

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA)

GUIDELINE ON FOSTERING INNOVATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR OF THE ARAB REGION

Chapter III: The IDEA Lifecycle for Public Sector Innovation



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III. THE IDEA LIFECYCLE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION

A. INTRODUCTORY NOTES

This chapter presents the IDEA lifecycle, which has been developed in the context of this study as a proposal at the level of a methodology instrument for developing and, most importantly, sustaining, innovations in public sectors. At the same time, care has been taken to substantiate this proposal by systematic liaising it to ICT tools that allow implementing the way of work prescribed. The detailed correspondence of the IDEA lifecycle to different categories of ICT tools, as well as the methodology according to which best-in-class tools for each one of these categories have been located and catalogued, are documented in corresponding reference material to the study⁹⁵.

The IDEA lifecycle for public sector innovation is based on the premise that innovation efforts in public sectors have three important characteristics:

- (a) they comprise a multi-step, rather than monolithic, process;
- (b) they are complex in nature and involve stakeholders both internal and external to the public sectors; and
- (c) they are not linear in nature, but necessitate iterations at specific stages as well as in their overall implementation frame.

These characteristics, which may be found in innovation efforts in many different domains, are especially applicable to such efforts within public sectors, given the institutional orientation of the latter to operate in extrovert terms, by providing products and services that aim to serve citizens and businesses whose needs are diversified at any point in time, as well as dynamically evolving over time.

At the same time, these characteristics become even more crucial when the need for sustainability, rather than one-off implementation, of public sector innovations comes into the picture. Sustainability of innovations, just like sustainability of any change in the current situation, implies that these innovations need to

- provide improvements and added value with respect to previous ways of work;
- allow all stakeholders to perceive this, and therefore provide their active consensus for keeping these innovations alive over the course of time;
- provide more efficient use of resources (doing the same with less, doing more with the same);
- allow public sectors to perceive this, and therefore provide their active support against abandoning these innovations over the course of time;
- be open to further revisions and improvements or, in other words, do not promote themselves as the solution to avoid any further innovation, but rather than the opposite; and
- encourage all internal and external stakeholders to adopt this mindset and actively contribute further ideas for improvements.

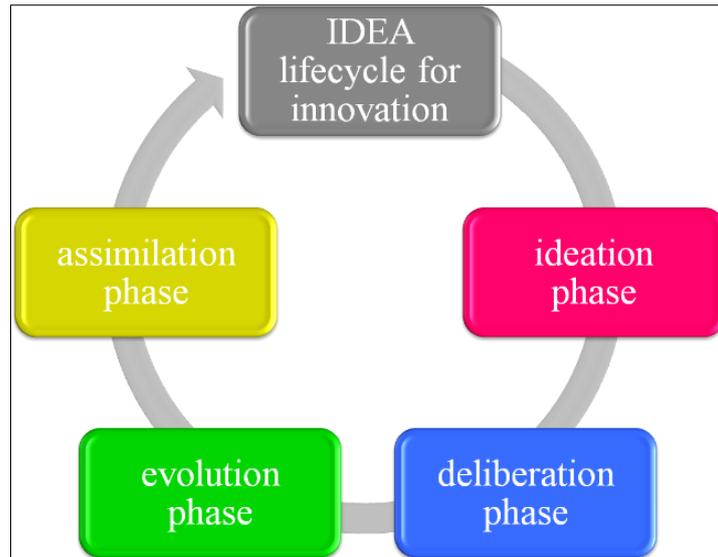
In this respect, the IDEA lifecycle which is described below for implementing and sustaining public sector innovation, encompasses provisions for building consensus, support as well as further improvements around innovations in the public sector, to help not only their initial implementation but their sustained operation as well.

B. OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE IDEA LIFECYCLE

This IDEA lifecycle encompasses, at the top-level, four discrete phases for generating ideas for innovation (Ideation Phase), deliberating over these together with external stakeholders (Deliberation Phase), implementing them in a circular evolutionary process (Evolution Phase), and monitoring how they are adopted by all stakeholders involved (Assimilation Phase). Figure 1 provides a simple representation of the top-level structure of this lifecycle.

⁹⁵ The reference material to the study is accessible online from <https://www.unescwa.org/our-work/7775/resources>.

Figure 1. Top-level structure of the IDEA lifecycle



Source: Consultant, original work for the study on Fostering Innovation in the Public Sectors of the Arab Region.

