



Openness · Transparency · Participation · Collaboration · Citizen Engagement



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ESCWA

Open Government for Greater Public Sector  
Transparency and Accountability in Arab Countries  
**Capacity Development Material on  
Participation, Collaboration and Engagement**

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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

# **Open Government for Greater Public Sector Transparency and Accountability in Arab Countries**

## **Capacity Development Material on Participation, Collaboration and Engagement**



**United Nations**  
Beirut, 2018

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Note: Mention of firm names and commercial products does not imply the endorsement of ESCWA or the United Nations.

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The present report was prepared by Mr. Jeremy Millard, Director, Third Millennium Governance, Denmark, and Ms. Louise Thomasen, Director, coThomasen, Denmark, both international experts in digital government transformation. Ms. Nibal Idlebi, the chief of the Innovation Section, directed the preparation of this report and contributed to its peer-review. Ms. Lize Denner, Information Technology Officer at the Innovation Section, peer-reviewed this report.





## CONTENTS

*Page*

Acknowledgements .....	iii
Abbreviations and acronyms .....	vii

### *Chapter*

<b>I. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
A. Purpose and structure of the capacity development material .....	1
B. The open government context .....	2
<b>II. OVERVIEW OF THE GENERIC STRATEGY.....</b>	<b>3</b>
A. Strategy derivation.....	3
B. The four phases of the generic open government strategy .....	5
C. Preliminary steps .....	6
<b>III. PHASE 1: GENERIC OPENNESS STRATEGY.....</b>	<b>7</b>
A. Overall goals.....	9
B. Developing policy and strategy: lessons and guidance .....	9
C. Providing institutional frameworks: lessons and guidance .....	13
D. Setting up legal and regulatory frameworks: lessons and guidance .....	14
E. Upgrading government capacity: lessons and guidance .....	16
F. Rolling out technology features and channels: lessons and guidance .....	18
G. Improving public capacity: lessons and guidance .....	20
<b>IV. PHASE 2: GENERIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY .....</b>	<b>21</b>
A. Overall goals.....	23
B. Developing policy and strategy: lessons and guidance .....	23
C. Providing institutional frameworks: lessons and guidance .....	26
D. Setting up legal and regulatory frameworks: lessons and guidance .....	26
E. Upgrading government capacity: lessons and guidance .....	26
F. Rolling out technology features and channels: lessons and guidance .....	28
G. Improving public capacity: lessons and guidance .....	36
<b>V. PHASE 3: GENERIC COLLABORATION STRATEGY .....</b>	<b>37</b>
A. Overall goals.....	39
B. Developing policy and strategy: lessons and guidance .....	39
C. Providing institutional frameworks: lessons and guidance .....	41
D. Setting up legal and regulatory frameworks: lessons and guidance .....	44
E. Upgrading government capacity: lessons and guidance .....	44
F. Rolling out technology features and channels: lessons and guidance .....	45
G. Improving public capacity: lessons and guidance .....	49
<b>VI. PHASE 4: GENERIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY .....</b>	<b>51</b>
A. Overall goals.....	53
B. Developing policy and strategy: lessons and guidance .....	53

## CONTENTS (continued)

### Page

C. Providing institutional frameworks: lessons and guidance .....	55
D. Setting up legal and regulatory frameworks: lessons and guidance .....	56
E. Upgrading government capacity: lessons and guidance .....	56
F. Rolling out technology features and channels: lessons and guidance .....	59
G. Improving public capacity: lessons and guidance .....	61

## **VII. THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENT ACTORS AND THE RECONFIGURATION OF TRANSPARENCY, PARTICIPATION AND COLLABORATION THROUGH ENGAGEMENT .....**

**63**

<i>Annex. Public Administration Reform</i> .....	65
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<i>Bibliography</i> .....	66
---------------------------	----

### LIST OF TABLES

1. Main types of impacts and benefits of open government and e-government .....	10
2. Web 2.0: social media participatory tools .....	31

### LIST OF FIGURES

1. Generic open government strategy .....	5
2. Digital age participation, collaboration and engagement methodologies.....	29
3. Classification of collaborative tools .....	46
4. Government as a platform for new roles .....	58

### LIST OF BOXES

1. Jordan: open government data policy .....	13
2. Information system for Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis .....	18
3. Egypt: National Grid Reference Addressing System .....	20
4. Mozambique: engaging citizens to monitor waste management services .....	30
5. Kenya: Open Data Initiative.....	31
6. Bahrain: Fix2Go.....	34
7. Oman: Parent Mobile Application .....	35
8. Tunisia: feedback and commenting on professional education.....	35
9. Tanzania: partnership for shaping policy-making through online consultations .....	36
10. India: I Paid a Bribe .....	42
11. Morocco: E-collaboration for sustainable development policy.....	46
12. Palestine: Governmental Mobile Applications Competition.....	49
13. Kenya: Map Kibera .....	57
14. United States of America: Chicago Complete Street Design .....	57
15. United Kingdom: FixMyStreet.....	61

## Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>app</b>	mobile application
<b>ESCWA</b>	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
<b>ICT</b>	information and communications technology
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OGP</b>	Open Government Partnership
<b>PPP</b>	public-private partnership
<b>RSS</b>	rich site summary
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>TDD</b>	Technology for Development Division (ESCWA)





## I. INTRODUCTION

This capacity development material was prepared in the framework of the project titled “Fostering Institutional Development for Participatory Approaches towards the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Western Asia”. The Technology for Development Division (TDD) of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is participating in this project and focus on promoting open government in the Arab countries through the use and adaptation of modern and emerging technologies. This project aims to build the capacity of ESCWA member States to increase the transparency and accountability of their public sectors and adopt more effective and efficient citizen engagement approaches through the use of technology.

This report relies on the Commission’s framework for fostering open government in the Arab region<sup>1</sup> which was also prepared in the context of the above-mentioned project. It is a four-phased framework that is consistent with the context in Arab countries, specifically the level of investment in information and communications technology (ICT), e-government status, legal and regulatory aspects, Arab culture and the level of interaction between citizens and the public sector. Government departments and institutions can use this framework to apply open government by following a vertical approach in applying the four phases sequentially, or by following a horizontal approach in applying a phase across different government entities.

### A. PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT MATERIAL

The purpose of this document is to provide details about the implementation of the four-phased ESCWA framework on open government, and to offer basic material for developing the capacity of government decision-makers in the Arab region to implement successful open government strategies through policies and initiatives for openness, participation, collaboration and engagement. These are also seen as vehicles for increased government accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness and effectiveness, as described in the ESCWA framework on open government and dictated by the needs and priorities of the Arab countries.<sup>2</sup> It is based on global good practices customized to the situation in the Arab countries. The report is structured as a generic medium- to long-term strategy for open government through four phases: (a) openness for transparency; (b) participation; (c) collaboration; and (d) engagement. It also indicates the relevant technology enablers. This generic strategy provides checklists, illustrative case studies and guidance based on good practices from around the world and the Arab region and shows how these may be applied to a given phase.

The generic strategy is designed as material for use in workshops and advisory services for developing the capacity of mid-level government decision-makers charged with the implementation of open government through the four phases, when enabled by ICT. The strategy is generic in the sense that it is applicable to any level of government and to specific departments, agencies and public institutions, but it also offers specific guidance for implementation, moving from one phase to the next dependent on accomplishments and existing needs.

Based on a comprehensive examination of evidence and good practice, the four-phase generic strategy is structured with reference to six strategic objectives, as follows:

- (a) Developing policy and strategy;
- (b) Providing institutional frameworks;
- (c) Setting up legal and regulatory frameworks;
- (d) Upgrading government capacity;
- (e) Rolling out technology features and channels;
- (f) Improving public capacity.

Each of the strategic objectives have several building blocks, as elaborated in this report.

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<sup>1</sup> ESCWA, 2018, available at <https://www.unescwa.org/study-fostering-open-government-arab-region>.

<sup>2</sup> Idlebi and Mounajed, 2017.

## B. THE OPEN GOVERNMENT CONTEXT

The open government approach of this report is about fostering participatory, collaborative and engaging governance, particularly in the context of ICT. It provides tools for enabling and strengthening openness, participation, collaboration and engagement between Governments and legitimate non-government actors, including citizens, civil society organizations, other non-profit organizations and businesses, both for the empowerment of these actors as well as for the benefit of society. In addition to promoting the opening of decision-making and policymaking to non-government actors, the overall objective of open government is to improve access to information and public services, and to improve the understanding of and engagement in administrative and other governance processes.

Open government, especially when using ICT, is very important given that, 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. Without this, there is increased danger that high levels of corruption, the perception of corruption and lack of trust in the Government will undermine the ability of the Government to act effectively. If open government is developed without participation, it may result in all actors in society not trusting each other and lead to an increase in transaction costs across society. Such costs place a burden on all of society, making it less robust, resilient and effective as well as undermining cohesion.

The overall context of the digitization of society shows that people are connecting with each other by social media and other ICTs on a massive scale which cannot be ignored by Governments. This presents Governments with both opportunities and threats, given, for example, that some participation tools are government controlled and owned, though most are not. This means that in an open manner, Governments will also have to follow the users (citizens, civil society organizations and businesses) and be where they are when this is relevant to its roles and functions. Governments need to join in, monitor and contribute to any relevant online community to reap the full benefits.

Open government is thus about communication and interaction 24 hours a day and seven days a week, and not only about the technology, although a good understanding of technology is of course required. ICT has both high and wide reach (huge mass audiences) but can also be targeted, one-to-one and be very personal and customized. It tends to be interactive and is not as top-down, unidirectional or authoritative compared to traditional broadcast media. Security in the ICT context is increasingly important, in relation to technical, personal and reputational (trust) issues. There are numerous and ever-expanding technical tools available, including networks (such as Facebook), platforms (such as wikis), publication tools (such as YouTube) and feedback facilities (such as ratings and surveys).

There are also many current challenges and threats which need to be addressed, partially arising from the digitization of government, such as the development of the so-called 'post-truth' society when data and information are misused, manipulated or distorted without any factual or objective basis. In this context, vigilance as well as new forms of security are needed to address issues such as how to know the data are correct, and the danger of 'black-box' algorithms when users do not know how they function and are structured. There are also potentially greater challenges with big data, such as cybercrime and cyberwarfare as well as the so-called 'dark web' and other subversive developments.

## II. OVERVIEW OF THE GENERIC STRATEGY

### A. STRATEGY DERIVATION

Many sources have been consulted in designing the generic strategy, including sources from the European Union, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the United Nations and the Open Government Partnership (OGP).

Since 2003, in the context of its biennial global eGovernment Surveys, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs has compiled the E-Participation Index, which has as framework:

(a) E-information: Enabling participation by providing citizens with public information and access to information without or upon demand;

(b) E-consultation: Engaging citizens in contributions to and deliberation on public policies and services;

(c) E-decision-making: Empowering citizens through co-design of policy options, coproduction of service components and delivery modalities.<sup>3</sup>

In the United States of America, the Obama Administration's Open Government Directive from 2009 is also based on three principles forming the cornerstone of an open government.

- Transparency promotes accountability by providing the public with information about what the Government is doing;
- Participation allows members of the public to contribute ideas and expertise so that their government can make policies with the benefit of information that is widely dispersed in society;
- Collaboration improves the effectiveness of government by encouraging partnerships and cooperation within the Federal Government, across levels of the government, and between government and private institutions.<sup>4</sup>

The Open Government Directive was used as a set of principles and the basis for action, underpinned by an overt philosophy and mindset of openness. It has since 2011 been taken up globally through the development of OGP.<sup>5</sup> As of February 2018, OGP consisted of 75 participating countries and 15 subnational governments that together have made over 2,500 commitments to transform their governments to be more open and accountable.

The Open Government Directive was also the background for the European E-Government Action Plan 2016-2020.<sup>6</sup> Pillar 3 of the Action Plan is concerned with facilitating digital interaction between administrations and citizens and businesses for high-quality public services, for example consisting of reusable modules for user-friendly and personalized as well as better policies. Such initiatives should be based on: inclusiveness and accessibility; openness and transparency; and trustworthiness and security.

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<sup>3</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> United States of America, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Open Government Partnership, 2018b.

<sup>6</sup> European Commission, 2016.

The ESCWA policy framework for strengthening open government in the Arab countries outlines a similar approach to the United Nations (2016) and the United States (2009). The framework outlines four phases, splitting the third step of the Open Government Directive into phase 3 and phase 4 as follows:

(a) Openness for transparency, especially of data, as it lays the foundation for open participation and cooperation between the Government, citizens and other stakeholders;

(b) Participation, by providing ideas, knowledge, comments and suggestions to the Government, leads to increased inclusiveness and improved contributions to government work and decision-making;

(c) Collaboration focuses on the role of collaborative tools, while the previous phase focused on its role as an instrument of expression, government departments focus on collaboration with citizens and the private sector to provide innovative, value-added government services, in a way that allows access at any time and any place;

(d) Engagement aims to achieve the complete engagement of citizens in government work.<sup>7</sup>

The digital government strategies of OECD<sup>8</sup> are also relevant, which point out that, although government was once seen purely as a provider, it is now also seen as a convener and enabler and no longer as a silo separated from the rest of society. The four main OECD pillars of digital government are concerned not with the technology per se but with how the technology can be used to do the following:

- Ensure greater transparency, openness and inclusiveness of government processes and operations;
- Encourage engagement and participation of public, private and civil society stakeholders in policymaking and public service design and delivery;
- Create a data-driven culture in the public sector;
- Reflect a risk management approach to addressing digital security and privacy issues and include the adoption of effective and appropriate security measures, to increase confidence in government services.

A final important source for the generic strategy on open data was designed by Tim Berners-Lee, and it describes linked open data according to a five-star scheme:

1 star: Any data in whatever format made freely available through an open license.

2 stars: Data that are machine-readable and structured in any format.

3 stars: Data as in 2, but is in a standard format making it much easier to access and use by those using the standard.

4 stars: Data as in 3, but using open standards so that literally anyone can access and use it.

5 stars: Data which are all the above, plus electronically linking to other data sets, such as linking open government data with all other appropriately open, formatted and linked data.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Idlebi and Mounajed, 2017.

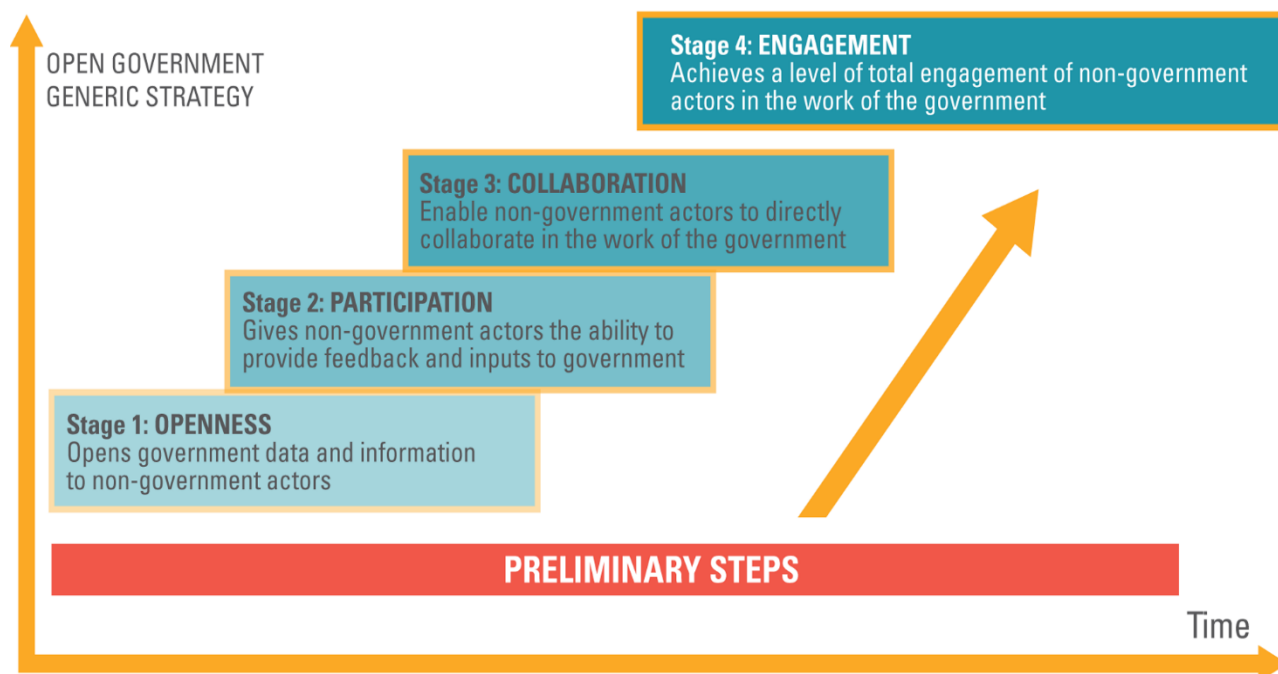
<sup>8</sup> OECD, 2014a.

