds for relief from an automatic stay or moratorium (for example, if the movable property is in danger) or sets a time limit for the automatic stay.

Second, because the ease of doing business index now includes the getting electricity indicators, procedures, time and cost related to obtaining an electricity connection were removed from the dealing with construction permits indicators.

Third, a threshold has been introduced for the total tax rate for the purpose of calculating the ranking on the ease of paying taxes. All economies with a total tax rate below the threshold (which will be calculated and adjusted on a yearly basis) will now receive the same ranking on the total tax rate indicator. The threshold is not based on any underlying theory. Instead, it is meant to emphasize the purpose of the indicator: to highlight economies where the tax burden on business is high relative to the tax burden in other economies. Giving the same ranking to all economies whose total tax rate is below the threshold avoids awarding economies in the scoring for having an unusually low total tax rate, often for reasons unrelated to government policies toward enterprises. For example, economies that are very small or that are rich in natural resources do not need to levy broad-based taxes.

Data challenges and revisions

Most laws and regulations underlying the *Doing Business* data are available on the *Doing Business* website at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>. All the sample questionnaires and the details underlying the indicators are also published on the website. Questions on the methodology and challenges to data can be submitted through the website's "Ask a Question" function at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Ease of doing business and distance to frontier

This year's report presents results for 2 aggregate measures: the aggregate ranking on the ease of doing

business and a new measure, the "distance to frontier." While the ease of doing business ranking compares economies with one another at a point in time, the distance to frontier measure shows how much the regulatory environment for local entrepreneurs in each economy has changed over time.

Ease of doing business

The ease of doing business index ranks economies from 1 to 183. For each economy the ranking is calculated as the simple average of the percentile rankings on each of the 10 topics included in the index in *Doing Business 2012*: starting a business, dealing with construction permits, registering property, getting credit, protecting investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts, resolving insolvency and, new this year, getting electricity. The employing workers indicators are not included in this year's aggregate ease of doing business ranking. In addition to this year's ranking, *Doing Business* presents a comparable ranking for the previous year, adjusted for any changes in methodology as well as additions of economies or topics.⁴

Construction of the ease of doing business index

Here is one example of how the ease of doing business index is constructed. In the Republic of Korea it takes 5 procedures, 7 days and 14.6% of annual income per capita in fees to open a business. There is no minimum capital required. On these 4 indicators Korea ranks in the 18th, 14th, 53rd and 0 percentiles. So on average Korea ranks in the 21st percentile on the ease of starting a business. It ranks in the 12th percentile on getting credit, 25th percentile on paying taxes, 8th percentile on enforcing contracts, 7th percentile on resolving insolvency and so on. Higher rankings indicate simpler regulation and stronger protection of property rights. The simple average of Korea's percentile rankings on all topics is 21st. When all economies are ordered by their average percentile

⁴ In case of revisions to the methodology or corrections to the underlying data, the data are back-calculated to provide a comparable time series since the year the relevant economy or topic was first included in the data set. The time series is available on the *Doing Business* website (<http://www.doingbusiness.org>). The *Doing Business* report publishes yearly rankings for the year of publication as well as the previous year to shed light on year-to-year developments. Six topics and more than 50 economies have been added since the inception of the project. Earlier rankings on the ease of doing business are therefore not comparable.

rankings, Korea stands at 8 in the aggregate ranking on the ease of doing business.

More complex aggregation methods—such as principal components and unobserved components—yield a ranking nearly identical to the simple average used by *Doing Business*.⁵ Thus, *Doing Business* uses the simplest method: weighting all topics equally and, within each topic, giving equal weight to each of the topic components.⁶

If an economy has no laws or regulations covering a specific area—for example, insolvency—it receives a “no practice” mark. Similarly, an economy receives a “no practice” or “not possible” mark if regulation exists but is never used in practice or if a competing regulation prohibits such practice. Either way, a “no practice” mark puts the economy at the bottom of the ranking on the relevant indicator.