Every one of these phases is circular, therefore in practice it may need to be iterated several times to arrive at more mature results that will stand the test of time. This need for phase-level iterations further depends on contextual factors such as

- the complexity of the problems to be solved;
- the diversity of the stakeholders and resources involved;
- organizational and social readiness and maturity for change; as well as
- legacy, continuity and interoperability constraints that need to be respected in each case.

At the same time, the IDEA model is circular at the top-level, meaning that the entire lifecycle may need to be iterated several times, in two different cases:

- in the case of first implementation, due to the contextual factors that may bring forward new issues that had not been identified in the first walk through of the process; and
- following first implementation, at points in time when it is felt that new potential and/or new needs for improvements are presenting themselves, to sustain the innovations that have been implemented.

As a final note, it needs to be kept in mind that the phases prescribed in this lifecycle model, although conceptually discrete, may well not be strictly discrete in practice. The contextual factors, mentioned above, as well as the complex nature of innovation, may result in overlaps between successive phases, or even in bypassing some phase to move on directly with the next one. Such instances can only be managed on the experience and judgment of the actors involved. Still, the conceptual differentiation of these phases in the presentation of the model herein, can facilitate the task of planning the innovation effort in such cases as well.

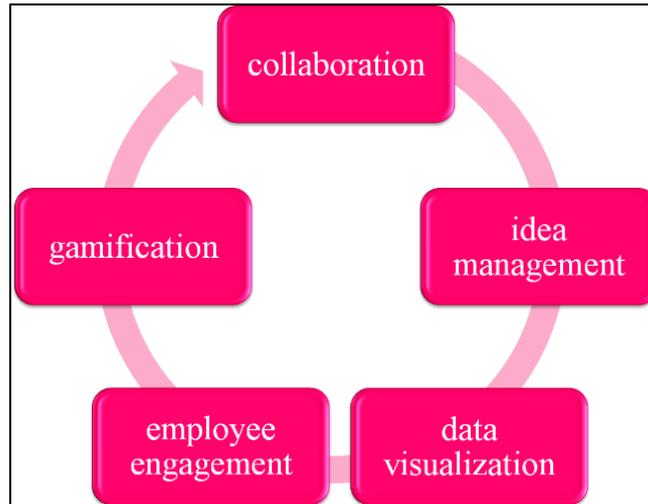
The sections that follow describe the discrete phases of the IDEA lifecycle in more details.

C. IDEA LIFECYCLE: IDEATION PHASE

The top-level purpose of the IDEA lifecycle Ideation Phase is to have the internal stakeholders of the public sector generate ideas for innovation, grounded not just on the potential to innovate, but on actual needs of the public sector for bringing forward positive change.

To this end, the Ideation Phase comprises the activities depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Detailed structure of the IDEA lifecycle Ideation Phase



Source: Consultant, original work for the study on Fostering Innovation in the Public Sectors of the Arab Region.

These activities are meant to take place in the following manner:

- All activities need to be enacted in a first full implementation of this phase, and in every subsequent iteration that needs to bring forward significant new outcomes, whereas some of the activities may be omitted in iterations taken for minor improvements only.
- The strict serial order of activities that follows from reading Figure 2 clockwise is not the only option; indeed, there may be cases where these activities can be put in place in a strict linear way with waterfall characteristics (not allowing the next activity to commence before the previous one has completed), and cases where these activities may be enacted in parallel, throughout the implementation of this phase. The final choice depends on the objectives of the specific implementation instance of this phase (cf. previous point), as well as on the time-horizontal vs. time-vertical nature of each activity with respect to the objectives of this phase (cf. points below).
- The Collaboration, Employee Engagement and Gamification activities should best be perceived as more time-horizontal in nature, i.e. as activities that can best be enacted throughout the duration of a full implementation of this phase. The Idea Management and Data Visualization activities, on the other hand, should better be perceived as more time-vertical in nature, i.e. as activities that can best be enacted at appropriate stages during implementation of this phase, and deliver concrete outcomes that will be used by the time-horizontal activities.
- That said, the central positioning of the Collaboration activity in the initiation of the Ideation Phase is meant to convey the idea that every iteration of this phase, whether for full or for partial implementation, should include the enactment of at least this activity.

The activities of the IDEA lifecycle Ideation Phase are described in the following in terms of the core objective of each activity, as well as its contents and aspects of importance. Implementation details for each activity in each specific case are left to the public sectors involved, who can best identify the more appropriate ways to implement it considering their own contextual and case-specific factors, whereas software tools and platforms that may be used for each activity have been located and catalogued in the corresponding annexes of the study.