<sup>9</sup> Berners-Lee, 2006.

## B. THE FOUR PHASES OF THE GENERIC OPEN GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

The generic strategy proposed in this report draws directly on the international experiences outlined above, while aligning with the ESCWA policy framework on open government for Arab countries (figure 1).

Figure 1. Generic open government strategy



Source: ESCWA, 2018. <https://www.unescwa.org/study-fostering-open-government-arab-region>.

**Preliminary steps** are measures which should be contemplated before launching the phases of open government implementation.

### Phase

1. **Openness** requires the opening of (government) data and information, its dissemination, quality and use, as well as the building of a culture of cooperation and openness among government agencies towards a joined-up whole-of-government approach, making it much easier for non-government actors<sup>10</sup> to understand what government does and how it is organized.
2. **Participation** relates to boosting the involvement of non-government actors in the work of the Government through feedback loops and providing ideas and knowledge.
3. **Collaboration** refers to more cooperation between the Government and non-government actors to co-create innovative services, strategies and plans.
4. **Engagement** moves towards the total engagement of non-government actors in the work of the Government through shared responsibility.

Each of the four phases of openness for transparency, participation, collaboration and engagement represent distinct types of relatively discrete strategies that can and often are carried out by countries

<sup>10</sup> The term 'non-government actors' is used throughout to cover citizens, civil society, charities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and non-profit institutions not part of the Government.



independently from each other. However, there is also considerable overlap and mutual dependence between the phases. In real life, they coexist and overlap, forming numerous interactions between government and non-government actors related to the prevailing sociocultural and regulatory contexts of each country. The phases are also cumulative and highly synergistic, especially if carried out in the order presented (from openness, to participation, to collaboration and then engagement), because the benefits to both government and non-government actors increase at each phase. Even though it is possible to achieve some open government benefits by implementing each phase independently in any order, the evidence shows that the benefits increase when all four are implemented and in the order suggested.

Chapters III, IV, V and VI provide a detailed description of the objectives of each of the four phases, together with supporting lessons and guidelines for how these objectives can be achieved. The annex provides an overview of the Public Administration Reform agenda and methodology, which is being developed and used by the European Commission and OECD and could also be applied to most Arab countries.

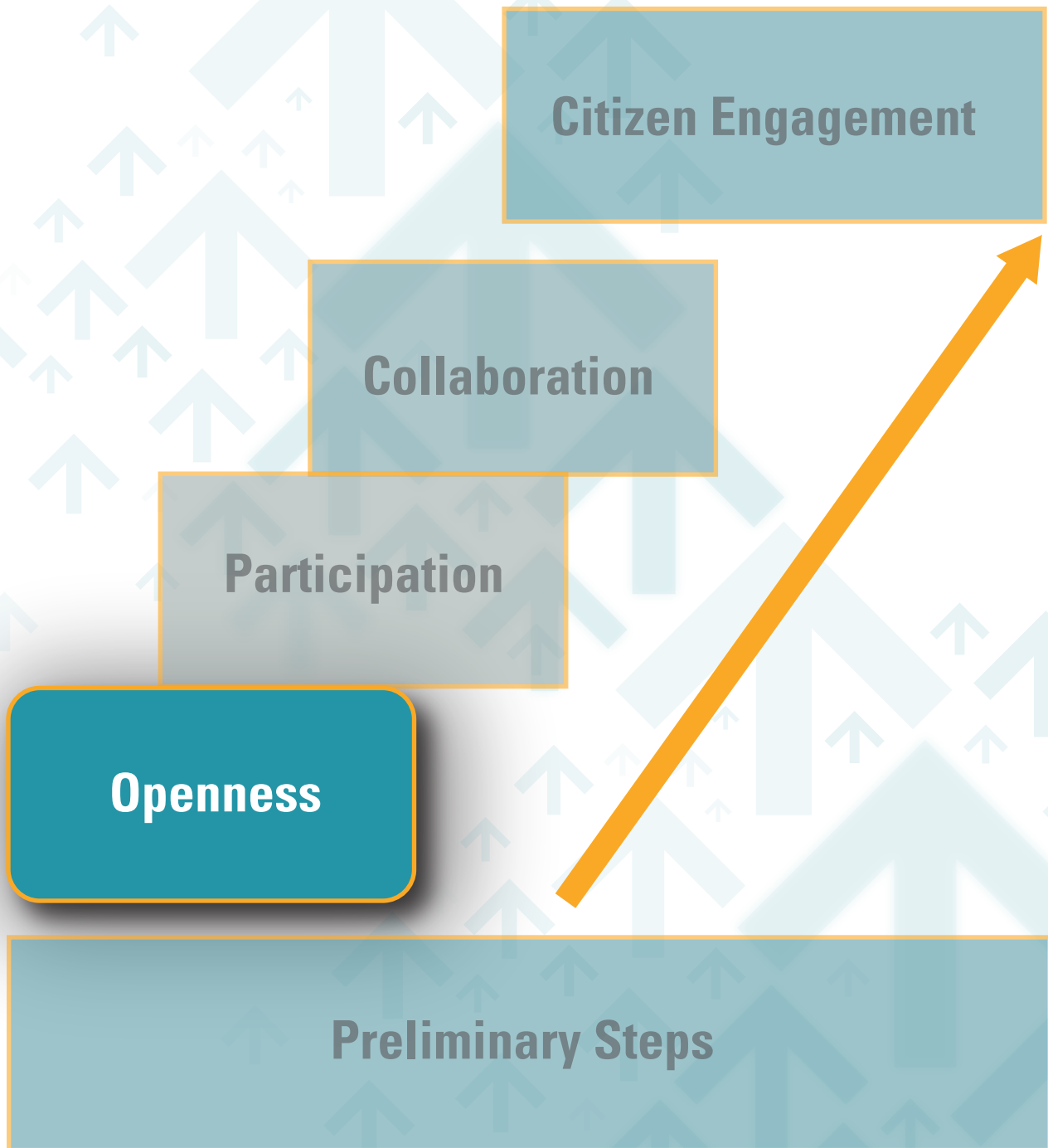
### C. PRELIMINARY STEPS

As shown in figure 1, several preliminary steps and conditions need to be in place prior to the detailed implementation of the four phases of the open government strategy. Open government relies increasingly on the availability and use of ICT, both in the Government as well as in the wider society. There is, thus, an important dependency on e-government given that a solid basis of e-government applications is required upon which to build open government applications. The business process reengineering needed within individual government entities, but also importantly across these entities linking them together, also relies heavily on ICT.

Several preparatory measures are also advisable, including designing a general framework for open government based on a declared policy document outlining the national vision for and overall approach to open government and the principles needed for implementation. A change management strategy across government is required which addresses both working procedures and mindsets, also using for example a senior management supervised “virtual interoperability matrix” covering the different entities and ensuring coordination between them. Coordination and cooperation among various public sector agencies is crucial for the success of open government. There is also a need to increase the capacity of government employees to learn how to use data dissemination tools, as well as interpret feedback from non-government actors. In terms of technology, a clear policy will be needed for embedding ICT use across government, the use of social media. Outside of government, a start should be made in raising awareness among non-government actors, through information and publicity.

### III. PHASE 1:

## GENERIC OPENNESS STRATEGY





### III. PHASE 1: GENERIC OPENNESS STRATEGY

#### A. OVERALL GOALS

As mentioned in chapter II, section B, at phase 1, the goal of the open government strategy is to be open and transparent. This requires opening (government) data and information, disseminating it, ensuring its quality and use, and building a culture of cooperation and openness among government agencies towards a joined-up whole-of-government approach, making it much easier for non-government actors to understand what the Government does and how it is organized. An important part of this is putting data online. Reference points for phase 1 include the following:

- Openness for transparency is basically one-way, from the Government to non-government actors, where the Government is active and non-government actors are passive;
- Some relevant data can be obtained from the e-information component of the United Nations E-Participation Index;
- The most relevant level of the five-star scheme for open data in phase 1 is 1 star: any data available on the web in any format but with an open license.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** As reflected in figure 1, it is clear that openness, as the first phase, typically has the role of establishing policies, strategies, systems and initiatives which provide the basis for phase 2 (participation), phase 3 (collaboration) and phase 4 (engagement). Thus, the content on the transparency strategy is more detailed than the content on the other phases.

The six strategic objectives and the relevant building blocks that demonstrate how they might be achieved need to be applied to the overall goals of the generic openness strategy, as described in the present chapter. Specific lessons and guidance are provided for each strategic objective drawing on the relevant building blocks.

#### B. DEVELOPING POLICY AND STRATEGY: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

##### 1. Policy

At phase 1 – openness – transparency by default is recommended, so that in principle all government activities should be fully transparent except in specific legally defined areas. Transparency enables the public to understand the workings of their Government and makes it possible for them to hold the Government to account for its policy and service delivery performance.

A long-term and politically stable policy framework is needed for this which provides sufficient resources, as well as political will and support, for open government building on e-government. It is also important to closely align open government and e-government policies with the broader societal policies a country has, both to maximize synergies and impacts and minimize conflict with such policies that could lead to lower or even negative impacts as well as the waste of resources.

Open government and e-government are not goals in themselves, but tools to make wider societal goals possible, so consideration needs to be given to making them mandatory otherwise these other benefits might not appear. Open government provides the cornerstone for making efficient and effective government possible, together with other elements of e-government, and needs to be seen on the political and strategic level.

Open government policies and vision should also be communicated through related participation, communication and awareness strategies, including using traditional media (such as radio, television, posters, leaflets and campaigns) as well as physical face-to-face engagement such as town hall meetings. Often open

government and e-participation are most effective at the local and regional levels, especially in large countries, as this is where the Government touches the everyday lives of citizens, where the local context can best be addressed and where it can quickly and directly be seen whether activities have an impact.

## 2. Impacts, benefits and costs

The main costs of open government and e-government are related to limited resources and funding, so that for example any efforts and finances devoted to them will result in fewer inputs for other policies, programmes and initiatives. However, there are also substantial benefits if open government policies are well designed, implemented and monitored. Table 1 contains a summary of the main types of benefits and impacts that can be considered.

**Table 1. Main types of impacts and benefits of open government and e-government**

Context	Impacts and benefits
Open government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service efficiency and effectiveness;</li> <li>• Quality and legitimacy of decisions;</li> <li>• Good governance and active citizenship.</li> </ul>
ICT supported open government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced transaction and coordination costs in social and political relationships;</li> <li>• Greater deliberativeness due to a-synchronic and anonymous qualities of ICT;</li> <li>• The enhanced information-processing capacity which information technology facilitates.</li> </ul>
Citizens, organizations, Government and other actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For citizens – increased convenience, satisfaction, feelings of involvement, greater engagement and commitment in community and society, also noting that e-participation is not only a rational but also an emotional experience;</li> <li>• For organizations (civil society and companies) – improved efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy of organizations, for example successful participation can increase the economic viability of private sector and civil society organizations, and probably also public institutions as well, by reducing costs. Also, the increased efficiency and quality of their own policymaking;</li> <li>• For Governments – support for social cohesion and other society-wide policies;</li> <li>• For all –increases in overall participation rates and the intensity and quality of participation if done in the right way.</li> </ul>
Policy and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ends or means: the instrumental benefits (that open government is a means to an end) compared to the intrinsic benefits of an open government process (that learning, individual reflective learning or social learning is inherently justified). The type of governance mode is more important for instrumental benefits than for intrinsic benefits;</li> <li>• Who benefits: both public goods (shared across many actors) and private goods (only for specific actors) are increased;</li> <li>• Short-term/long-term: the more immediate (micro) benefits of a distinct project or initiative compared to the longer-term (macro) benefits of living in an open governance culture. This can also be related to the operational (short-term) outputs of an open government project, on the one hand, compared to its outcomes and impacts (longer-term).</li> </ul>



**Table 1** (*continued*)

Context	Impacts and benefits
Local and regional government level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most progress with open government has been made at the local level;</li> <li>• The most commonly used ICT tools supporting open government are discussion forums and e-consultation tools;</li> <li>• However, there are considerable variations between cultural contexts, for example, in Europe ‘deliberation’ tools tend to predominate, notably forums, given that the political culture is typically more participatory and ongoing. (This applies to the national level as well.) This is compared with the United States where ‘transparency’ tools seem to predominate, such as webcasting, podcasting and Web 2.0 tools like rich site summary (RSS) feeds and video sharing. Here, the political culture tends to hold representatives more to account and this typically peaks at campaign time. In Arab countries, both ‘deliberative’ and ‘transparency’ tools are generally less developed but important, such as websites with policy information, social networks, informative rather than highly interactive mobile apps.</li> </ul>
Benefits at national government level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given that the national level open government system is relatively recent, and sometimes under stress and turmoil, it is more difficult to find a relatively stable role for open government, so it tends to be less relevant here than at local level, even though the national level has more resources;</li> <li>• However, some ICT tools for open government have increasingly been developed in recent years to help citizens lobby their representatives more effectively and in a coordinated way, or to enliven the internal democratic life of political parties. The use of basic personal communication tools for similar purposes, especially email, has also expanded.</li> </ul>
Benefits at cross-border level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT tools for open government are used even less at the cross-border level than the national level, not least due to the fragmentation of the Arab region and strong political and other differences between countries, even though there is generally a common language and culture offering great potential. Thus, in the Arab public sphere, most media are focused at national and/or local level;</li> <li>• However, there are many promising cross-border examples between Gulf Cooperation Council countries, although at present most are e-government applications and services mainly for the back office as opposed to front office.</li> </ul>

Source: Compiled by author.

### 3. *Quick wins*

Although care must be taken so that quick wins do not to impede longer-term goals, there are many potential and relatively easily achieved initiatives which can significantly enhance progress and have high visibility. These include analysing where and how costs are incurred, and the number of transactions and their costs to distinguish those which can be rapidly changed to produce quick results from those which require longer-term work. It is also useful to examine all relevant legal and regulatory issues to identify which can be rapidly changed to produce quick results as compared to those requiring longer-term work. In the absence of compulsion, it is best to start only with willing entities, build on those and show the benefits to others. Policymakers should set up principles for how to incorporate open government supported by ICT in new regulation. This should specify what areas are regulated, what data are accessible, what users are asked to do and what is technically feasible. They should consider if other authorities possess the information being requested. A ‘risk-based’ approach to open government is needed to compare the effort involved in preparing and making available open data versus the risks of not doing so.

Many of the policies prepared and implemented in phase 1 will need to be designed for all three phases, depending on the overall ambition and goals. Such policies include the following:

(a) *Develop, align and enforce relevant policy, institutional, legal and regulatory provisions*

Although many policy, institutional, legal and regulatory provisions may already be in place, they are often insufficiently aligned. In addition, enforcement mechanisms and adherence within and between entities are typically weak so their impact and effectiveness is reduced. Developing, aligning and enforcing relevant policy, institutional, legal and regulatory provisions is necessary to form collaborative alliances across government, as further described below.

(b) *Form collaborative alliances across government*

It is important to form collaborative alliances across the Government to coordinate the generic strategy effectively so that these joint efforts can leverage the maximum potential, avoid redundant investments, exploit synergies wherever possible and introduce a culture of sharing and reusing building blocks and solutions as part of routine practice. To achieve these principles, effective collaboration within a governance structure involving all relevant key players is of utmost importance. To achieve the priorities outlined in the generic strategy, the full commitment of specified actors is required as a precondition. This is necessary to tackle the silo phenomena and especially where different ministries, agencies and levels compete against each other.

