ESCWA Capacity Building Workshop on Open Government in the Arab Region

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Participation, collaboration and engagement (1):

Participation: strategy and concept

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Preparing capacity development material: background and purpose

• Capacity development material for government decision-makers in the Arab region on implementing open government

• Structured as a generic medium- to long-term strategy

• **Basic premise**: although Governments are not omnipotent, their actions affect the lives of millions of citizens

• All citizens have a **right to know** how institutions are making decisions, who participates in preparing them, who receives funding and what information is produced or underlies the preparation and adoption of legal acts
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**Strategy derivation:**

- **Transparency**
  
  Government accountability
  
  Public has information about what government is doing

- **Engagement**
  
  Public can contribute ideas and expertise
  
  Government can make more informed policies

- **Collaboration**
  
  Improve government effectiveness
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**Strategy derivation:**

**European E-Government Action Plan, 2016-20**

- Facilitating **digital interaction** between administrations and citizens and businesses for high-quality public services

- Developing **re-usable modules** for user-friendly and personalised as well as better policies

- Based on **principles** of inclusiveness and accessibility; openness and transparency; and trustworthiness and security
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Strategy derivation:
European open governance framework, 2016


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Strategy derivation:
OECD digital government strategy, 2014

Government no longer perceived only as provider but also now as convener and enabler

Technology can be used for:

1. Greater transparency, openness and inclusiveness of government processes
2. Encourage engagement and participation in public service design and delivery
3. Data-driven culture in public sector
4. Risk management approach
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Strategy derivation:
Tim Berners-Lee’s 5-star open data scheme, 2006

★★★★★ Link data to all other appropriate data
★★★★ Use URIs to denote things, so that people can point at your stuff
★★★ Use non-proprietary formats, e.g. CSV instead of Excel
★★ Available as structured machine-readable data, e.g. Excel instead of image scan
★ Make your stuff available on the Web (whatever format) under an open license
eParticipation and Open Government are not goals in themselves – they are tools to make wider societal goals possible, e.g.:

- Global policy goals: Agenda 2030 SDGs
- Regional policy goals, e.g. Arab Region, EU, ASEAN
- National policy goals
- City policy goals
Putting open government and participation in perspective (2)

Participation benefits

– Service efficiency and effectiveness
– Quality and legitimacy of decisions
– Good governance and active citizenship

eParticipation additional benefits

– Reduced transaction and coordination costs
– Greater deliberativeness
– Enhanced information-processing capacity
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Strategy derivation:
UNDESA E-Participation index since 2003 (1)

- **E-information**: enabling participation by providing citizens with public information and access to information without or upon demand

- **E-consultation**: engaging citizens in contributions to and deliberation on public policies and services

- **E-decision-making**: Empowering citizens through co-design of policy options, coproduction of service components, delivery modalities.
E-Participation Framework is comprised of the following three stages:

**Stage 1 - E-information**: availability of online information

**Stage 2 - E-consultation**: online public consultations

**Stage 3 - E-decision-making**: directly involving citizens in decision processes
Government Effectiveness (GE) – capturing perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government’s commitment to such policies. Source: Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project by the World Bank Institute
Control of Corruption (CC) – capturing perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests.

Source: Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project by the World Bank Institute
ESCWA generic open government strategy

Four phases of open government

Stage 1: OPENNESS
Opens government data and information to non-government actors

Stage 2: PARTICIPATION
Gives non-government actors the ability to provide feedback and inputs to government

Stage 3: COLLABORATION
Enable non-government actors to directly collaborate in the work of the government

Stage 4: ENGAGEMENT
 Achieves a level of total engagement of non-government actors in the work of the government
### ESCWA generic open government strategy

**Four phased framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Openness for Transparency</td>
<td>- What government does and how it is organised</td>
<td>✓ Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Participation</td>
<td>- Feedback loops</td>
<td>✓ Responsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Collaboration</td>
<td>- Co-creation</td>
<td>✓ Inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Engagement</td>
<td>- Shared responsibility</td>
<td>✓ Effective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ESCWA generic open government strategy