The Collaboration activity is meant to encourage internal stakeholders of the public sector to collaborate, taken in this context to mean work with one another, rather than cooperate, taken in this context to mean simply work in the presence of one another. Practically speaking, the goal of this activity is to make sure that ways of work are put in place which make sure that internal stakeholders work together on joint agendas and co-delivered outcomes, rather than just share information and exchange outcomes of their individual work.

The Idea Management activity is meant to encourage the stakeholders involved to generate ideas for innovations, share these ideas within their internal community, be open to peer review and feedback and co-

produce final proposals. At the same time, it is meant to allow decision makers plan and enact internal processes in which the above will take place in a systematic way. It should be noted that this activity is cross-boundary, in the sense that it traverses organizational and expertise boundaries, and can best be enacted by joint teams mixed across hierarchy levels and specializations.

The Data Visualization activity is meant to provide the stakeholders involved with the ability to inspect available data on the public sector's internal work and contextual realities, identify important information that these data deliver, and ground and/or inform their innovation proposals with such hard evidence. This activity clearly entails a sustained level of proper management of the underlying data assets, and is closely related to the Data Governance activity described in the Evolution Phase of the IDEA lifecycle further below.

The Employee Engagement activity is meant to provide public sector managers with instruments to promote and monitor the active involvement and fruitful engagement of personnel in the activities taking place within the Ideation Phase. This activity is particularly important in this context, given that the concept of generating ideas for positive change may often be perceived as additional, unnecessary and/or copious work by the exact people that have the tacit knowledge and facts to contribute the best such ideas.

The Gamification activity is meant to apply meaningful gamification mechanics to the implementation of the Ideation Phase. This builds on the concept that generating new ideas is a creative process, which among others has to do with testing the truth of our own assumptions, beliefs and inspirations in a playful way. This can be explicitly acknowledged through the deployment of game-like processes for generation of ideas in a more systematic way by teams and communities, and the challenges and rewards involved should best be defined in a way meaningful for each specific case.

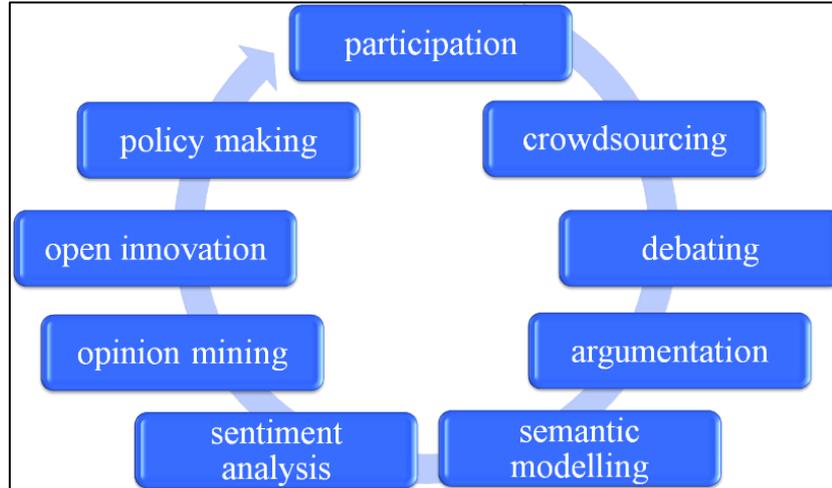
D. IDEA LIFECYCLE: DELIBERATION PHASE

The top-level purpose of the IDEA lifecycle Deliberation Phase is to have the internal stakeholders of the public sector reach out to external stakeholders pertinent to the innovation proposals that have been generated, and encourage them to deliberate over the latter. The concept of external stakeholders, in this respect, should be taken as a collective loosely-defined term that may encompass citizens, businesses, interest groups, civil society organizations, as well as other public sectors and international organizations that have an interest in the innovations proposed. In this sense, and given that each one of these actors have their own needs and agendas, it should be expected that external stakeholders beyond deliberating over the agenda set by the public sector initiating this process, may tend to bring forward more issues of interest, or priority, to themselves. In such a case this exercise, which may have been initiated by a public sector as a consultation over a fixed agenda with specific issues and closed-choice questions, may turn into a real deliberation exercise with new issues defined by the stakeholders.

This should not be perceived as an a priori problem, but managed as an opportunity for enriching the engagement of external stakeholders as well as the outcomes of this exercise overall. In this line of thought, it can be noted that the Deliberation Phase of the IDEA lifecycle may be used for idea generation for public sector innovations from scratch, so that the major innovation ideas-creative stage of the IDEA lifecycle may be moved from internal ideation to cross-boundary deliberation over innovation proposals.