Specifically, there is often a lack of coordination between relevant actors, such as information technology bodies, involved ministries and other entities. Mostly, these actors have their own agendas and do not take into consideration the requirements and developments of other entities. This non-coordination will severely hamper the effectiveness and efficiency of implementing the generic strategy, as well as build barriers to interoperability.

If policymaking, implementation and oversight are imbedded into a single line organization, it will be a competitor to other entities, rather than a facilitator for the whole of the Government. Thus, cooperation can typically only occur when such an organization has cross-government responsibility and power, supported by clear political pressure from the top. Similarly, if responsibilities for information technology in line ministries are spread between subordinated agencies, this causes them to compete with one another at the expense of the public good and the overall principles of good governance. Without built-in collaboration, expensive infrastructure will be underutilized and services, participation and open government data will not be developed and shared. Although many deficiencies are caused by the understandable lack of financial resources, existing systems often contain many redundancies which may reduce the need for Government expenditure on information technology in the short and medium term while opening new opportunities for longer-term growth.

(c) *Tackle the resistance of government entities to recognize open government as a part of the core business of the Government*

Open government and open government data are typically seen as chores and burdens on the Government rather than as tasks and responsibilities, and there is insufficient awareness and understanding of their value in economic, social and democratic terms.

Overcoming this resistance is ultimately dependent on applying high-level political will, legal obligations and budgetary entitlement/enforcement to drive a change of culture. This must enable a set of core competencies needed to focus on the prioritization of overall public value rather than, as is often the case at present, the individual interests of different competing government entities. Change should focus on a shift away from this inherent competition based on exclusive ownership of data by individual agencies, and even the selling of data between agencies (which should be disallowed and the costs allocated centrally by budgetary entitlement). In other words, data should be seen not as a commodity but as a resource. If the use of publicly created resources is charged for between entities, disincentives for the reuse of data will be created and

unnecessary complications in accounting will grow exponentially with the increase in interoperability. This inhibits open government and all e-government development.

Thus, it is important to determine what is the ‘core’ business in open government as part of the overall e-government policy, and to ensure that this can be handled inside government. This is necessary to retain control and retain/build competence, while the many non-core tasks can be outsourced to help build national and Arab region ICT businesses through public-private partnerships (PPPs) and public-civil partnerships.

Sometimes entities are reluctant to release government data because there are concerns about its accuracy, but this can be overcome by always specifying the provenance and timelines of the data and being completely transparent about its shortcomings as part of the guide as to how it can be used. In turn, international experience shows that users accept this and even in some cases work with the Government to improve data accuracy and hence its value for all actors. The focus should move towards combining and sharing across the Government to enable more efficient use of available resources including data, by establishing inter-agency networks and training.

The open government data policy of Jordan illustrates many aspects of good practice in transparency (box 1). This case also illustrates good practices in the participation phase (providing more responsive services through feedback from users), in the collaboration phase (increasing the participation of civil society in policy and decision-making processes and co-creating public goods and services between government and non-government actors).

#### **Box 1. Jordan: open government data policy**

Based on Jordan’s Law of Right to Access to Information (No. 47/2007), as well as the country’s Third National Plan 2016-2018,<sup>a</sup> commitment number 10 of its Open Government Partnership Initiative stipulates the implementation of an open government data sources policy. This uses ICT to facilitate access to governmental information and increases the transparency and accountability of government actions.

The platform contains three datasets available to the public: economy and business; tourism and archaeology; and population and community.<sup>b</sup> The overall objectives of the policy are:

1. Transparency and enhancing confidence in the Government’s performance.
2. Encouraging innovation in the provision of more responsive services important to people, pioneers, businesses and all relevant stakeholders.
3. Increase the participation of civil society in policy and decision-making processes.
4. Social and economic benefits: (a) attracting new investors; (b) stimulating the co-creation of public goods and services between government and non-government actors; (c) reducing unemployment through providing tools that initiate new income resources; and (d) enabling end users to access open government data for studies and statistical analysis.

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Sources: Open Government Partnership, 2018a.

<sup>a</sup> Available at [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Jordan\\_NAP-3\\_2016-2018\\_ENG.doc](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Jordan_NAP-3_2016-2018_ENG.doc).

<sup>b</sup> For more information go to <http://www.jordan.gov.jo>.

### **C. PROVIDING INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE**

#### **1. Institutions**

Institutional arrangements need to be put in place to support openness. These will include a state/national authority to facilitate and administer transparency, e-transparency and open government data.

## 2. Governance

There is a need for clear role and authority demarcations between entities, including the balance between centralization and decentralization, especially concerning responsibility and accountability. Where there are decentralized entities involved in the strategy, these should be coordinated and supported. In terms of the overall responsibilities for implementing the generic strategy supported by ICT, the following general approach is strongly recommended (in approximate sequence although the process should be iterative):

- (a) Central level: Develop and determine the overall long-term strategies, priorities, frameworks and infrastructure at the centre linked to the beneficiary's general policy goals;
- (b) Decentralized level: Determine the goals and needs of each entity/ministry/local government;
- (c) Central level: Prioritize, coordinate and (if necessary) insist on the goals and needs;
- (d) Decentralized level: Implement the strategy by relevant entities);
- (e) Central level: Coordinate, monitor and (if necessary) enforce ongoing implementation.

Once the details of the action plan are determined, the implementation guidelines, including timing, can be prepared. Some initial guidelines can, however, be specified in this generic strategy, including the need for coordination and/or enforcement of the strategy at the highest political level, through the office of the prime minister or president or through a powerful cross agency task force located, for example, in the Finance Ministry. Rigorous change and risk management programmes together with strong leadership at all levels are also required. In addition, robust change management actions should be implemented to reflect the wide differences in how civil servants work in, for example the initial needs assessments and design of open government tools. Training in the use of new tools and complex inter-administration communication is also very important.

## 3. Monitoring

Monitoring the roll-out of the open government strategy is necessary to assess and quantify both monetizable and non-monetizable costs and benefits for open government supported by ICT on an ongoing basis. This should cover both types of indicators:

- Quantitative indicators include the number of published data sets, the number of times the data are downloaded and the frequency of visits;
- Qualitative indicators include public understanding of open government initiatives and services, as well as overall satisfaction concerning interactions with the Government.

It is also important to note that benchmarking and comparing between entities are not always easy, as processes vary and are often not transparent. Thus, a standardized approach to monitoring and analysing impacts is necessary to develop and update the business case for implementing open government. Overall, the focus should be on specific tailored studies on costs, benefits and other impacts nationally and internationally, and on learning from good practices elsewhere as part of this process.

## D. SETTING UP LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

### 1. Legal and legislation

Legislation and/or regulations need to be put in place to support openness. These will include legislation and/or regulations reflecting policies on freedom of information and data, the reuse of information and data, and rights for non-government actors to access and use information and data, including open government data.

It is essential to establish a sound forward looking legal basis that ensures as much transparency as possible and clear lines of accountability. In this context, there is a need to consider whether open government supported by ICT should be mandatory and whether to achieve it in steps. Some entities would be reluctant if they think they will lose power. There are distinctions between rights and obligations, in a legal sense, in which the former means an entity may establish a social media platform to discuss a specific policy area with citizens but does not insist that it must. Legal obligations, however, can mandate an entity, for example, to publicise all laws it passes and to publish the full legal texts online and the entity must comply. The legal basis may not be as important as governance or monitoring. In principle, administrations may enforce an open government policy on a voluntary basis. The right mix of policy and quick wins is highly dependent on the specific political and social context.

Other important legal provisions should ensure that no entity may request data from users that have already been given to another entity (the so-called ‘once only’ principle) and legal relationships, especially contracts, with vendors and other non-public actors are completely in-line with administrative rules and standards, and published online unless there are valid legal reasons for not doing so.

Often digitization comes after legislation, but strong efforts should instead be made to at least consider a proposed digitization initiative before making new legislation. This will lead to closer coordination between regulation and the successful implementation of policies.

## *2. Open government data*

Open government data refer to all data placed by government authorities in the hands of non-public actors via a portal or a website or upon the request of one or more interested parties. The provision of open government data is usually free of charge.

The legal and regulatory framework, whether voluntarily or mandatory, should require an inventory of the available data, such as economic data, financial data, government procurement, public spending, data related to employment and employees in each of the relevant government departments, support data, education data, tourism and cultural data, geographical and spatial data, and government archives. It is important to gradually disseminate government data according to priorities. Websites should be easy to use, and should include help pages, dialogue forms and pages allowing the user to send comments and proposals. Data dissemination is subject to specific procedures for determining organizational structures responsible for data dissemination, and databases for data selection for publication. Some government departments have set up a data management committee and appointed a ‘Chief Data Officer’ and assistants.

In terms of data quality assurance, the principles that can be used to assess the extent of the readiness of government data to provide appropriate quality are completeness, timeliness, accessibility and sustainability. In addition, it is important to determine the ownership of data, including who has responsibility for data quality, data update, data loss and so on. Clear instructions to entities are needed on the use and reuse of data, based on common standards and approaches. They should remember that data can be of good quality in one context but not at all sufficient in another. Thus, open data and open standards are very important, though these can of course vary by entity, purpose, type of data and type of use, if all these issues are made transparent.

Taxonomy (semantic) issues are also important, including defining terms in law so they are equivalent, such as addresses, etc. A critical issue is semantics when not everyone uses the same definition for similar items. Governments should align their business reporting systems with the global standards and frameworks using equivalent fields, taxonomies and definitions.

## *3. Data protection*

Data protection should be mandated at all levels of all entities. Clear, trustworthy and legally defined data protection/privacy rules and systems are necessary for open government supported by ICT to be



successful, together with robust information management systems. A clear legal base is needed, for example specifying which entities and officials can use which data. A big issue is often how much control users have over their own data. Where there are no base registries or unique user identifiers, Governments should decide how to allow people to control the use of their own data, as mentioned above.

For example, in the United Kingdom the Identity Assurance Programme enables citizens or businesses to store data in a personal safe box and they decide which entities can see and use it. The policy stipulates data reuse and processing by user consent, but user consent can be overridden by law if necessary. One widely accepted solution to providing identity security online in the United Kingdom is the development of ‘identity assurance’ using a federated trust framework or trust ecosystem. This requires a set of industry-agreed protocols, standards and certifications under which organizations can collaborate to allow citizens to use assets they own to validate and verify their identity to relying parties.<sup>11</sup>

In Estonia, users can see their own personal data, check it for accuracy and make sure it is up-to-date, and request the Government to make changes if necessary, thereby increasing data quality and timeliness, as well as reducing the need for the Government to do this. This provision also enables users to track which entities have used their data over a given timeframe, thereby increasing trust and enabling users to monitor whether the Government is properly complying with its obligations. In this context, national identification and authentication are important to allow people to control how their data are used.<sup>12</sup>

Data protection is a precondition for trust in open government, and in that sense, it is very important, although too narrow an interpretation of data protection may conflict with other policies such as when applying the ‘once only’ principle.

#### 4. *Security*

There are three security issues that require attention for safe and secure open government supported by ICT. First, technical security for open government must prevent damage to the Government’s own systems by viruses, hackers or people with malicious intent. Technical security would also prevent unsolicited email by requiring users to enter email details, register or log on via Facebook profile, for example. Second, open government must fully secure citizen data such as passwords, personal identification numbers, bank account and health details. Third, open government must ensure reputation security by preventing the publication or display of content, such as pornography, that would cause offence to users. This requires cooperation between authors, discussion moderators and the marketing and legal departments. Also, open government must prevent or offer a positive response to inaccurate or potentially illegal material. This requires a proactive approach by the marketing department and covers not only the Government’s own ‘in house’ domain but also any online social media systems where the Government might be discussed.

### E. **UPGRADING GOVERNMENT CAPACITY: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE**

Many of the policies prepared and implemented in phase 1 will need to be designed for all three remaining phases, depending on the overall ambition and goals, as described in this section.

#### 1. *For open government data, focus on high value data sets*

The key success factors for open government supported by ICT are to focus on high impact areas and issues which can prioritize initiatives and how they should be implemented. For example, in open government

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<sup>11</sup> United Kingdom, National Audit Office, 2014. ‘Relying parties’ are those that make use of identity assurance services to determine if the person is who they claim to be.

<sup>12</sup> Estonia, 2007.

data, the overall level of development of open data initiatives among the Arab countries seems rather limited. Some specific challenges include:

- A very limited number of data sets;
- Data are not published in machine-readable format (such as PDF files);
- OGP partnerships often have only limited (or no) partners from the civil and private sectors;
- The legal base for open data is still in progress in some countries;
- There is limited awareness and/or capability concerning open data;
- Some countries do not have fully functional open data portals.<sup>13</sup>

To realize the benefits of open data in a short period of time, it is important to focus on high value data sets, either as defined by the European Commission or OECD.<sup>14</sup> Apart from a sectoral/domain focus, the approach can also focus on a specific government level or domain within a city. Many open data initiatives have shown that great value and engagement is achieved at this level, and indeed cities in the leading countries globally are at the forefront of releasing and exploiting open data.<sup>15</sup>

## *2. Develop the capacity of government personnel*

Many of the policies and initiatives needed for e-participation and open government will only be successful if government personnel also have a whole-of-government perspective and have the security, confidence and assurance that they can receive good career progression across the public sector through good management practices as well as appropriate employment contracts and training.

Although, the overall level of awareness of open government in general and open government data specifically is reasonable, more emphasis is needed on knowledge transfer and capacity-building. The extensive online resources provided by the European Data Portal, including massive open online courses, case studies, specific reports and Goldbooks provide an excellent starting point for this.<sup>16</sup> Arab countries could benefit from actively promoting the use of these online resources among data managers, chief information officers and government staff generally.

## *3. Raise awareness and exploit the benefits of cross-border cooperation*

The cross-border value of open government initiatives supported by ICT has been demonstrated in Europe,<sup>17</sup> the leading region in this context, and from which Arab countries could draw inspiration. Arab countries may also derive some lessons from data sharing across countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council.<sup>18</sup> Open data must be standardized and shared, not just between entities but also between countries across high value or politically important sectors, and this requires a common interoperability framework, such as the European Interoperability Framework.<sup>19</sup>

The case of Jordan illustrates many aspects of the above good practices in openness by providing an information, reporting and tracking system for tackling a crisis (box 2). This case also illustrates some good

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<sup>13</sup> Available at <https://oldsite.theodi.org/blog/the-open-data-barometer-a-review-of-the-arab-countries-performance-1of2>.

<sup>14</sup> European Commission, 2014; OECD, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> More information is available at [https://www.europeandataportal.eu/sites/default/files/edp\\_analytical\\_report\\_n4\\_-\\_open\\_data\\_in\\_cities\\_v1.0\\_final.pdf](https://www.europeandataportal.eu/sites/default/files/edp_analytical_report_n4_-_open_data_in_cities_v1.0_final.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> More information is available at <https://www.europeandataportal.eu/en/resources/elearning> and <https://www.europeandataportal.eu/en/resources/training-companion>.

<sup>17</sup> Available at <https://www.europeandataportal.eu/>.

<sup>18</sup> Available at <https://www.gccstat.org/en/>.

<sup>19</sup> More information is available at [https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/eif\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/eif_en).

practices in relation to participation and collaboration by enabling feedback and inputs from stakeholders to be incorporated into decision-making processes.

### Box 2. Information system for Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis

To ensure that the Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis has an accurate understanding of funds disbursed, as well as a clear picture of activities implemented, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, supported by the secretariat of the Jordan Response Platform for the Syria Crisis, has put in place an online information, reporting and tracking system (JORISS). This system enables users to submit their projects online, track the status of their request for approval and periodically report on their project progress.

The overall objectives of the platform include ensuring transparency of aid-effective management to the protracted Syrian crisis, and providing major stakeholders with proper and reliable data. JORISS has a fast and structured mechanism sending regular monitoring updates to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and task forces on progress achieved, targets met and funding status. The system enables users to filter, search and download available documents directly, simplifying and facilitating project approvals, reporting and monitoring, thus ensuring efficient and effective use of aid money and adherence to national priorities.

All these features inform the decision-making processes of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and other stakeholders.

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*Source:* Kingdom of Jordan, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2017.