Six strategic objectives

1. Developing policy and strategy
2. Providing institutional frameworks
3. Setting up legal and regulatory frameworks
4. Upgrading government capacity
5. Rolling-out technology features and channels
6. Improving public capacity
Preliminary steps

- Availability and use of ICT
  + business process reengineering in and across entities
- Declared policy document outlining national vision for participation and open government
- Change management strategy
- Increase capacity of government employees
- Raise awareness among non-government actors
III. PHASE 1: GENERIC OPENNESS STRATEGY

- Citizen Engagement
- Collaboration
- Participation
- Openness
- Preliminary Steps
ESCWA generic open government strategy

Phase 1: generic openness strategy

- One-way flow of information from government to non-government actors
- Government is active, other non-government actors tend to be passive
- Transparency by default, with legally defined exceptions
- Public can hold government to account on policies and performance
- Some relevant data from e-information component of UN E-Participation index

- Putting data online:
  - 1 Star ★ make your stuff available on the Web (whatever format) under an open license
Openness strategy – Policy

• All government activities in principle **open and transparent** but not **total transparency**, though decisions themselves, as well as the evidence and rationale for them should be transparent.

• The public can then:
  1) understand how and why government works
  2) hold government to account

• Long-term and politically **stable framework**

• **Aligned** with broader social policies

• **Impacts, benefits, costs**

• **Quick wins**
  Analyse and improve impacts, benefits, costs; collaborative alliances, coordinate strategies, align policies, body with cross-government responsibility and power, top political will

• **Tackle resistance** across government entities and promote sharing
Openness strategy – Institutional framework

- **Institutions**
  State/national authority or competence

- **Governance**
  Centralisation and de-centralization: determine policy and coordinate strategy at top government level (e.g. prime minister office, taskforce in Finance Ministry), action plans and implementation at lower levels

- **Monitor/analyse impacts**
  Standardised approach, quantitative, qualitative, KPIs, etc.
Openness strategy – Legal and regulatory

- **Legal and legislation**
  Freedom of information, re-use of information and data
  Once only principle, consider digitization before legislation

- **Open government data**
  Inventory of data, Chief Information/Data Officer, data quality, ownership of data, taxonomies/global standards

- **Data protection**
  E.G.: Identity Assurance Programme (UK), see own data and know who has used it (Estonia)

- **Security**
  Technical, citizen data, reputation
Openness strategy – Government capacity

- **Open government data**
  Cities often leaders but national level also important
  - Open data must be standardised and shared across entities (e.g. European Interoperability Framework, EIF)
  - Focus on high value datasets, e.g. map, weather, environmental, traffic, socio-economic, base registries

- **Government personnel**
  Whole-of-government perspective, knowledge sharing and transfer; civil servants career progression

- **Raise awareness across government**
Openness strategy – Technology features and channels

- **Tools and features for transparency**
  - Portals for information and data
  - Transparency features (e.g. policies, rights, missions, codes of conduct, agendas, how to use)
  - Data protection and security features
- **Align** to suit the needs of both government and users, e.g. on-going process of experimentation and adaptation
- **Raise awareness** amongst non-government and especially disadvantaged users
- **Provide incentives**: why? what’s in it for you?, cost, accessibility, outreach, help desks, chatbots, training, in-person support, floor walkers, personal assistants)
Openness strategy – Public capacity (1)

- **Basic digital training**
  Especially for traditionally digitally excluded, e.g. people who are older, poorer, have disabilities, live in inaccessible areas

- **Curate demand side ecosystem**
  Appropriate tools, surveys, quick wins, potential pioneers
Openness strategy – Public capacity (2)