To this end, the Deliberation Phase comprises the activities depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Detailed structure of the IDEA lifecycle Deliberation Phase



Source: Consultant, original work for the study on Fostering Innovation in the Public Sectors of the Arab Region.

These activities are meant to take place in the following manner:

- All activities need to be enacted in a first full implementation of this phase, and in every subsequent iteration that needs to bring forward significant new outcomes, whereas some of the activities may be omitted in iterations taken for minor improvements only.
- The strict serial order of activities that follows from reading Figure 3 clockwise is not the only option; indeed, there may be cases where these activities can be put in place in a strict linear way with waterfall characteristics (not allowing the next activity to commence before the previous one has completed), and cases where these activities may be enacted in parallel, throughout the implementation of this phase. The final choice depends on the objectives of the specific implementation instance of this phase (cf. previous point), as well as on the time-horizontal vs. time-vertical nature of each activity with respect to the objectives of this phase (cf. points below).
- The Participation, Crowdsourcing, Debating, Argumentation and Open Innovation activities should best be perceived as more time-horizontal in nature, i.e. as activities that can best be enacted throughout the duration of a full implementation of this phase. The Semantic Modelling, Sentiment Analysis, Opinion Mining and Policy Making activities, on the other hand, should better be perceived as more time-vertical in nature, i.e. as activities that can best be enacted at appropriate stages during implementation of this phase, and deliver concrete outcomes that will be used by the time-horizontal activities.
- That said, the central positioning of the Participation activity in the initiation of the Deliberation Phase is meant to convey the idea that every iteration of this phase, whether for full or for partial implementation, should include the enactment of at least this activity.

The activities of the IDEA lifecycle Deliberation Phase are described in the following in terms of the core objective of each activity, as well as its contents and aspects of importance. Implementation details for each activity in each specific case are left to the public sectors involved, who can best identify the more appropriate ways to implement it considering their own contextual and case-specific factors, whereas software tools and platforms that may be used for each activity have been located and catalogued in the corresponding annexes of the study.

The Participation activity is meant to encourage stakeholders external to the public sector as discussed above to participate in this deliberation exercise. The primary objective of this activity has to do with the process, rather than the actual outcomes, of participation. In this respect, it needs to be enacted in a way that will ensure an open, inclusive and meaningful process that will deliver rich and focused feedback.

The Crowdsourcing activity is meant to encourage stakeholders external to the public sector operate as information providers, in case where the innovation proposals discussed are in need of information currently not available to the public sector in order to further substantiate their importance and aspects, and/or as problem

solvers, in case where the innovation proposals discussed have been formulated in terms of problems to solve or issues to ameliorate, but remain open-ended in terms of the alternative solutions that may be possible.

The Debating activity is meant to encourage external stakeholders to debate over the issues put forward in this overall exercise. The notion of debating, in this respect, has to do with a process in which each stakeholder involved has a protected right and a practical way to voice her or his views, with as few restrictions on structure and volume as possible, in a multi-modal manner allowing for text, voice, video, comments, storytelling and any other similar format as may be appropriate in each context. In all cases, the goal of this activity is to provide rich feedback that may be further explored to identify opinions and new issues.

The Argumentation activity is meant to encourage external stakeholders to react to some issues in a more structured way, formulating their own concrete arguments anew, providing counter-arguments or corroborating arguments to arguments already formulated by others, as well as voting for or against the latter. The goal of this activity is to end up with conceptual maps of arguments over the issues that lay the grounds for innovations, and/or over themselves the innovations proposed, so that the latter are substantiated with a concrete rationale which has gathered public consensus.

The Semantic Modelling activity is meant to allow stakeholders internal to the public sector to explore the (potentially voluminous) corpora of debates and arguments that have been formed at some point in time, to identify which issues have been discussed or most discussed, which views are prevalent, which concerns recur most often in the external stakeholders' feedback, and other similar.

In a similar way, the Sentiment Analysis and Opinion Mining activities are meant to allow internal stakeholders of the public sector to explore the corpora of arguments and debates, to identify positive, neutral and negative reactions with respect to specific proposals (in the case of Sentiment Analysis), as well as codify the different opinions expressed with respect to the issues discussed (in the case of Opinion Mining). It should be noted that the value of these activities, as well as of the Semantic Modelling activity above, is grounded on the fact that different stakeholders generally use different wordings and expression styles to express meanings that may be quite similar, as well as on the fact that, in a successful deliberation exercise, the volume of the resulting debating and argumentation corpora may be such that it will render human inspection and exploration impractical.