## F. ROLLING OUT TECHNOLOGY FEATURES AND CHANNELS: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

Focusing on phase 1 alone, the use of any available ICT, such as traditional web pages and mobile applications (apps), is relevant. Depending on the overall ambition and goals of individual countries, however, the technology features and channels prepared and implemented in phase 1 must be designed as a basis for the other three phases.

### 1. *Tools and features for transparency*

Drawing partly on the United Nations E-Participation Index for measuring e-information (enabling participation by providing citizens with public information and access to information without or upon demand), five types of features and channels are recommended in relation to transparency, as described below.<sup>20</sup>

First, portals may provide open government data and information, including policies and archived information, for example in relation to justice/security, finance, education, health, employment/growth, social services/welfare, environment, housing, water and sanitation, and transport.

Second, transparency features of open government may include:

- Availability of online information on citizens' rights to access government information (such as freedom of information act or access to information act);
- Availability of an anti-corruption policy;
- Availability of e-participation policies/mission statements;
- Availability of public procurement notifications and tender results online;
- Public services: About and how to use them;

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<sup>20</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016.

- Forms download/print (policies, ministries, etc.);
- E-participation portal;
- Availability of an audit institution/anti-corruption section;
- Civil servants' code of conduct.

Third, open government data features may include:

- Section or link to open data initiative;
- Legislation on data privacy;
- Personal data protection acts or equivalent;
- Legislation on open data;
- Policy on open government data;
- Guidance using open government data.

Fourth, open government data protection features may include the availability of 'personal data protection' legislation and privacy statements.

Fifth, open government may target specific groups, especially vulnerable people.

## *2. Align and design open government features and channels to suit the joint needs of the Government and users*

Given the specific conditions in each Arab country context, the technical features and channels of open government need to be tailored as precisely as possible to suit the needs of both government and users. An ongoing process of experimentation and adaption is needed in which lessons learned can be applied, which also draws on Arab and global good practices and on high levels of cooperation between Arab countries. This can be done, for example, by analysing the main government services and support offerings for different non-government actors and matching these with service and support. The Government can also conduct user surveys, where feasible, both online and through traditional means, such as interviews, focus groups, postcard questionnaires in public places.

## *3. Raise awareness and take up of e-government generally and open government offerings specifically among non-government actors*

Although basic infrastructure and e-services are already in place, and some awareness raising activities have been carried out, the uptake of e-service and open government offers and solutions is generally low in Arab countries. For example, although citizens and businesses are generally already using the Internet, they are often not aware of features offered by public agencies, nor do they know how to use the provided services. This can be changed through traditional awareness raising campaigns as well as initiatives to curate the demand side, as in chapter III, section G, subsection 2.

## *4. Provide incentives for non-government actors to get involved*

Basic questions need to be asked as to why non-government actors will wish to use and engage with open government offerings supported by ICT, and specifically what is in it for them and how they can get involved. Although government capacity may be in place, the capacity and willingness of the public is often lacking. It is important to address issues of why and how people should become involved and to make this easy and rewarding, and what types of incentives are needed to get them to do so successfully and continue to do so in the future. Such incentives might include price, accessibility, outreach activities, help desks, chatbots, training, events and personal assistance.

Aspects of good practice in transparency highlighted above are illustrated in the Egyptian spatial addressing service providing information and data to specific sets of users (box 3).

### **Box 3. Egypt: National Grid Reference Addressing System**

The Egyptian National Grid Reference Addressing System for digital spatial addressing is establishing a digital spatial database to support land use planning and investment. In addition to a spatial address, this includes the structures above and the infrastructure under it – with a precision that suits the needs of different applications. In turn, this supports the development of the national investment plan, in addition to, facilitating marketing the investment opportunities to both foreign and local investors.

The system also integrates the national databases that use spatial data, such as real-estate taxes, agricultural real-estate registry, real-estate registry, planning the use of state owned lands, and population census. The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, responsible for conducting censuses, linked the census database with the digital reference numbers (squares addressing numbers). This provided more concrete information about what exists on every square (houses, companies, gardens, governmental buildings, etc.) and registered these findings in a database.

This is considered a building block in establishing the spatial data and spatial planning infrastructure to collect and use demographic and topographic information and services to determine the optimal size of all services provided to citizens in any given location.

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*Source:* Planning and Implementation Agency: The Ministry of Planning, Monitoring, and Administrative Reform, Egypt.

## **G. IMPROVING PUBLIC CAPACITY: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE**

### *1. Provide basic digital training*

Basic digital training is needed and should be offered to the whole population, especially to those who are traditionally digitally excluded, such as older people, poor people and/or people with disabilities. Training should cover the acquisition of appropriate ICT skills and how to access and how to use information. This could be started at school and college level, as well as by providing support through citizen groups and civil society organizations, and ad hoc support in public offices.

### *2. Engage directly with the public to curate the demand-side ecosystem for open government*

Effort is needed to ensure that open government features and open data are used. For example, the involvement of open data reusers is crucial to help prioritize the most valuable data sets and to provide direct feedback on what is needed in data provision to improve its usability. It is important that Governments and other data providers proactively curate demand-side ecosystems by providing appropriate tools, open data catalogues and customized support for specific needs and problems, advice, events, prizes, hackathons, cases and good practices. To facilitate this, a survey could be conducted to measure business and civil society awareness of and needs for open data, which will help to identify quick wins and potential pioneers. In promoting the value of open data to users, focus should not be on the open data as a technological fix, but on how its use can provide specific (public) value benefits, such as for competitiveness, jobs, safety, health, education, inclusion, quality of life and transparency.

#### IV. PHASE 2:

### GENERIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY





## IV. PHASE 2: GENERIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

### A. OVERALL GOALS

As mentioned in chapter II, section B, at phase 2, the open government strategy is to be participatory. This requires boosting the involvement of non-government actors in the work of the Government through feedback loops and providing ideas and knowledge. This means that government is both active and reactive in setting the agenda and the non-government actors are reactive. An important part of this is putting data online and making it machine readable and structured. Reference points for phase 2 include the following:

- Participation is basically two-way, between government and non-government actors, where both sides are active although government still sets the agenda (government is active and non-government actors reactive);
- Some relevant data can be obtained from the e-consultation component of the United Nations E-Participation Index (engaging citizens in contributions to and deliberation on public policies and services);
- The most relevant levels of the five-star scheme for open data in phase 2 are 2 stars (data in machine-readable format, such as Excel, instead of an image scan of a table) and 3 stars (data in machine-readable, standard format, such as comma-separated values instead of Excel).

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** As reflected in figure 1, participation, as the second phase, typically builds upon the policies, strategies, systems and initiatives developed in phase 1.

The six strategic objectives and the relevant building blocks that demonstrate how they might be achieved, need to be applied to the overall goals of the generic participation strategy, as described in the present chapter. Specific lessons and guidance are provided for each strategic objective drawing on the relevant building blocks.

### B. DEVELOPING POLICY AND STRATEGY: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

At phase 2, participation by default is recommended, so that in principle all government activities should be fully open to public participation except in specific legally defined areas. Participation allows members of the public to contribute ideas and expertise, so their government can make policies with the benefit of information that is widely dispersed in society. However, government determines the agenda and which issues are open for consultation, and does not directly include other actors in its decision-making, so that it always retains the leading role. Whereas openness on its own is passive, it is necessary for participation to actively function so that the public can see and understand what is happening inside the Government to influence its workings by participating in public policy processes including in relation, for example, to public services.

Thus, the core of phase 2 is the participation of non-government actors in the work of the Government by providing ideas, knowledge, comments and suggestions. This is designed to lead to increased inclusiveness and valuable contributions to the Government's work and decision-making. The benefits from improved open participation are maximized by continuous dialogue based on a wide variety of feedback in a timely manner. This reduces the time and cost of innovation, thereby improving decision-making mechanisms, building confidence and trust and combating corruption.

#### 1. *Basic principles of participation policy*

The Government needs to follow four basic principles when designing and implementing the e-participation policy. First, the Government should establish an overall philosophy by being transparent about why participation is important and the specific purposes it serves. Second, the Government should develop a



list of facilities and functions, including how participation will be implemented, including the specific roles and rationales of each function. Third, the Government should make commitments concerning how participation will be handled, including how moderators will be used, rules for participation and the service delivery obligation. Fourth, the Government should communicate the expectations about user behaviour through a user code of conduct, for example.

## *2. Success criteria for participation*

For the participation policy to be successful, several success criteria should be established by which the relevant government entities can judge how well the policy is performing. It is important to be clear about the purpose and expectations of participation, for example what it is expected to do and not do, and to focus on real (e-) participation needs at the outset of the process. The overall processes and outcomes of participation must be highly transparent, open and in most cases negotiable, as this helps build confidence. High level (political) backing can be critical.

In designing the participation process in detail, it is important to use words and language people understand, and not just 'coded' information. For example, there may be cases where, to involve actors in policymaking, providing policy drafts may not be enough but instead such drafts should be explained or commented in terms simpler than those used by lawyers. Participation is about listening as well as asking and telling, so it can be important to let people express their anger and frustration. In terms of timing, participants should be involved as early as possible in the policy lifecycle. Once inputs and comments are received, feedback on these should be provided, for example by showing how they are used so citizens know their voices were heard. If their inputs could not be considered, an explanation is necessary, otherwise cynicism breeds. The cardinal rule, therefore, is to take citizen inputs very seriously (whether they are asked to give them, or they give them unsolicited), and show how they are used. A rationale needs to be provided for the outcome or decision which specifically addresses participant inputs.

Before a participation initiative starts, the Government should decide how to collect input, how to analyse it, how to use it, and make this clear to participants. The Government should directly address the needs and/or interests of participants and involve them in the initiative. During the participation initiative, the Government should use careful, independent, trustworthy moderators and transparent guidelines. It is also necessary to ensure clear, transparent, rules-based discourse and accountability as this is more important than the technology to increase meaningful participation. This requires independent monitoring where appropriate to ensure balance as well as to minimize miss-use and inappropriate online behaviour. In addition, the Government should always be wary of the digital divide, and especially the gender digital divide. They should not assume that every view or need is captured through the participatory process. Finally, the Government should evaluate the processes and the outcome, and include the participants in this stage as well.

## *3. Process simplification and reduction*

An important criterion for maximizing the impact of a participation policy is the simplification of processes, forms and legal requirements of all aspects of the interface between governmental and non-government actors. This is an ongoing process, including reducing the number of forms and the time needed to participate, for example through using ICT for business process reengineering. Simplifying forms and processes improves their usability by obtaining as much data as possible from the relevant base registries where the legal framework allows this. It is important to make processes smarter, more intuitive and user friendly using data from the base registries, supplemented where relevant by new data from the user. Simplification initiatives include analysing and benchmarking processes and proposing changes. The best participation services are those that are simple and require little effort from citizens, so that complexity is kept in the back office and never in the front office.

#### 4. *User-centred design*

Another important criterion for maximizing the impact of e-participation policies is to move to fully user-centred design processes. Such processes include ‘design thinking’ that employs ethnographic and anthropological approaches, and the analysis of e-participation and open government personas and service pathways. These processes will also assist in developing very simple, highly personalized services of high quality and are easy to use.

For example, the Danish Business Authority is studying how companies engage with legal processes through observation and interviews (anthropological investigation). This is revealing how companies understand the information and procedures they are presented with, resulting in improved designs for both the services provided and the legal framework in which they take place. This has become an ongoing iterative process of improvement rather than a one-off event.<sup>21</sup>

In the United Kingdom, service design principles were fully rolled out in 2014 and include the proviso that no service will be launched unless the responsible minister can successfully complete it unaided and in a timely manner. Working groups have been set up with actors to develop style guides which can support the continuous improvement of service designs.<sup>22</sup>

Once basic participation policies and systems are in place, the focus should be on using these to provide government services that enhance user experience and usability, as well as ensure that procedures are supported by fluid and fully integrated services. For example, Finland has reduced the work of the user through good service design and actual use benefits, rather than just better access and ease of use. It has developed ‘service design models’ which involve the Government doing all or most of the work, thereby enabling users to participate, collaborate and engage rather than use their time on access and navigation.<sup>23</sup>

#### 5. *Personalization*

A third important criterion for maximizing the impact of e-participation policies is to focus on usability through segmented and personalized e-participation and open government services. For example, MyPage interfaces in Denmark enable citizens and businesses to personalize their service interfaces in relation to the services they are interested in, the set-ups used and the design of the interface itself.<sup>24</sup> This also includes better exploitation of multiple channels, including web, social media, mobile, kiosks, call centres and service centres, as services are honed to individual needs using the most suitable means.

Ultimately simplification means personalization, as everything which is not relevant to a given user and their specific needs at a time and place, is removed. In this context, the Government should increasingly move to become like a personal assistant (and intelligent agent), mimicking the best commercial companies through a process of ‘mass customization’. This may require the Government to switch between pro-actively promoting services for individuals (using big data, data analytics together with base registries) on the one hand, and, on the other hand, empowering individuals to choose the services they use, for example, through providing their own data, co-creation and data from the cloud.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See <https://danishbusinessauthority.dk>.

<sup>22</sup> United Kingdom, n.d.

<sup>23</sup> Demos Helsinki, 2015.

<sup>24</sup> See for example the service for immigrants available at <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-US/minside/>.

<sup>25</sup> Millard, 2011.

## C. PROVIDING INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

### 1. *Institutions*

Institutional arrangements need to be put in place to support participation. These will include a state/national authority or competence to facilitate and administer participation, e-participation and open government data to support participation.

### 2. *Governance*

The governance arrangements in phase 2 are like the arrangements described in phase 1 and are built upon them (see chapter III, section C, subsection 2) but are designed to facilitate the participation and e-participation policy and strategy context as described above. It is thus recommended that phase 2 issues be already anticipated in the phase 1 design.

### 3. *Monitoring*

Monitoring in phase 2 should build on phase 1 monitoring (chapter III, section C, subsection 3) as well as include indicators such as the following:

- Quantitative, including the number of visitors, fans, and followers in social media; the number of ideas presented by citizens; the percentage of publications versus notes-, and the voting rate;
- Qualitative, including the changing culture of government departments towards openness; and overall satisfaction with interactions with the Government.

## D. SETTING UP LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

The legal and regulatory framework for phase 2 is like those in phase 1 (chapter III, section D, subsection 4) but should be adjusted to facilitate the participation policy and strategy context as described above. It is thus recommended that phase 2 be already anticipated in the phase 1 legal and regulation framework design. Apart from data protection and security, which need to reflect these participation and e-participation policies and strategies, some additional specific issues are addressed in this section.

### 1. *Legal and legislation*

Legislation and/or regulations need to be put in place to support participation. These will include legislation and/or regulations reflecting policies on participation, such as requiring specified government entities to enable participation and the right of non-government actors to participate in specified ways and contexts.

### 2. *Open government data*

The most relevant levels of the five-star scheme for open data in phase 2 are 2 stars (data in machine-readable but any format, such as Excel instead of an image scan of a table) and 3 stars (data in machine-readable and standard format, such as comma-separated values instead of Excel).

## E. UPGRADING GOVERNMENT CAPACITY: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

### 1. *Guidance for civil servants*

Civil servants need to be trained and have the resources to engage with the public on websites and in social media in a manner which shows they are credible, accurate, fair, thorough and transparent. It is important they are responsive and share their relevant and balanced insights where appropriate. They need to be able to

integrate and align online participation with other offline communications, but also to be a ‘civil servant’ who is the ambassador for the Government, so they need to be fully open about their position as a representative of the relevant department or agency.

Above all, civil servants should be clear and open about what they can and cannot do. Make sure they openly distinguish situations where they can give concrete advice as a representative of the Government from situations where they can only inform citizens how to get such advice. Social media is about individuals talking to each other and interacting, thus although they are civil servants engaging on behalf of the organization, they need to interact on a personal level.

## *2. Civil servants: Understanding how to select issues*

Civil servants also need to be trained and have the resources to distinguish and select the issues they can interact on. Experience shows that there are two areas in which participation works well and both are at city/local level: (a) participatory budgeting; and (b) public planning. The reason seems to be that those areas are concrete enough to get people involved, although participants frequently begin to think in abstract terms and talk about other topics and perhaps even more general political perspectives and visions.