The ease of doing business index is limited in scope. It does not account for an economy’s proximity to large markets, the quality of its infrastructure services (other than services related to trading across borders and getting electricity), the strength of its financial system, the security of property from theft and looting, its macroeconomic conditions or the strength of underlying institutions.

Variability of economies’ rankings across topics

Each indicator set measures a different aspect of the business regulatory environment. The rankings of an economy can vary, sometimes significantly, across indicator sets. The average correlation coefficient between the 10 indicator sets included in the aggregate ranking is 0.36, and the coefficients between any 2 sets of indicators range from 0.17 (between protecting investors and getting electricity) to 0.57 (between starting a business and protecting

investors). These correlations suggest that economies rarely score universally well or universally badly on the indicators.

Consider the example of Canada. It stands at 12 in the aggregate ranking on the ease of doing business. Its ranking is 3 on both starting a business and resolving insolvency, and 5 on protecting investors. But its ranking is only 59 on enforcing contracts, 42 on trading across borders and 156 on getting electricity.

Variation in performance across the indicator sets is not at all unusual. It reflects differences in the degree of priority that government authorities give to particular areas of business regulation reform and the ability of different government agencies to deliver tangible results in their area of responsibility.

Economies that improved the most across 3 or more Doing Business topics in 2010/11

Doing Business 2012 uses a simple method to calculate which economies improved the most in the ease of doing business. First, it selects the economies that in 2010/11 implemented regulatory reforms making it easier to do business in 3 or more of the 10 topics included in this year’s ease of doing business ranking.⁷ Thirty economies meet this criterion: Armenia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Georgia, Korea, Latvia, Liberia, FYR Macedonia, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Nicaragua, Oman, Peru, Russian Federation, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, the Solomon Islands, South Africa and Ukraine. Second, *Doing Business* ranks these economies on the increase in their ranking on the ease of doing business from the previous year using comparable rankings.

Selecting the economies that implemented regulatory reforms in at least 3 topics and improved the most in the aggregate ranking is intended to highlight economies with ongoing, broad-based reform programs.

⁵ See Simeon Djankov, Darshini Manraj, Caralee McLiesh and Rita Ramalho, “*Doing Business* Indicators: Why Aggregate, and How to Do It” (World Bank, Washington, DC, 2005). Principal components and unobserved components methods yield a ranking nearly identical to that from the simple average method because both these methods assign roughly equal weights to the topics, since the pairwise correlations among indicators do not differ much. An alternative to the simple average method is to give different weights to the topics, depending on which are considered of more or less importance in the context of a specific economy.

⁶ A technical note on the different aggregation and weighting methods is available on the *Doing Business* website (<http://www.doingbusiness.org>).

⁷ *Doing Business* reforms making it more difficult to do business are subtracted from the total number of those making it easier to do business.

RESOURCES ON THE *DOING BUSINESS* WEBSITE

Current features

News on the *Doing Business* project
<http://www.doingbusiness.org>

Rankings

How economies rank—from 1 to 183
<http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings/>

Reports

Access to *Doing Business* reports as well as subnational and regional reports, reform case studies and customized economy and regional profiles
<http://www.doingbusiness.org/reports/>

Methodology

The methodologies and research papers underlying *Doing Business*
<http://www.doingbusiness.org/methodology/>

Research

Abstracts of papers on *Doing Business* topics and related policy issues
<http://www.doingbusiness.org/research/>

***Doing Business* reforms**

Short summaries of DB2012 business regulation reforms, lists of reforms since DB2008 and a ranking simulation tool
<http://www.doingbusiness.org/reforms/>

Historical data

Customized data sets since DB2004
<http://www.doingbusiness.org/custom-query/>

Law library

Online collection of business laws and regulations relating to business and gender issues
<http://www.doingbusiness.org/law-library/>
<http://wbl.worldbank.org/>

Contributors

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