The Open Innovation activity is meant to encourage external stakeholders to explicitly engage in an open innovation exercise, with a focus on being creative, thinking in terms of what is possible rather than in terms of what is allowed; being daring in terms of ideas, coming up with proposals that have some solid value even if they seem strange at first glance; and being open in terms of interaction, accepting the right of their peers to criticize and/or build on their own proposals, and accepting the fact that results of this exercise are to be openly shared and owned.

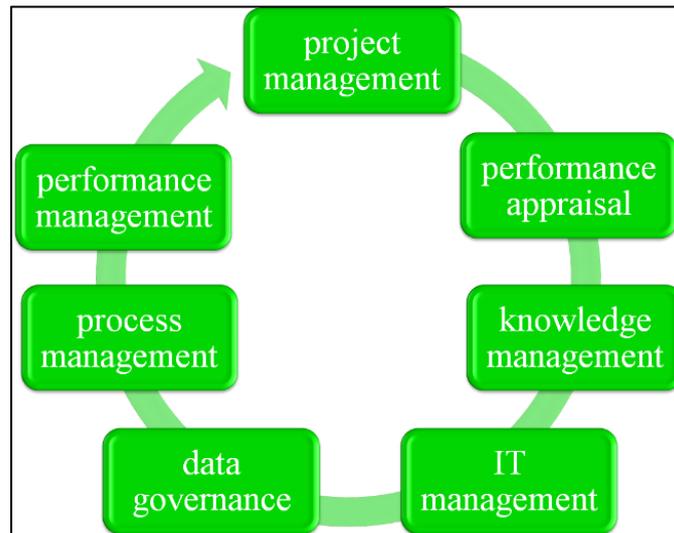
The Policy Making activity, finally, is meant to engage stakeholders to turn their innovation ideas, or their views on the innovation proposals of others, into concrete scenarios for policies that the public sector may adopt. This activity has essentially to do with the need and responsibility of deliberating not for the sake of deliberating, but for the sake of delivering some solutions that can be put into action and, to this end, need to be expressed in terms of policies and become embedded into new or existing policies of the public sector.

E. IDEA LIFECYCLE: EVOLUTION PHASE

The top-level purpose of the IDEA lifecycle Evolution Phase is to allow public sectors to implement, along a circular evolutionary process, the innovation proposals that have been formulated. Given that these proposals, generally, will take the use of ICT infrastructures and services for granted, this phase is in fact reminiscent of various approaches that may be found in the literature for implementation of IT and organizational change, and is pertinent to all the issues that arise in the discussion about organizational alignment of information technology.

Along these lines, the Evolution Phase of the IDEA lifecycle comprises the activities depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Detailed structure of the IDEA lifecycle Evolution Phase



Source: Consultant, original work for the study on Fostering Innovation in the Public Sectors of the Arab Region.

These activities are meant to take place in the following manner:

- All activities need to be enacted in a first full implementation of this phase, and in every subsequent iteration that needs to bring forward significant new outcomes, whereas some of the activities may be omitted in iterations taken for minor improvements only.
- The strict serial order of activities that follows from reading Figure 4 clockwise is not the only option; indeed, there may be cases where these activities can be put in place in a strict linear way with waterfall characteristics (not allowing the next activity to commence before the previous one has completed), and cases where these activities may be enacted in parallel, throughout the implementation of this phase. The final choice depends on the objectives of the specific implementation instance of this phase (cf. previous point), as well as on the time-horizontal vs. time-vertical nature of each activity with respect to the objectives of this phase (cf. points below).
- The Project Management, Performance Appraisal and Performance Management activities should best be perceived as more time-horizontal in nature, i.e. as activities that can best be enacted throughout the duration of a full implementation of this phase. The Knowledge Management, IT Management, Data Governance and Process Management activities, on the other hand, should better be perceived as more time-vertical in nature, i.e. as activities that can best be enacted at appropriate stages during implementation of this phase, and deliver concrete outcomes that will be used by the time-horizontal activities.
- That said, the central positioning of the Project Management activity in the initiation of the Evolution Phase is meant to convey the idea that every iteration of this phase, whether for full or for partial implementation, should include the enactment of at least this activity.

The activities of the IDEA lifecycle Evolution Phase are described in the following in terms of the core objective of each activity, as well as its contents and aspects of importance. Implementation details for each activity in each specific case are left to the public sectors involved, who can best identify the more appropriate ways to implement it considering their own contextual and case-specific factors, whereas software tools and platforms that may be used for each activity have been located and catalogued in the corresponding annexes of the study.