Cumulative levels of ICT use and exploitation

1) Access
2) Socio-economic
3) Skills
4) Beneficial use
5) Participation & co-creation
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IV. PHASE 2:
GENERIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

- Citizen Engagement
- Collaboration
- Participation
- Openness
- Preliminary Steps
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Phase 2: generic participation strategy

- **Two-way** exchange of information, knowledge and opinions
- Government becomes *active and re-active*, other non-government actors are re-active
- Participatory by default, with legally defined exceptions
- Public contribute ideas and expertise
- Government determines the agenda and retains the leading role
- Some relevant data from e-consultation component of UN E-Participation index

**Putting data online:**
- 2 Star ★ ★ available as structure ed machine-readable data, e.g. Excel instead of image scan
- 3 Start ★ ★ ★ use non-proprietary formats, e.g. CSV instead of Excel
Participation strategy – Policy and strategy

• Participation policy
  1. overall philosophy, 2. list of facility and functions, 3. how participation will be handled, 4. expected user behavior

• Success criteria
  Explain in language people can understand – let people express their anger and frustration if necessary, respond whether use inputs or not (no black holes), as early in the policy and decision process as possible

• Participation process
  Process simplification and reduction; complexity kept in back-office

• User-centered design
  Design thinking, personas, service pathways

• Personalisation
  E.g. MyPage, simplification=personalization, mass customisation
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Participation strategy – Institutional framework

Building on Phase 1

• **Institutions**
  State/national authority or competence

• **Governance**
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• **Monitor/analyse impacts**
  Standardised approach, quantitative, qualitative, KPIs, etc.
Building on Phase 1, plus

- Require government entities to enable participation – right of and opportunities for non-government actors to participate
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Participation strategy – Government Capacity

- **Guidance for civil servants** – train civil servants in engaging with the public: responsive, credible, accurate, fair, clear, thorough and transparent; open about what they can and cannot do
- **Objectives** needs to be clear from the outset + transparent procedure and understand success criteria
- **Be a civil servant** – ambassador for the government, promote participatory culture
- **Help to frame the debate** – government as arbiter between competing interests in society, making trade-offs transparent, reduce trivialisation and shouting, avoid false polarisation
- **Timing**: participants inputs must be *early enough* to make a difference
- **Security and privacy for civil servants** – email, passwords, security risks
Participation strategy – Technology features and channels (1)

- Shift to social media, web 2.0, semantic web
- Multi-channel and multi-media both for participation and e-participation
- E-participation portal: audio, video, feedback, rating
- Collect feedback, comments, opinions, access decisions based on previous consultations
- Open government data tools facilitating accessing, using and commenting
- Data protection – eID, information privacy, Commissioner to advise users, guidance on cyber security
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Participation strategy – Technology features and channels (2)

Aligning purposes with types of participation, collaboration of engagement

- **Mainly offline, with online support**

- **Move towards mainly online**

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**Depth**

- Moderated brainstorming
  - Workshops
  - Focus groups
  - Policy networks

- Policy portals
  - Targeted communications
    - Citizen juries
  - Commissions
    - Question periods
    - Town halls
    - Solicited feedback
    - Deliberative polling
    - Polling

- **Recommendation zone**
  - Solicited feedback
  - Deliberative polling
  - Polling

- **Decision zone**
  - Elections
  - Referenda

**Breadth**
Participation strategy – Technology features and channels (3)

- **Interplay** between channels, mix of offline and online
- **Social media types**: networks, platforms, publication, feedback
- **Citizen feedback channels**
  - Citizens: this is a problem
  - Government: we need input to inform administration or political process
  Examples: chat, comment, poll, surveys, forums, blogs, social media link buttons, etc.
- **Remember to acknowledge feedback**: automatic receipt of feedback
Building on Phase 1, plus

- Build participation from the bottom
  - local and specific is best
  - then show how local debates have wider relevance
- Digital and political literacy
  - problem of digital ‘elites’
Thank you