One conclusion from this is that highly close, local, specific and concrete topic hooks should be used to start the participation process and then to encourage a natural process of widening out to encompass related and more general issues which participants themselves embark upon. However, even when participants themselves extend the scope of their interest, online debates must remain concrete (like a strategic plan which contains many specific proposals) if they are to be successful.

A clear current trend is also the increasing importance of single issue politics, seemingly at the expense of party politics. Citizens and voters seem to want both to reduce tax on petrol but also to protect the environment, cheaper house prices for their sons and daughters to become homeowners without building more houses near them and lower taxes but better public services. In other words, however laudable single issues are, taken together they are often undeliverable. The Internet is however, a highly effective tool both for organizing and propagandizing single issues, and this is one reason why it is on the rise.

## *3. Civil servants: Framing the debate and linking issues*

One of the biggest challenges of participation for politicians is to cope with an avalanche of single-issue campaigns (including housing for the homeless, Amnesty International and Greenpeace) through constructive engagement, and where ICT can both exacerbate the problem as well as potentially provide some answers. It is thus important to focus on the Internet’s potential to provide space for deliberation and debate, in addition to or rather than the shouting and trivialization which can also occur. An important way to do this is for politicians (or civil servants) to accurately and fairly frame the debate, so that it balances simplicity and leverage, on the one hand, with nuance and the need to recognize trade-offs with related issues, on the other.

As Governments increasingly become just one player among many, they are finding that they need to be an arbiter between competing interests in society. In this role, the intelligent and balanced framing of issues is critical. Many single-issue campaigns have an external face, based on propaganda, stridency and opposition to a policy or another group. However, many also have an internal stance which is reasonable, measured and capable of compromise. Politicians and others must therefore seek to avoid ‘false polarization’ and focus much more on genuine disagreement which recognizes complexity and trade-off.

## *4. Civil servants: Which processes and which actors*

Participation success often depends on careful timing, for example, participation must take place early enough in the process to make a difference to the outcome, and the timing and scope of participation must suit

the specific situation. This relates to where in the policy or political life cycle participation is designed to take place.

Civil servants need to understand the success criteria for participation, as discussed in chapter IV, section B, subsection 2. Above all, a participatory culture needs to be created and maintained. Success with providing accessible and useful information depends on using language that people understand and not just 'coded' information. However, this clearly also depends on the stakeholder so, for example, professional or special interest groups should be addressed in the language they use and understand, linked of course to the mandate of the organization concerned and its objectives.

A major success requirement of participation is to directly address the needs of the actors involved, understand their situation and motives, and get them involved in identifying and designing the process. Actors should try to define their own interests and strategies to determine why and how they will use e-participation. Most success seems to come when the expectations of stakeholders are outlined from the beginning, including the purpose, means, processing of input and outcomes. Thus, objectives need to be clear from the outset, and the participants themselves need to understand the procedure in a transparent way, otherwise their interest in participating will rapidly diminish.

### *5. Security and privacy for civil servants*

Government ICT and other security policies also apply to social media websites, but a few additional precautions must be taken, for example civil servants should not use their official email address or password to log into their private accounts on social media websites. It is essential that an employee's professional and social profiles online are kept separate. Websites such as Facebook offer access to additional applications which may pose security risks such as unsolicited email, phishing and security attacks. Further, such third-party applications may misuse or keep data indefinitely.

More generally, the incentive to share data is so strong, that the user becomes lax with their own personal privacy, especially on third-party applications like social media sites. Civil servants should be educated about these security risks. Specifically, they must be aware that information shared can potentially remain on the Internet indefinitely, they must never share sensitive government information such as confidential data or private information about themselves or others, and it should be clearly stated what type of information civil servants can disclose when using social media.

## **F. ROLLING OUT TECHNOLOGY FEATURES AND CHANNELS: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE**

Focusing on phase 2, there is an intensified use of ICT and especially a shift towards social media and Web 2.0 applications and where the semantic web is important because these means of expression enable citizens' spontaneous informal participation.

### *1. Tools and features for participation*

Drawing partly on the measurement of e-consultation in the United Nations E-Participation Index (engaging citizens in contributions to and deliberation on public policies and services), four types of features and channels are recommended in relation to participation, as described below.

The first channel is an e-participation portal which can support many features, such as audio/video content, multilingualism, online forms regarding policies and services, news on upcoming participation activities, access to the parliamentary calendar, frequently asked questions on sending comments and access to the e-law-making system.

The second channel of participation tools could include those that can be used to input feedback, comments and opinions and other input in raw (non-deliberative) form. The tools could be used to access decisions already made that include the results of consultations with citizens on education, health, finance, social welfare, labour and the environment. Updates can be shared via email or RSS feeds. Personalized alerts can also be shared via email or SMS (such as policies, specific ministries and so on). A range of social media tools do the following:

- Acknowledge receipt of e-opinions, e-deliberations, and e-interactions;
- Conduct polls/surveys;
- Publish weblogs ('blogs');
- Facilitate chat/instant message;
- Track and/or report corruption;
- Share the results of procurement/bidding processes;
- Enable monitoring/evaluation of existing procurement contracts.

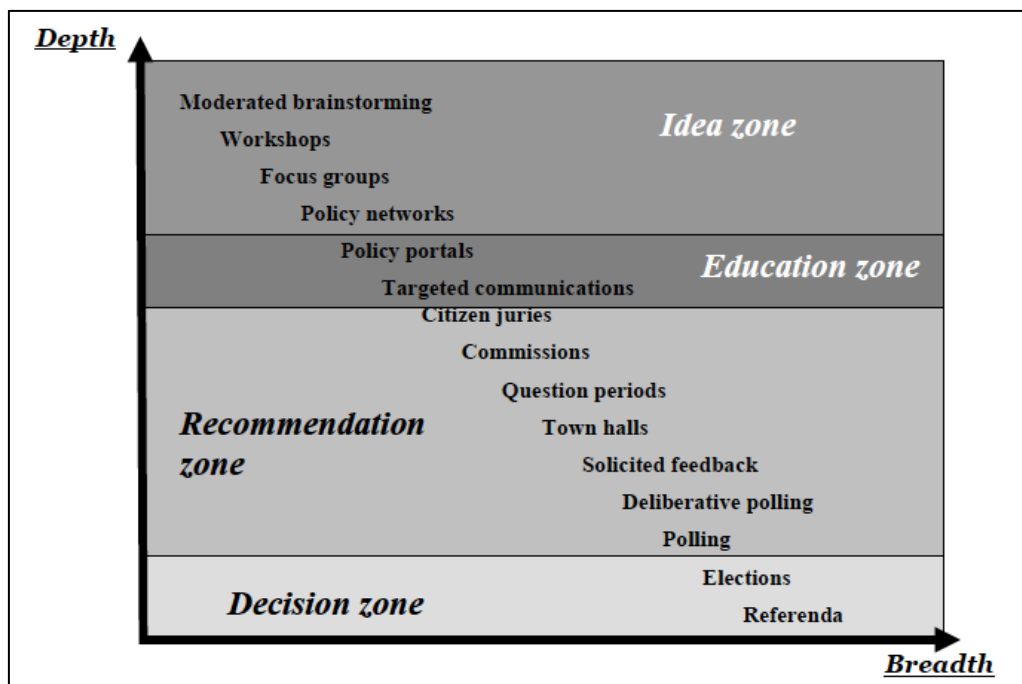
The third channel of open government data tools facilitate accessing, using and commenting. This corresponds to the five-star scheme for 2 stars (data in machine-readable but any format, such as Excel instead of an image scan of a table); and 3 stars (data in machine-readable and standard format, such as comma-separated values instead of Excel).

The fourth channel includes data protection features such as e-identification/authentication, and an Information (Privacy) Commissioner to advise citizens on their concerns and provide guidance on cybersecurity.

## 2. Aligning the purposes and types of e-participation

A global overview of digital age engagement methodologies compares the depth and the breadth of participation with the types of benefits they could be associated with, as shown in figure 2.

**Figure 2. Digital age participation, collaboration and engagement methodologies**



Source: Compiled by author.

This figure considers engagement and participation types in terms of four ‘zones’: the idea zone, the education zone, the recommendation zone, and the decision zone, each of which is made up of a number of specific types of activities. Thus, ideas are more likely to be generated in the depth of smaller groups (although there could be many of these) using a mix of online and offline techniques. Decisions at a societal level typically need to be more broadly based across mass populations and this could increasingly move towards mainly online methods.

Although there is likely to be a tendency for ICT to play a stronger role moving down and to the right-hand side of figure 2, the specific application of participation in practice will vary according to circumstances and objectives, as well as in relation to new applications as they become available. For example, the Service Monitoring System in Mozambique solicits feedback from users through channels that are tailored to local characteristics (box 4).

#### **Box 4. Mozambique: engaging citizens to monitor waste management services**

The Service Monitoring System or Monitoria Participativa Maputo is designed to support marginalized and underserved populations in overcoming barriers to entry in the urban services sector.

The system is based on a software platform, Ntxuva, which is designed to collect information from people via SMS, a mobile app and a web portal. A voice interface in local languages is used to enhance access by less educated, poorer populations. Members of the public can dial \*553# or access the [www.mopa.co.mz](http://www.mopa.co.mz) website and use a computer, smartphone or ordinary cell phone (via SMS) to report failure to empty waste bins, illegal dumping or inappropriate burning of garbage. The project involves people in the process of monitoring the quality of solid waste management services, especially when contracted to third parties (with the support of the World Bank and other bilateral donors).

The system provides visualizations and statistics originated from public information about urban services. The system also promotes engagement among the local software development/innovation community. Users can add photos, comments and other clarifications for quick intervention by the city council. The Municipal Directorate of Hygiene and Cemeteries, with the help of the municipal districts, manages and monitors the information.

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Source: <http://www.mopa.co.mz>; <http://clubofmozambique.com/>.

### *3. Which channels and the digital divide*

Taking a multichannel and multimedia approach is essential for e-participation, that is to say it is essential to focus not only on electronic channels, but also on the interplay and switching points between different channels in terms of their respective strengths and weakness, the specific needs of the stakeholder at that point in time and the precise circumstances. ICT should thus be only one channel, albeit potentially very powerful and perhaps transformative, but which also complements other channels. It is also the case that still at least one half of the populations of Arab countries are digitally excluded and thus not online so an exclusive move to electronic channels could deepen the digital divide. Many people, including the ICT-literate, still like to meet face-to-face and many want real communicative and tacit substance which is difficult to deliver purely electronically.<sup>26</sup> The multichannel approach is evident in the Kenya Open Data Initiative, which uses technologies and intermediaries to expand the reach of open government data (box 5).

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<sup>26</sup> Millard, 2015a.

### Box 5. Kenya: Open Data Initiative

Kenya launched the Kenya Open Data Initiative in 2011, making government data freely available to the public through a single online portal. In 2013, a new constitution came into force, which included fundamental principles related to public participation and the promotion of a more open society.

The open data initiative is geared toward increasing data availability and user accessibility for people's empowerment, especially vulnerable groups. The Data Release Calendar on the open data portal provides information on when government agencies produce and publish public datasets. The calendar is a working document to keep citizens informed about data availability. People can also request data through the 'Data Suggestions' section on the website. To target senior citizens and those with low literacy, Kenya Open Data Portal has been posting journals interpreting raw materials into graphs and simple language.

The open data team also organizes discussion forums with youth on education-related issues. Research also shows that the chief's centres, community centres, churches and mosques can act as intermediaries providing access to government data in urban slums and rural settlements. The open data team is also developing tools to monitor the site's effectiveness. Finally, there is a blog where journalists specialized in data analysis can upload information, thus highlighting data worth being considered by the public.

Source: <http://opengovdata.ke>.

### 4. Social media

Web 2.0 is online technology and set of tools which enable users to author and contribute their own content, or manipulate the content of others. Social media are one major type of Web 2.0 tools which enable users to socially interact with each other. The use of all Web 2.0 tools blurs the distinction between producers and consumers of content. All Internet users are consumers and producers of content, and the more a user interacts with Web 2.0 tools, the greater the value that may be derived from the system. Even just 'listening in' to a conversation makes the user a creator of content, as page views or entry to websites are often logged and added to a statistic showing the popularity of the content. The more the content is viewed, the more popular or interesting the content is perceived to be, and even this piece of information is of value to other users. Social media is known by names such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, but there are many other tools and technologies available, and change is very rapid. Table 2 provides a useful categorization of Web 2.0 tools and the advantages and disadvantages of each one.

**Table 2. Web 2.0: social media participatory tools**

Tool	Description	Advantages and disadvantages
<b>Networks</b>	<p>An online service or platform built upon and reflecting the networks and relationships between people (through their interests or activities).</p> <p>A network generally consists of a representation of each user (often a profile), social ties and a broad range of services (such as e-mail, chat, messages, blog posts and content). It offers the users the opportunity to exchange ideas, activities, events and interests with members of a personal network.</p>	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• User and target audience is present;</li><li>• Informal tone, two-way dialogue and open to all;</li><li>• Input directly from users and stakeholders;</li><li>• Can be combined with various publications and feedback components as well as portal;</li><li>• Dialogue creates ideas and innovation;</li><li>• Good communication and PR channel;</li><li>• Independent, neutral platform.</li></ul>



Tool	Description	Advantages and disadvantages
	<p>Examples: Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and Twitter.</p>	<p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use and feedback is not guaranteed and the dialogue on social networks is often superficial and difficult to encourage a constructive debate;</li> <li>• Alternative channel for debate and voting, opens another channel for communication;</li> <li>• Added value and tipping point unknown;</li> <li>• Not necessarily full control.</li> </ul>
<b>Platforms</b>	<p>An online collaborative platform, facilitating the cooperative and work processes that help more people to interact and share information to achieve a common goal and thus promote innovation.</p> <p>The Internet makes it easier to disseminate and exchange information and knowledge as well as facilitates contributions from individuals. A crucial element of collaboration is that ideas occur everywhere and that individuals can share these ideas. Social cooperation corresponds to crowdsourcing, where individuals work together towards a common goal.</p> <p>Examples: Wikis like MediaWike, DokuWiki, TikiWiki, Google page wiki, blogs like Wordpress or Blogger and collaborative office solutions as digitaliser.dk, Debategraph, Teamwork or Work Spot.</p>	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-way dialogue and discussion forum;</li> <li>• Input directly from users and stakeholders;</li> <li>• Can be combined with various publishing and feedback components as well as a portal;</li> <li>• Dialogue creates ideas and innovation;</li> <li>• Common platform, forum and resource.</li> </ul> <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use and feedback is not guaranteed and can be difficult to encourage a constructive dialogue;</li> <li>• Alternate channel;</li> <li>• Added value unknown.</li> </ul>
<b>Publication</b>	<p>An online service or platform that facilitates sharing, publication, changes, folksonomies, user creation and mash-up of content.</p> <p>Content may be in the form of video, images, text, etc.</p> <p>Examples: YouTube, Flickr, SlideShare, RSS feeds and Twitter</p>	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active update of user and stakeholder;</li> <li>• Helps to maintain interest;</li> <li>• Gives the user a “share” in the content and how it is used;</li> <li>• Alternative tools for mediation and alternative to text – web accessibility;</li> <li>• Compliment a platform with audio, pictures and text;</li> <li>• Give users a choice of medium;</li> <li>• Can be used on different networks and collaborative platforms and a portal.</li> </ul>

Tool	Description	Advantages and disadvantages
		<p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential information overload;</li> <li>• The value of user-generated content can have large fluctuations;</li> <li>• Copyrights not always respected;</li> <li>• Can be heavy/time-consuming material upload/access.</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback</b>	<p>An online service or platform facilitating input from an audience through one or two-way communication. Two forms of feedback exist: quantitative forms like voting and rating and qualitative forms as commenting, discussion, surveys, wikis and blogs.</p> <p>Feedback types are often combined and are often found on website or as functional elements in different networks and collaborative platforms.</p> <p>Examples: Vote and debate on borger.dk or 'Debategraph', rating and commenting on Facebook or digitaliser.dk, surveys as survey monkey, pirate survey, free online surveys, blogs, wikis, Wikipedia's article feedback tool, various public solutions etc.</p>	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be used on different networks and collaborative platforms and oman.om;</li> <li>• Two-way dialogue and discussion forum;</li> <li>• Input directly from the users and stakeholders, facilitate inclusion and involvement.</li> </ul> <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use and feedback is not guaranteed;</li> <li>• Alternative method of user and stakeholder feedback;</li> <li>• Added value and resource unknown.</li> </ul>

Source: Compiled by Author.