The Project Management activity is meant to include all the standard tasks for managing projects, according to the methodologies used by public sectors in this respect. Still, the underlying rationale for explicitly including such an activity in the IDEA lifecycle Evolution Phase, is that the implementation of innovation

proposals, if it is to bear fruit, should be explicitly considered as a project, with its own allocated resources, timelines, work plans and objectives. That said, and in the understanding that it would be more straightforward to implement this activity with the methodologies and tools that the public sectors involved are already using, the option of using more agile project management methodologies and tools for the special case of innovation projects is worth considering, due to the complex nature of these projects and the character of the solutions sought, which are original.

The Performance Appraisal activity is meant to provide public sector managers with instruments to monitor and, more importantly, recognize and appraise, good performance of public sector personnel during the implementation of innovation proposals. The importance of this activity in the case of innovation projects stems from the fact that such projects inevitable entail changes to current internal ways of work and external outcomes, with multiple lateral effects that risk getting out of control if not properly managed. In this respect, human factors and good personnel performance comprise maybe the most important critical success factor at least for the back-office part of such projects, and the better way to care for this factor would be to monitor and practically appraise good performance, rather than just impose objectives and penalize shortcomings.

The Knowledge Management activity is meant to allow all internal stakeholders to share and manage the knowledge that currently exists within public sectors and is pertinent to the innovation efforts undertaken. It should be noted that, beyond formal organizational knowledge (official procedures, regulatory frameworks and similar) that is already documented and can thus be updated as required, the most important types of knowledge to subject to explicit management in the context of this activity are the tacit knowledge of mid-/low-management and front-line personnel, as to the problems and exceptions which internal processes may have and how to best solve them, as well as concerning undocumented problems and issues that the citizens or businesses served are having and how to best respond to them.

The IT Management activity is meant to allow public sectors systematically to manage their IT properties (taken to mean installed infrastructures, managed services as well as new assets acquired) in an effective and efficient way throughout the change waves that the implementation of innovation efforts will inevitably cause. Although the technology investments of public sectors are more and more moving from the technology as an installed product to the technology as a managed service approach, it should not be overlooked that many public sectors still have the major part of their IT properties physically installed in their premises. In such and all cases, the success goal for this activity is to ensure that mission-critical IT properties will operate uninterrupted, and that all newly acquired IT properties will be confirmed for full interoperability with existing ones prior to bringing them into operational use.

The Data Governance activity is meant to provide to public sectors instruments for managing their data throughout the implementation of innovation efforts and resulting changes. Given the importance of data as an asset which is proprietary, and thus irreplaceable and most critical, the single most important concern of this activity is to ensure that the master data of public sectors are safeguarded and maintained for integrity and updates as required throughout innovation projects. At the same time, given that data are often the basis driving such projects, a similarly important concern of this activity is to have data assets curated, available and explorable as appropriate to serve as information base for innovation, as this may be required in each case.

The Process Management activity is meant to ensure that processes of innovating public sectors are managed as appropriate throughout the innovation effort. This is particularly important for innovation efforts focused on, or in direct ways pertinent to, the process level, and it entails all static and dynamic aspects of public sector processes. In terms of static aspects, process descriptions, metadata and knowledge (cf. the Knowledge Management activity above) need to be documented and gradually versioned and updated, close together with the introduction of changes. In terms of dynamic aspects, the enactment of processes needs to be managed for operational continuity, as well as for security, in all cases of process changes that have not yet passed the test of time.

Finally, the Performance Management activity is meant to provide public sector with instruments for monitoring their operational performance levels, as well as the changes of the latter throughout innovation

efforts. This clearly entails internal performance aspects, in terms of resource utilization and resource effectiveness, external performance aspects, in terms of satisfaction of external stakeholders, as well as organizational performance aspects, in terms of accomplishment of the mission of the public sectors. All these should be sustained and improved, as evidence for the value of innovation efforts and rationale for their sustainability.

F. IDEA LIFECYCLE: ASSIMILATION PHASE

The top-level purpose of the IDEA lifecycle Assimilation Phase is to monitor how the innovations effected by public sectors are adopted by all stakeholders involved, those internal to the public sector and, most importantly, those external. To this end, this phase is based on the rationale that public sectors, to gather real evidence about the value and sustainability of their innovations, need here again to reach out to their external stakeholders and actively seek the latter’s feedback.

In this respect, the Assimilation Phase of the IDEA lifecycle comprises the activities depicted in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Detailed structure of the IDEA lifecycle Assimilation Phase



Source: Consultant, original work for the study on Fostering Innovation in the Public Sectors of the Arab Region.

These activities are meant to take place in the following manner:

- All activities need to be enacted in a first full implementation of this phase, and in every subsequent iteration that needs to bring forward significant new outcomes, whereas some of the activities may be omitted in iterations taken for minor improvements only.
- The strict serial order of activities that follows from reading Figure 5 clockwise is not the only option; indeed, there may be cases where these activities can be put in place in a strict linear way with waterfall characteristics (not allowing the next activity to commence before the previous one has completed), and cases where these activities may be enacted in parallel, throughout the implementation of this phase. The final choice depends on the objectives of the specific implementation instance of this phase (cf. previous point), as well as on the time-horizontal vs. time-vertical nature of each activity with respect to the objectives of this phase (cf. points below).
- The Online Community and Social Media Management activities should best be perceived as more time-horizontal in nature, i.e. as activities that can best be enacted throughout the duration of a full implementation of this phase. The Advocacy and Feedback Management activities, on the other hand, should better be perceived as more time-vertical in nature, i.e. as activities that can best be enacted at appropriate stages during implementation of this phase, and deliver concrete outcomes that will be used by the time-horizontal activities.

- That said, the central positioning of the Online Community activity in the initiation of the Assimilation Phase is meant to convey the idea that every iteration of this phase, whether for full or for partial implementation, should include the enactment of at least this activity.

The activities of the IDEA lifecycle Assimilation Phase are described in the following in terms of the core objective of each activity, as well as its contents and aspects of importance. Implementation details for each activity in each specific case are left to the public sectors involved, who can best identify the more appropriate ways to implement it considering their own contextual and case-specific factors, whereas software tools and platforms that may be used for each activity have been located and catalogued in the corresponding annexes of the study.

The Online Community activity is meant to encompass the work required for innovating public sectors to build up an online virtual community of stakeholders that will serve as sources of feedback for the value and sustainability of the innovations effected. Such a community will typically need to extend beyond the innovating public sector's organizational and physical boundaries, to provide independent feedback by third sources that would not be possible otherwise. Still, this type of community differs from the one discussed in the Deliberation phase of the IDEA lifecycle along two important aspects:

- Firstly, the online community needed at this stage is more selective, in the sense that it should comprise members of diversified provenance (citizens, businesses, interested groups, civil society organizations as well as other public sectors and international organizations, just like the community discussed for the Deliberation Phase), who are nevertheless sharing not just an interest in but also an informed, critical and at the same time unbiased opinion on the innovations implemented.
- Secondly, the online community needed at this stage is less porous, in the sense that it should comprise members that are committed to participate for a meaningful timeframe, and can commit to the purpose of providing their constructive feedback, in the understanding that this is the central *raison d'être* of this community, which renders it a community around this common goal.

The Social Media Management activity, at the same time, is meant to allow public sectors to reach out and communicate their innovation efforts on selected social media, the latter being at this stage the prevalent platform for addressing a broader public. Social media exposure clearly being a delicate exercise for public sectors, this activity encompasses all the work and objectives involved in deploying a systematically managed social media presence on the platforms appropriate for each case. At the same time, this activity can serve as a recruitment instrument for bringing external stakeholders into the online community discussed above.

The Advocacy activity is meant to provide public sectors with the opportunity and instruments for collecting, beyond feedback and comments, selected real cases and stories that can serve as advocacy for the actual value that their innovation efforts bring forward in practice. The main goal of this activity is to build up an authentic and diversified advocacy corpus for the innovation efforts that have been implemented, that can serve a twofold purpose: in an extrovert manner, serve as an instrument for further communicating these efforts and gathering more advocacy; and in an introvert manner, serve as a testimony towards management for the actual value achieved through these efforts and the need to sustain them.