### 5. Direct communication channels: Citizens provide feedback

Citizens may want to participate in government in certain areas that they feel needs attention. They may want to point out a problem, express their views on service delivery, or make unsolicited suggestions. There are many reasons why citizens want to participate and notify government about something. Government may also want to receive inputs from citizens in specific areas to inform the administrative or political process. E-participation features and channels take many forms, the most common of which are given below.

Chat/comment/poll facility on each web page: Governments should consider setting up a comment facility at the bottom of each web page for users to chat about the page with each other and/or with civil servants. This will provide direct feedback to the information technology departments on their service delivery and to the authors on the quality of information on the web pages (from a user perspective). It is quite natural for civil servants and information technology departments to assume that users have the same knowledge about government organizations and processes as they themselves do, but very often citizens do not possess this knowledge. Structured feedback from users is needed so the Government knows how well information and content on web pages is understood and how well it works. Problematic electronic services and misunderstood or erroneous web pages can be identified and improved very quickly if feedback from users is available. When a comment facility is supplied, each comment should be vetted before it is released for publication.

Opinion polls and surveys must ask relevant questions and must not give the user the feeling that they are provided just to fill up space or because a poll was required by an external evaluator. Thus, users should be able to view poll/survey results and an archive of previous poll/survey results and they should be able to see how long the poll/survey will run (and has run). Answer categories must not be biased to only display favourable answers, but must be a balance between positive, neutral and negative answer categories. Users should be informed if any action was taken as a direct result of the poll or survey.

Discussion forums and suggestion/feedback/input forms and social media: It is perfectly acceptable for government organizations to establish guidelines for discussion forums they provide or sanction, but there should not only be obligations put on the users. The Government should also tell the user how they intend to handle the dialogue in its discussion forums. Will they moderate discussions? Will they act on feedback and suggestions from the users? Such principles for e-participation and dialogue should be put into the e-participation policy for government organizations, and a statement of the principles should be included on pages containing e-participation functionality. Sometimes, a Government must go where the users are, and they may be on social networks and discussion forums hosted by third parties. If the Government wants to engage with citizens and further the dialogue and increase transparency, they must, in some cases, cede control, but it should be done in a manner appropriate for Government. Civil servants engaging on behalf of the Government must know that they act on behalf of and as spokes persons for the Government. This means that a social media policy should be created for the civil servants so that they know how to conduct themselves (see also chapter IV, section B).

Automatic receipt of feedback: Every time a user makes an input or request or asks a question (except in an open ongoing discussion), an automatic receipt (acknowledgment) must be generated on the page (and/or sent by email if appropriate). For every relevant facility, the operator should ensure a statement is made so the user knows to expect such a receipt.

The government blog: A blog is like a written diary or journal. It is a frequently updated, chronological publication of personal thoughts and weblinks. The blog is usually written by one person, or in the name of one person. Each 'post' or entry is usually listed with the newest one first and the oldest at the bottom. Blogs are most often about a topic, just like a daily or weekly column in a newspaper. It can be used as a tool to present the blog writer's personal thoughts and often blogs invite readers to make comments to the blog posts at the bottom of the page. This concept of sharing personal thoughts on a subject on a blog is a good way for top-management as well as for other key government personnel or experts to have a permanent communications channel to a targeted audience. A minister might share his or her thoughts on certain political issues or upcoming initiatives. It gives the author a place for providing in-depth analysis on the subject through commenting and engaging with his/her audience.

#### **Box 6. Bahrain: Fix2Go**

Fix2Go was the result of cooperation and shared efforts between different governmental entities including the Information and eGovernment Authority, as well as other entities that provide different services including the Ministry of Health, the Electricity and Water Authority, the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning. The Information and eGovernment Authority is responsible for proposing public policies, suitable legislation and decisions for the implementation of eGovernment, information technology and data programmes, and for the delivery of e-government services.

The Information and eGovernment Authority has developed Fix2Go to establish a direct and easy channel and means of communication between the public and government entities regarding suggestions and complaints aimed at improving efficiency and transparency. It provides users with easy and quick communication with the Government, thereby increasing and facilitating interaction by providing feedback, including the use of photo capturing and location services. Fix2Go enables high levels of interaction between the public and the Government through a very effective and easily accessible channel, available 24 hours a day and seven days a week, resulting in high levels of customer satisfaction.

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*Source:* Kingdom of Bahrain, eGovernment Authority, 2018; With Fix2Go..., 2017; and 'Tawasul' your communication..., 2018.

Using the social media link buttons: A good way of propagating the information on government websites is to use the buttons offered by social media, such as save, share, like, tweet and so on. If website visitors find interesting content and want others to see, they can ‘spread-the-word’ by clicking on one of the social media buttons. Social media sharing buttons are easy to integrate on web pages, as it is just embedding a script. The embedded script adds functionality and requires no intervention from the webmaster. Some of the buttons also offers statistics, showing how many times the website content has been spread by users.

The Fix2Go (Tawasul) case of Bahrain illustrates many aspects of the good practices in participation by facilitating suggestions and complaints aimed at improving government efficiency and transparency (box 6).

Similarly, the Parent Mobile Application of Oman illustrates many of the benefits of participation (box 7).

#### **Box 7. Oman: Parent Mobile Application**

The Parent Mobile Application is designed to facilitate the delivery of critical services for parents to make it easier for them to follow up on their children’s achievements, attendance in classrooms and behaviour in school, and to communicate with the school authorities. This improves parents’ interaction with the school by having services available from any location and at any time through the app. It allows parents to report complaints and observations instantly. It also enables parents to initiate the transfer of their children’s records between different schools in Oman with features like notifications, tracking to closure.

Parents are thereby able to follow student school timetables and schedules, follow up on academic results and access notifications of all school activities and events. All these increases parental satisfaction as it enables them to closely follow up their students through tablets and smart phones without the need to use computers as before. The technical support of the application is also leading to the development of new facilities. Results indicate large savings in time and money for parents, the Ministry of Education and the school authorities.

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*Source:* Al Lawati, 2016.

The website of the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment in Tunisia enables people to contribute to the development of the country’s education services (box 8).

#### **Box 8. Tunisia: feedback and commenting on professional education**

The goal of the website of the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment (Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment<sup>a</sup>) is to provide an opportunity for people, professionals and other interested parties to ask questions and make suggestions concerning professional education in the country. There is also a possibility to discuss issues on the Ministry’s Facebook page.<sup>b</sup>

The Agency is a public establishment with no administrative character endowed with a civil personality and with administrative and financial autonomy, the main mission of which is implementing the policy of the Government related to the promotion of employment. Its role is to animate the job market at national, regional, local and sectoral level through its network of offices of employment and self-employment, by developing information on employment and professional qualifications to support businesses and job seekers.

It is especially aimed at young people, small firms and self-employment. The goal is to ensure accurate, relevant and up-to-date information and vocational guidance for job-seekers and to organize and conduct investment transactions for the Tunisian workforce abroad, including the reintegration of immigrant workers into the national economy after their final return. It also supports workers dismissed for economic and technical reasons. Inputs and suggestions from job seekers, employers, trainers and educators is essential for ensuring the best possible services.

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*Source:* Tunisia, Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, 2018.

<sup>a</sup> More information is available at <http://www.emploi.gov.tn/tn/>.

<sup>b</sup> Available at <https://www.facebook.com/MFPE.GOV.TN/>.

## G. IMPROVING PUBLIC CAPACITY: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

### 1. *Build citizen participation from the bottom*

Experience shows that most citizens are interested primarily in single specific issues which have a direct impact/influence on their own lives where they live, while some are also interested in such issues which have wider geographic relevance like climate change, migration, crime and economic conditions.<sup>27</sup> These interests should be used to build citizen participation in a national or local public space from the bottom up. An initiative for public participation in policy discussions in Tanzania is described in box 9.

#### **Box 9. Tanzania: partnership for shaping policy-making through online consultations**

Tanzania Knowledge Network (TAKNET) promotes knowledge and information sharing on various aspects of social and economic development of national interest to stimulate discussions by informing individuals about current development issues.

Both the public and experts take part in these discussions, which result in consensus building on policy issues of concern to Tanzanian society. Summaries of discussions covering the outcome of a topic are produced by moderators, which include recommendations and statements of good practices, and are shared with policymakers and the public.

TAKNET is a joint initiative of the Government of Tanzania, United Nations and the Economic and Social Research Foundation.

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Source: <http://www.taknet.or.tz>.

It is important to show how local debates have wider relevance and to provide tools and mechanisms to hook them together in a two-way process that provides context for a local debate and substance for the wider debate. Localities can also learn from each other. Specific topic hooks should be used to extend the participation process and encourage a natural process of widening out to broader issues, many of which will have national or regional. Informal social networks should also be harnessed where relevant and where these can make a good contribution, both online and off, in this process.

### 2. *Actively support participatory, digital and political literacy*

Ultimately, it is probably not possible to get around the problem of ‘elites’ which can dominate discourse and the political sphere given that this has always been the case historically. The introduction of ICT will not change this, although experience shows that if the technology is applied with care, it may in some cases mitigate the problem. It is also important to strongly support the participatory, digital and political literacy of those currently excluded.

For non-government actors, it is recommended to encourage, design and support skills acquisition and education/training in participatory, digital and political literacy, as well as to ensure that ICT channels complement non-ICT channels. Investments should be made in new interfaces which are more intuitive and better embedded in everyday activities. In addition, where possible, they should build and piggy-back upon what is already happening, such as existing training, awareness raising and outreach initiatives, rather than starting something completely new.

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<sup>27</sup> European Commission, 2009.

V. PHASE 3:

## GENERIC COLLABORATION STRATEGY





## V. PHASE 3: GENERIC COLLABORATION STRATEGY

### A. OVERALL GOALS

As mentioned in chapter II, section B, at phase 3 the open government strategy is to increase collaboration between the government and non-government actors to co-create, for example, innovative services, strategies, and plans. This is mainly a two-way exchange of information, knowledge and opinion from government to citizen (and other non-government actors) and vice versa, and where both government and non-government actors are both active and reactive. An important part of this is putting data online, making it machine readable, structured and using open standards. Reference points for phase 3 include the following:

- Collaboration is basically two-way, between government and non-government actors, where both can set the agenda and be active, but based on an overall policy framework provided by government;
- Some relevant data can be obtained from the e-decision-making level of the United Nations E-Participation Index;
- The most relevant level of the five-star scheme for open data in phase 3 is 4 stars, meaning that data are machine readable, in a standard format using open standards so that literally anyone can access and use it.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** As reflected in figure 1, collaboration, as the third phase, typically builds upon the policies, strategies, systems and initiatives developed in phases 1 and 2.

The six strategic objectives and the relevant building blocks that demonstrate how they might be achieved need to be applied to the overall goals of the generic collaboration strategy, as described in the present chapter. Specific lessons and guidance are provided for each strategic objective drawing on the relevant building blocks.

### B. DEVELOPING POLICY AND STRATEGY: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

At phase 3, collaboration by default is recommended, so that in principle all government activities should be open for collaboration with all legitimate actors, both where government proactively takes the lead but also enables others to do so. Whereas transparency and participation in phases 1 and 2 provide limited opportunities determined by the Government, collaboration takes the next step by enabling non-governmental actors to have significant say in issues they consider important. The extent of this needs to be determined by legal provision, and in a society in which Governments are duly elected, the Government will need to determine whether such collaboration is in the public interest or not.

Phase 3, therefore, promotes collaboration between citizens and the Government by involving all parties: Government, the private sector, civil society and other non-government actors. It is characterized by the deliberation of public policies and decisions by many actors, so that the Government can respond by providing more precisely the right services according to actor needs, which implies a move towards an ‘agile’ government. Collaboration therefore aims to encourage the effective contribution of citizens through enhanced communication and flow of information between government entities and citizens. This is a more advanced level of participation achieved through open public debate on planned government policies and programmes.

#### 1. *Proactive involvement in decision-making*

There are different degrees of e-collaboration that move from more ‘passive’ to ‘active’ engagement and collaboration. Active collaboration can be defined as “a relationship based on partnership with government



in which citizens actively engage in defining the process and content of policy-making”.<sup>28</sup> People can be involved in public decisions and service delivery in many ways and degrees. People can be informed of government decisions and availability of services, they can be consulted about certain decisions, they can be asked to take part in decisions, or they can themselves become proactive and take the initiative themselves in framing and taking decisions. Such proactive involvement in decision-making does not necessarily mean that people’s opinions and inputs will automatically be translated into actual policies.

The level of collaboration in e-decision-making does not always presume literally the direct enactment of policies and decisions. It greatly depends on the type of tool being used as well as on the intention of those using it. In the case of e-voting, where people choose political parties and candidates during elections or vote on referenda by utilizing online platforms, the inputs of citizens are translated into immediate tangible outcomes. Overall, there is no one-size-fits all in the implementation of this concept, since each country has its own peculiar characteristics in terms of collaboration culture and preferred means of interaction between people and public authorities.<sup>29</sup>

## *2. Success criteria for collaboration*

E-decision-making at phase 3 remains a serious challenge. E-decision-making refers to a process in which people provide their own inputs into decision-making processes. Two examples are: (a) direct e-voting via secure systems and (b) identifying preferred (popular) options and proposals by rating them through social media “like/dislike” or rating functions. While policymaking is the logical next step after e-participation in phase 2, e-information and e-consultation are equally valuable collaboration forms.

Recently, policy discourse has gained special attention as new software tools are creating complex and sophisticated systems of deliberation online. The United Nations E-Government Survey 2016 provides evidence that progress in collaborative decision-making is closely linked with progress in public consultation. Discussing policies and decisions with the public is becoming an increasingly common practice. For example, the portal Gov.uk interlinks all three e-participation domains into one process. Publishing policy drafts – also supplying other relevant documents and information – for public consultation (e-information) allows for constructive and informed feedback. The Government then publishes its position on the feedback received from the public and explains any changes in the proposed policy options taken because of consultation by highlighting what has been considered, what has not and why. Such a holistic approach to e-collaboration expands the scope and meaning of participatory decision-making.

The United Nations E-Government Survey (2016) also concludes that, despite the growing practice of online consultations, most consultations are not yet sufficiently institutionalized in policymaking processes. In many instances, it is not clear how well online public debate was planned and executed, which objective it pursued and what the outcome was. Further, the feedback of the public was often scarce and infrequent. Much ongoing online consultation and deliberation is still ad-hoc and in its infancy, with plenty of untapped potential. To unlock this potential, public authorities should do the following:

- Have a clear e-collaboration strategy which strikes a balance among the e-information, e-participation, and e-decision-making phases. This obviously includes ensuring that the necessary e-tools are available;
- Clearly define the targeted population groups and regional audiences, and offer explanations of the consultation and decision-making procedures to be used;
- Have clear rules and procedures in place to process the received contributions. They should have sufficient analytical capacity to review them and a process to report back to the public about the outcome of the consultation and its impact on policymaking.

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<sup>28</sup> OECD, 2001.

<sup>29</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016.

### 3. *The opportunities of e-decision-making*

In addition, the United Nations E-Government Survey (2016) shows that, despite e-decision-making being the most challenging aspect of public collaboration, it has shown a breakthrough over just two years. This comes after many years of focusing primarily on e-transparency and more recently also on e-engagement, which technically, are easier to implement. At the same time, it also shows that the practice of e-decision-making has expanded so much that it is becoming an important part of the policymaking cycle rather than an ad-hoc experiment.

The very notion of policymaking has expanded well beyond the boundaries of decisions taken solely by Governments. Now it also seeks to support the process through which people form an opinion as they deliberate on common positions using technologies of collective moderation and preferential voting, such as the liquid feedback concept,<sup>30</sup> to ensure maximum transparency of the decision-making process.

The traditional meaning of decision-making, as a government-only effort within the constraints of public administration processes, is being transformed into an open and complex process of collaboration and decision-making, realized both between authorities and people, and increasingly among the latter.

#### C. PROVIDING INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

##### 1. *Institutions*

Governments must put institutional arrangements in place to support collaboration. These will include a state/national authority or competence to facilitate and administer collaboration, e-collaboration and open government data.

##### 2. *Governance*

The governance arrangements in phase 3 are similar to those described in phases 1 and 2 and are built upon them, but they are designed to facilitate the collaboration and e-collaboration policy and strategy context as described above. It is thus recommended that phase 3 issues be already anticipated in the phase 1 design.

##### 3. *Monitoring*

Monitoring in phase 3 should build on phase 1 and phase 2 monitoring as well as include indicators such as the following:

- Quantitative indicators, including the number of collaborators around common and co-creative activities using the full range of ICT tools; the number of collaborative ideas presented by citizens; the percentage of initiated and successful projects compared to ideas;
- Qualitative indicators, including the changing culture of government departments towards openness and collaboration; and overall satisfaction with collaborating with the Government.

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<sup>30</sup> LiquidFeedback.org embeds a deliberative process where proposals are voted on, supported, debated and written in a collaborative way; alternative options are voted on with the Schultze algorithm. Liquid Feedback was born to support democratic deliberation within political movements (such as the German Pirate Party) and experimented with as a way to gather ideas from the public; it is extensively practiced, for example, in Italy. De Cindio and Stortone (2013). Experimenting liquid feedback for online deliberation in civic contexts. *Electronic Participation*, Springer, pp. 147-158.

#### *4. Trust, transparency and openness of institutions are necessary for e-collaboration*

Ensuring and promoting trust, transparency and openness in any system of collaboration and democracy is arguably the greatest challenge. Trust, transparency and openness are inextricably interlinked. Without trust in political and collaborative institutions and in political representation no functioning democracy is possible. It is well known that trust in the national politics and institutions of many countries around the world, including Arab countries has been falling in the recent past, especially in the aftermath of the ‘Arab Spring’.

It is a truism that trust is difficult to grow and easy to degrade, so it is imperative to find ways to build trust and protect it once it has been earned. Trust and mistrust go together and need to be balanced, and both can be important in a healthy democracy. Trust reduces transaction costs, but a healthy mistrust encourages constructive criticism and debate. The challenge is to achieve balance.

Governments can assist in this by maximizing e-collaboration and open government, so citizens can see how decisions are made, who takes them and why. Suitable opportunities to challenge and directly collaborate in the decision-making process are also needed within clear rules. Although ICT can be very important for increasing collaboration, it is crucial to have clear, transparent, rules-based accountability for all forms of collaboration to reconnect disaffected voters with politicians. An example from India provides a compelling illustration of the ability of ICT to enhance transparency and accountability (box 10).

##### **Box 10. India: I Paid a Bribe**

The “I Paid a Bribe” initiative was set up by the non-profit organization Janaagraha in 2010, to harness the collective energy of citizens to tackle corruption in public services across India.

The site collects citizens’ reports about the “nature, number, pattern, types, location, frequency and values of actual corrupt acts”. Citizens can contribute in several ways. They can provide reports about bribes they paid, bribes they resisted and instances where they received a public service without paying a bribe, that is, when they encountered ‘honest officers’. There is also a bribe hotline for people to ask for advice about rules and regulations, how to avoid paying bribes, how to deal with corrupt officers, and so on. Together, these reports provide ongoing snapshots of bribery and corruption in a specific locality.

The information collected through the site is then used to advocate changes in governance and accountability processes, as well as to tackle incidences of corruption. For example, there are numerous instances where government rules and procedures have been changed as a result, including in the Department of Transport in the Government of Karnataka in Bangalore. About twenty senior officials were issued with warnings. Similarly, changes were made to registrations of land transactions at the Department of Stamps and Registration in Bangalore.

The success of the I Paid A Bribe concept and the ICT tools that enabled it has led to it being emulated in many other countries, including Ghana, Greece, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, South Africa, Ukraine and Tunisia. For example, in Romania an online service enables citizens to share their experiences of bribery when interacting with public services, including sharing information on the amount of money they paid.

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Source: <http://www.ipaidabribe.com>.

#### *5. Accountability, rights, responsibilities and the shifting role of the public sector*

Accountability flows from responsibilities as well as from openness and transparency. It is also related to ethical considerations, which are, both in theory and practice, highly important in the public realm. There are different types of accountability.

First, political accountability should be exercised by politicians and democratically elected representatives. Second, institutional and administrative accountability rests on civil servants individually as well as on the public sector as an institution. This also includes the likelihood of changing accountability when private sector and community partners are involved in public sector tasks, such as policymaking or delivering

services. Third, more informal institutions like citizen and interest groups must be accountable in not misusing or abusing public sector services or facilities, as well as in collaboration in legitimate and responsible ways. All these relate to responsibilities. Fourth, the general ethical and moral accountability of all actors, including citizens, businesses, communities and the public sector.

Further, when the Government is just one player among many in the public sphere, which now also legitimately consists of private and civil sector actors, new forms of accountability need to be found reflecting the new institutional landscape, whether formal or informal. Thus, there is also a need to rebalance institutional rights and responsibilities.

*6. Can there be too much participation and collaboration  
in the institutional context?*

Another important challenge in the context of ICT-enhanced collaboration is that existing institutional capacities may set practical (if not legal or ethical) limits on it. Too much participation and collaboration may not be in the interests of democracy if the system is overwhelmed by a massive increase in involvement, resulting in instability and system breakdown. Further, too much collaboration may not be in the interest of the individual citizen, certainly without ongoing commitment, knowledge and perhaps some training, if this leads to shallow, reactionary or populist participation.

New technologies and methods could reduce the cost of collective decision-making, but thereby could destabilize the political system with, for example, too many decisions and not enough responsibility. The right of collaboration in decision-making must be balanced against the need for responsibility for those decisions.

A sole reliance on ‘direct democracy’ produces problems – if all are responsible then no-one is. Note, however, that the same arguments have been used throughout history to restrict the democratic franchise, and limits to participation and collaboration may only be an attempt to preserve elitism or the meritocracy.

*7. Establish or support an independent, neutral trusted third-party service  
for e-participation and e-consultation*

There are several functions which government institutions cannot, or should not, perform for themselves to promote e-collaboration and open government. It is strongly recommended that there be legal and/or regulatory provision for an independent, neutral trusted third-party service, not controlled by government institutions, to be identified or set up in cooperation with other actors. This should, for example act as a ‘champion’ and ‘watchdog’ for ordinary citizens in relation to e-collaboration and open government in policy issues. It could be like the ‘ombudsman’ role set up in many European countries which independently looks after the interests of citizens vis à vis government institutions.

Part of this role would be to agree and publicize a citizen charter of rights and responsibilities for citizens in e-participation, e-collaboration and open government, building on what is there already in national law or regulation, if any, and open these to debate and amendment by citizens. It would identify and implement frameworks for real motivation, incentives and rewards for citizen participation and collaboration, and continuously monitor the potential risks of e-participation, e-collaboration and open government.

Citizens should be informed about this role and these provisions, as well as be offered possible solutions and assistance. The role could also be extended to provide both pro-active and passive moderation, as well as help frame debates in a neutral and balanced way, as needed. It should also monitor and uphold citizens’ privacy and data protection rights vis à vis government institutions and other interests, including private companies like Facebook and Twitter.

## 8. *Identify and support existing cross-border communities and interest groups*

Government institutions should help to nurture, sustain, learn from and partner (where appropriate) with both newly established and existing cross-border communities and interest groups, for example by providing them with resources, tools, guidelines and other forms of support.

Cross-border communities and interest groups can be found at any level within and across the Arab countries, from the local level to the national, regional or pan-Arab level. Unless high-level political will and resources can be obtained, the growth and development of such cross-border communities will come naturally. The role of government institutions is to provide opportunities, incentives and support, rather than pre-designed schemes or attempting to take them over. In this context it is important to identify and assist other potential initiatives which could promote debate and consultation spilling across borders, including at the local level, for example, by providing frameworks of incentives and support.

Regional cooperation across Arab countries, along these or similar lines, is strongly recommended to establish a unified framework for open government policies and to promote transparency and accountability in the public sector. Such cooperation is very important for coordinating regional activities and agreeing on key open government principles and concepts. It should also develop regional performance evaluation criteria, share success stories and experiences, for example, using web-based solutions for data dissemination and information gathering, as well as using participatory and collaborative tools. A dialogue should be launched with other government departments and users to achieve greater potential of efficiency and effectiveness.

### D. SETTING UP LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

The legal and regulatory framework for phase 3 is like that in phase 1 (see chapter II, section D) and builds upon phase 2, but it should be designed to facilitate the collaboration and e-collaboration policy and strategy context as described above. It is thus recommended that the needs in phase 3 should be already anticipated in the phase 1 legal and regulation framework design, supplemented by phase 2 developments. Apart from data protection and security, which need to reflect collaboration and e-collaboration policies and strategies, some additional specific issues are addressed in this section.

#### 1. *Legal and legislation*

Legislation and/or regulations need to be put in place to support collaboration. These will include legislation and/or regulations reflecting policies on collaboration, such as requiring specified government entities to enable collaboration and the right of non-government actors to collaborate in specified ways and contexts. In this context, it is strongly recommended that there be legal and/or regulatory provision for an independent, neutral trusted third-party service, not controlled by government institutions, to be identified or set up in cooperation with other actors (chapter V, section C, subsection 7).

#### 2. *Open government data*

The most relevant level of the five-star scheme for open data in phase 3 is 4 stars, meaning that data are machine readable, in a standard format using open standards so that literally anyone can access and use it.

### E. UPGRADING GOVERNMENT CAPACITY: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

#### 1. *Strengthen professional communities at every level*

Networks of organized professional groups should be encouraged to use online debate and knowledge exchange tools at all levels much more than they do at present. For example, e-rule or e-regulation-making in which professional organizations and experts help prepare rules and regulations as well as putting these out for general consultation, should be more widely exploited and adapted to local conditions. This could take

place by employing user-controlled wiki systems that enable everyone in the group to join the discussion and contribute. To promote this, frameworks of incentives and support should be provided where appropriate, as well as appropriate tools and guidelines.<sup>31</sup>

## 2. *Countering the challenges*

There are an increasing number of challenges and indeed dangers of e-collaboration and e-decision-making which governments need to be alert to and attempt to counter, especially through international cooperation.

While advances in technology have created great opportunities across sectors, it is difficult for society and governments to respond effectively to rapid changes. Typically, governments and regulators react to changes, as most of technical innovation occurs in the private sector. The rise of digital connectivity also raises increased cybersecurity concerns, for example with the hacking of critical infrastructure, such as electricity and transport networks, and the security, ownership and use of the massive amount of personal data that are created and shared. While social media has had a positive impact on the lives of many people, the misuse of social media, such as trolling and bullying online, has also had a negative impact.

The role of ICT in political participation is complex. Although ‘fake news’ and ‘fact-free’ discourse, including political discourse, are not new, ICT has enabled their significance to grow. The democratic and mind-broadening potential of the web has also come under scrutiny, as more people access only material that they choose to follow. They increasingly ignore or are excluded from other content, leading to filter bubbles. Search engines use sophisticated algorithms to adapt to users and present them only with content that matches their preferences.

### F. ROLLING OUT TECHNOLOGY FEATURES AND CHANNELS: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

Focusing on phase 3, there is an escalation in the intensification of ICT use, building on a shift to social media expressive and Web 2.0 applications in phase 2, and that additionally focuses on collaborative tools and features, as examined in the following.

#### 1. *Tools and features for collaboration*

Drawing partly on the United Nations E-Participation Index for measuring e-decision-making by empowering citizens, and other non-government actors, through the co-design of policies and the co-production of service components, three types of features and channels are recommended in relation to participation, as follows.

First, collaboration features enable the Government to partner and collaborate with non-government actors to provide services and develop policies, across different entities and sectors. This includes partnering and collaborating through PPPs and public-civil partnerships. Second, open government data make use of machine readable structured formats (such as comma-separated values, Resource Description Framework [RDF], RSS and Extensible Markup Language [XML]). This includes machine readable open formats and open standards so that anyone can access and use the data (such as Open Document Format, PDF-A), and open standards for open government data (such as RDF, SPARQL). Third, data protection features enable citizens and other non-government actors to correct their own data directly. Box 11 presents an example of e-collaboration from Morocco.

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<sup>31</sup> There are a number of relevant European examples such as ‘Have your say on European policies’ ([https://europa.eu/european-union/law/have-your-say\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/law/have-your-say_en)); the ‘Interactive Policy Making Tool’ ([http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-01-519\\_en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-01-519_en.htm?locale=en)); ‘European Business Test Panels’ (<https://www.eubusiness.com/topics/sme/ebtp/>); SINAPSE, a web communication platform offering tools to promote a better use of expertise in European Union policymaking and governance (<https://europa.eu/sinapse/sinapse/index.cfm?fuseaction=sinapse.home>); and CONECCS, the database for Consultation, the European Commission and Civil Society ([http://powerbase.info/index.php/European\\_Commission\\_CONECCS\\_Database](http://powerbase.info/index.php/European_Commission_CONECCS_Database)).

### Box 11. Morocco: E-collaboration for sustainable development policy

The objective of this open debate-forum, organized by the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (EESC) of Morocco, is to expand participation and collect contributions from researchers and the public for a new model of integrated and sustainable development. It focuses on the administrative regions of Boujdour-Sakia, Layoune-Al Hamra, Oued, Ed-Dahab-Lagouira, and that of Guelmim-Es Smara and is designed to support them in fulfilling their aspirations to create more jobs and wealth.

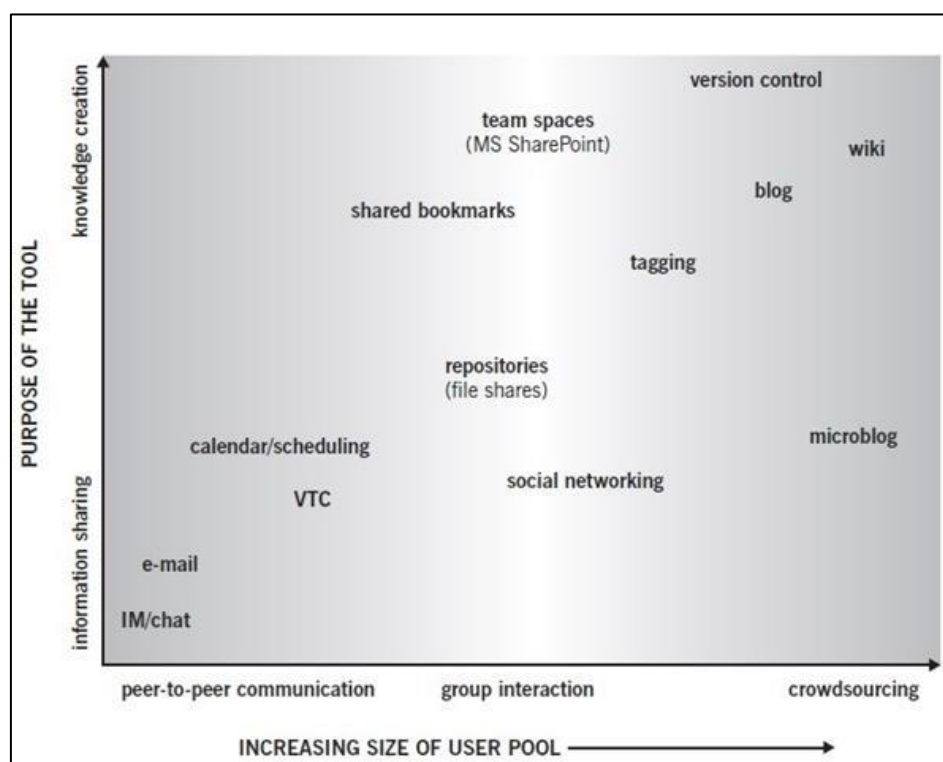
Preliminary diagnoses showed that current models of development require major adaptations in line with the aspirations of local populations. To this end, the EESC is seeking inputs from these populations which help shape and jointly design solutions to development challenges. These challenges are grouped around five components: economic, social and cultural, human development, spatial planning and environment, and implementation and governance. In its approach, the EESC ensures the widest possible crowdsourcing by organizing about 50 meetings during the process of drafting the EESC report. To support this and broaden the circle of participation, the EESC opened a web forum debate for collecting the contributions of researchers and citizens.