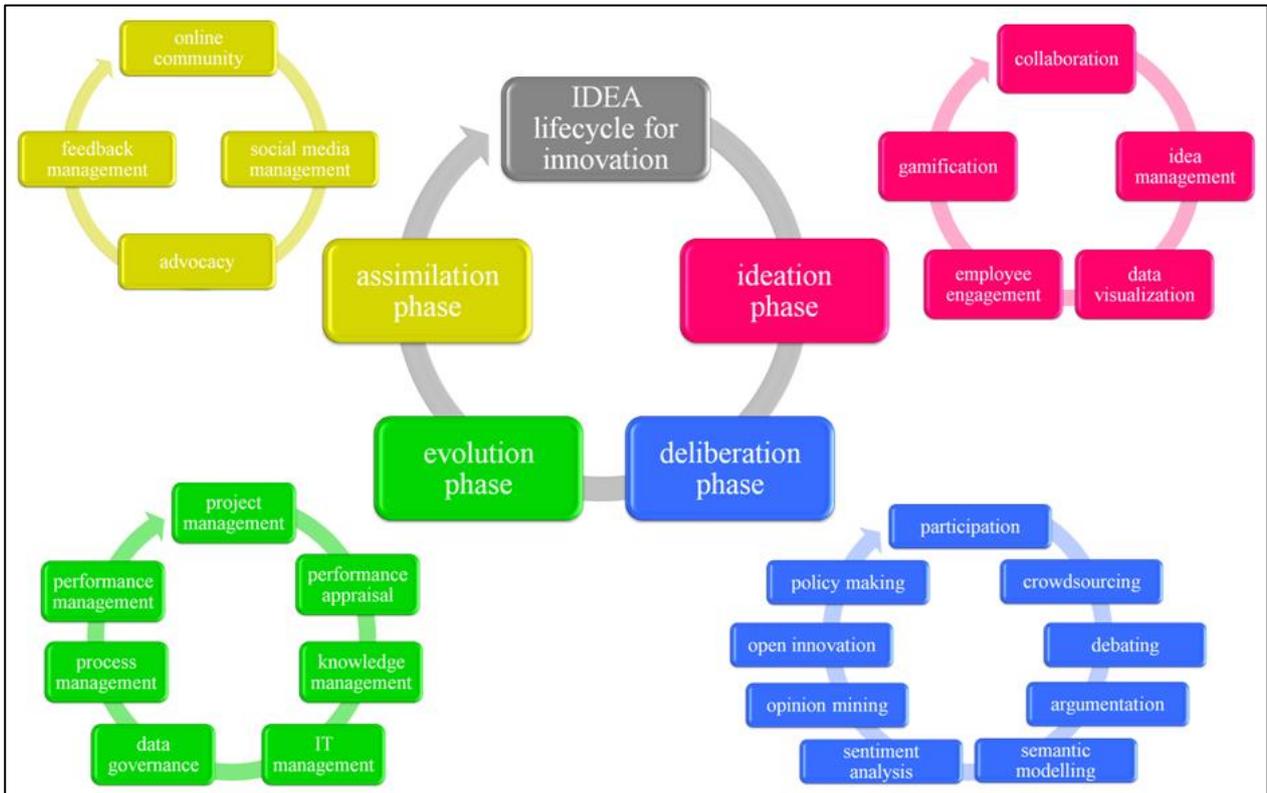
Finally, the Feedback Management activity is targeted at deploying instruments for systematically accepting and handling the feedback received for the innovation efforts implemented. It should be expected that this entails positive feedback, which can be screened and fed into advocacy corpora and other supporting evidence for the value of these efforts, as well as neutral feedback, which can be used to signal cases where more needs to be done, as well as negative feedback. The latter may be due either to actual shortcomings of the innovation efforts or to the time needed for external stakeholders to follow the learning curve required to follow the new ways of work of public sectors and take benefit of them. In both cases, this feedback can be used to drive amelioration efforts for the corresponding issues, and it is equally important that it is systematically monitored and handled.

G. CONCLUDING NOTES

The IDEA lifecycle for innovation efforts of public sectors aims to accommodate in a holistic (in terms of conceptual approach) and systematic (in terms of methodological guidance) way the issues brought forward during such efforts.

Figure 6 below depicts the detailed structure of this lifecycle, together with the 4 phases and total of 25 activities prescribed.

Figure 6. Detailed structure of the IDEA lifecycle phases and activities



Source: Consultant, original work for the study on Fostering Innovation in the Public Sectors of the Arab Region.

The number of different phases and activities included in this model should not be taken as grounds for considering it with reluctance based on complexity. Indeed, this overall model encompasses steps and activities which are already known to public sectors, but still often siloed in different mission-critical operations, and prescribes that they be brought together to implement successful and sustainable innovations.

Moreover, the methodological provisions provided in the above for the different ways in which the phases of the lifecycle and the activities of each phase may be enacted and iterated, create degrees of freedom necessary for this model to lend itself for adaptation to diversified needs and cases. This exact flexibility, at the same time, creates the need to actively explore and determine how this model can best fit and serve in each different case of public sector innovation effort.