Source: <http://fr.almoubadaralakoum.ma/category/provinces-du-sud>.

## 2. Mapping collaboration tools

A global overview of collaboration tools compares the purpose of the tool with the size of the user pool, as shown in figure 3.

Figure 3. Classification of collaborative tools



Source: Bernhard Krabina and Brigitte Lutz, 2016. *Implementation of Open Government – Version 3.0* (Vienna: Centre for Public Administration Research), p. 52.

Note: VTC: video teleconference; IM: instant messaging; MS: Microsoft.

Figure 3 shows that with the increasing size of the user pool, moving from peer-to-peer communications, through group interactions and then to crowdsourcing, the tools deployed change from information sharing to

knowledge creation. Information sharing is mainly at the participation phase, seen when citizens simply submit information in the form of feedback and comments. In comparison, knowledge creation is mainly at the collaboration phase enabling citizens (and other non-government actors) to co-create knowledge with the Government, which might result in new products and services.

### 3. *E-voting/e-polling*

Electronic voting (also known as e-voting) uses electronic means to either aid or take care of the chores of casting and counting votes. The degree of automation may vary from simple chores to a complete solution that includes voter registration and authentication, vote input, local or precinct tallying, vote data encryption and transmission to servers, vote consolidation and tabulation, and election administration.

The most successful examples of e-voting comply with a set of standards established by regulatory bodies, and are also capable of meeting strong requirements associated with security, accuracy, integrity, swiftness, privacy, auditability, accessibility, cost-effectiveness, scalability and ecological sustainability. Estonia and Switzerland have implemented such e-voting systems. Electronic voting technology can include punched cards, optical scan voting systems and specialized voting kiosks (including self-contained direct-recording electronic voting systems). It can also involve transmission of ballots and votes via telephone, private computer networks or the Internet.

In general, two main types of e-voting can be identified. First, e-voting which is physically supervised by representatives of governmental or independent electoral authorities (for example, electronic voting machines located at polling stations), such as in Brazil and India. Second, remote e-voting via the Internet (also called i-voting) where the voter votes at home or without going to a polling station, such as in Estonia.

E-voting/e-polling remains very controversial due to the possibility of hacking, cyberattacks and severe disruption of results, although it is also claimed that the dangers are no greater – though of a different nature – than with traditional physical voting systems.

### 4. *E-petitions*

An e-petition is a stand-alone e-participation and e-collaboration tool that is institutionalized and widely used by many people around the world. However, e-petitions are not typically preceded or accompanied by public consultations, at least on the same government-run website.<sup>32</sup>

As a good practice, legislators will formally debate and consider those petitions that have been signed by a certain number of people. Yet, such formal consideration of people's preferences does not necessarily translate into policy decisions. Therefore, there is a broader and serious challenge when engaging and/or collaborating with citizens or other non-government actors.

According to the findings of a report on e-petitions by the United Kingdom's Hansard Society, this tool is used more to attract the attention of the public and the media, rather than to understand public opinion more deeply.<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, e-petitions and the associated public debates can also be an important entry point for a two-way dialogue with the public.

### 5. *Participatory budgeting*

Participatory budgeting is a process of democratic deliberation and decision-making, and a type of participatory democracy, in which ordinary people decide how to allocate part of a municipal or public budget.

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<sup>32</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016.

<sup>33</sup> United Kingdom, House of Commons, 2014.



Participatory budgeting enables citizens to identify, discuss and prioritize public spending projects, and empowers them to make real decisions about how money is spent. Participatory budgeting processes are typically designed to involve those left out of traditional methods of public engagement, such as low-income residents, non-citizens and youth.

A comprehensive case study of eight municipalities in Brazil analysing the successes and failures of participatory budgeting has suggested that it often results in more equitable public spending, greater government transparency and accountability, increased levels of public participation and collaboration (especially by marginalized or poorer residents), and democratic and citizenship learning.<sup>34</sup> All participatory budgeting schemes enable citizens to deliberate with the goal of creating either a concrete financial plan (a budget), or a recommendation to elected representatives.

The earliest example is in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in which the structure of the scheme gives neighbourhoods authority over the larger political jurisdiction (the city) of which they are part. Neighbourhood budget committees, for example, have authority to determine the citywide budget, not just the allocation of resources for their neighbourhood. There is, therefore, a need for mediating institutions to facilitate the aggregation of budget preferences expressed by such small areas.<sup>35</sup>

Participatory budgeting generally involves several basic steps:

- (a) Community members identify spending priorities and select budget delegates;
- (b) Budget delegates develop specific spending proposals, with help from experts;
- (c) Community members vote on which proposals to fund;
- (d) The city or institution implements the top proposals.

#### *6. Collaborative co-production, multi-stakeholder partnerships, crowdsourcing and crowdfunding*

Innovative PPPs have emerged as models for the provision of public services and social entitlements in areas such as education, health and environmental sustainability. Recent advances in technology, connectivity and collaboration tools, and improvements in management practices in both the public and private sectors may significantly contribute to the development of PPPs. There is also increasing awareness in the business sector that profit is compatible with socially beneficial programmes. Some companies have started to rethink their business models by turning social and global development issues into business opportunities.

Similarly, the collaborative production of services via social networking and interactive web-based tools enable people to play a more active role in the design and production of public services within the context of public-civil partnerships and partnerships between public institutions, the private sector and local people. The use of ICT in government not only offers the opportunity to improve service delivery and citizen engagement, it can also help mobilize additional resources from both the public and private sectors, which enhances collaboration with stakeholders and innovation.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships can harness the resources, knowledge and ingenuity of the private sector, civil society, the scientific community, academia, philanthropy and foundations, parliaments, local authorities, volunteers and other stakeholders. This collective power is important to generate ideas, mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources. It complements the efforts of governments and supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing countries.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Wampler, 2007.

<sup>35</sup> Abers, 1998.

<sup>36</sup> United Nations, 1995.

Such multi-stakeholder partnerships can also be considered a form of crowdsourcing, in which individuals or organizations use contributions from users (normally obtained electronically) to obtain needed services or ideas. Finance may be sourced in the same way (crowdfunding), and the potential of it is estimated by the World Bank to represent at least a US\$90 billion market within 20 years in developing countries alone.<sup>37</sup>

The Governmental Mobile Applications Competition of Palestine illustrates many aspects of good practice in collaboration (box 12). The competition encourages and facilitates developers from all parts of society to develop e-government services in collaboration with the Government.

#### **Box 12. Palestine: Governmental Mobile Applications Competition**

The Mobile Applications Competition encourages Palestinian developers in all parts of society to produce government applications to support the country's e-government programme. This has encouraged Palestinian governmental organizations to automate the services and information they provide to the public, promote the culture of innovation and creativity in Palestinian society and enhance the role of ICT in improving the quality of life in the country.

Achievements to date include the fact that winning applications have been adopted and utilized by government institutions enabling them to improve their services to the public and to give a qualitative boost to the e-government project in Palestine. Developers have also been able to market themselves and their applications and have received additional support and motivation to produce more governmental applications.

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*Source:* Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology, Available at <https://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news/2017/01/15/1008863.html>.

### **G. IMPROVING PUBLIC CAPACITY: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE**

#### **1. *Build citizen collaboration from the bottom***

Building citizen collaboration from the bottom is like phase 2 (chapter IV, section G) but upgraded to take account of the e-collaboration and e-decision-making context as outlined above. It is thus recommended that phase 3 citizen collaboration be already anticipated in the phase 2 public capacity initiatives, taking account of the actual collaboration policies, strategies, institutional frameworks and legal and regulatory frameworks adopted, as examined above.

#### **2. *Actively support participatory, digital and political literacy***

Guidance for participatory, digital and political literacy is like those in phase 2 (chapter IV, section G) but upgraded to take account of the e-collaboration and e-decision-making context as outlined above. It is thus recommended that phase 3 participatory, digital and political literacy be already anticipated in the phase 2 public capacity initiatives taking account of the actual collaboration policies, strategies, institutional frameworks and legal and regulatory frameworks adopted, as examined above.

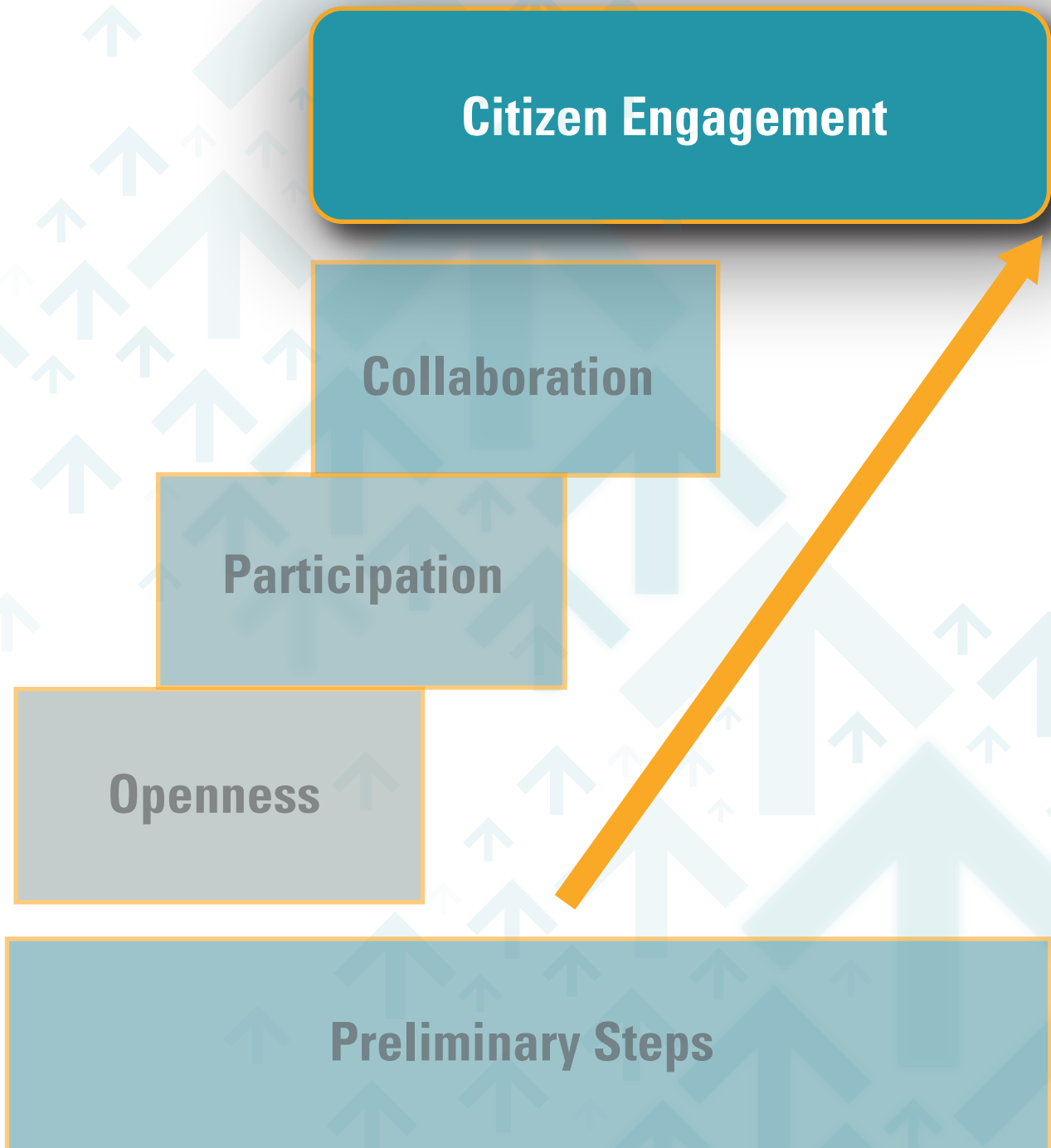
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<sup>37</sup> infoDev, Finance and Private Sector Development Department, 2013.



## VI. PHASE 4:

# GENERIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY





## VI. PHASE 4: GENERIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

### A. OVERALL GOALS

As previously mentioned, phase 4 the open government strategy is to move towards the total engagement of non-government actors in the work of the Government through shared responsibility. This is mainly a multi-way exchange of information, knowledge and opinion between government and all other legitimate non-government actors, and between other actors themselves where legitimate and in the public interest.

At phase 4, government and non-government actors are both active and reactive and can set the agenda and the overall policy framework, although the Government retains the ultimate right to exercise control and supervision as it is the only actor which represents and needs to balance all interests in society. An important part of this is putting data online, making it machine readable and structured, plus using open standards and enabling non-government actors to link to it and link it with their own or other actors' data. Reference points for phase 4 include the following:

- Engagement is basically multi-way, between government and non-government actors, where both can set the agenda and the overall policy framework and be pro-active based a shared agenda in a form of 'co-governing';
- The most relevant level of the five-star scheme for open data in phase 4 is 5 stars, meaning that data are machine readable, in a standard format using open standards and the data are electronically linked to other data sets, for example, open government data are linked with all other appropriately open, formatted and linked data.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** As reflected in figure 1, engagement, as the fourth and final phase, typically builds upon the policies, strategies, systems and initiatives developed in phases 1, 2 and 3.

The six strategic objectives and the relevant building blocks that demonstrate how they might be achieved, need to be applied to the overall goals of the generic engagement strategy, as described in the present chapter. Specific lessons and guidance are provided for each strategic objective drawing on the relevant building blocks.

### B. DEVELOPING POLICY AND STRATEGY: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

At phase 4, engagement by default is recommended in as many areas as possible. In principle, Governments should consider opening all government activities for engagement by all legitimate actors, both where the Government proactively takes the lead but also where it enables others to do so. Engagement may take place even without government, if this contributes to public value over which the Government has the final say. Phases 1, 2 and 3 provide many opportunities determined by the Government, but engagement takes the next step by enabling the full involvement, in principle, of non-government actors in all aspects of public governance.

The main purpose of phase 4 is to achieve the total engagement of citizens and other non-government actors in government work, by providing comprehensive access to data and services, engaging all parties in policymaking and decision-making, building a citizen-centred and accountable government, ensuring open government sustainability and making an effective contribution to the achievement of the SDGs.

The engagement phase focuses on the full implementation of open government based on the implementation of the previous three phases, to achieve the total engagement of citizens in government work. To achieve this policy, effective government structures and procedures need to be put in place that ensure continuous improvement and innovation in citizen engagement programmes to ensure that open government initiatives reach maximum impact.

## *1. Moving to full engagement and co-governance*

The progression from phase 3 (collaboration) to phase 4 (engagement) marks, in principle, the full involvement of all government and non-government actors in all aspects of public governance. The extent of engagement should be determined by legal provision, and in a society in which governments are duly elected, the Government will need to determine whether such engagement is in the public interest or not. Well designed and implemented engagement can considerably improve the overall effectiveness of the Government and public sector activities by encouraging partnerships and cooperation across levels of government, and between the Government and other legitimate actors in society, also in situations where the Government may decide it has no need to take the leading role. This is because the Government on its own does not have a monopoly on knowledge, resources or power to tackle most societal challenges and fully achieve societal goals.<sup>38</sup>

Overall, therefore, through the full engagement strategy of phase 4, open government connects ordinary people with political and policymaking processes; ensures that citizens understand decision-making processes; enables citizens to speak with politicians and decision-makers and vice versa; ensures that people are heard, and feel they are heard and included when decisions are made. Engagement makes it possible for non-government actors to take the initiative and the lead in creating public value, as long as this is legally compatible and complies with society's values and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs, which all Arab countries have agreed to.

Moreover, a full engagement strategy should aim to ensure that citizens can directly engage with and influence government policies and decisions; public services, including e-government services; the arrangements, administration and procedures of government and the public sector; and express their comments and complaints about any aspect of government and the public sector, and have these addressed in a timely, professional and effective manner that satisfies the citizen and/or explains why their needs cannot be met or input used. This will enable Governments to tap into the collective knowledge of society quickly and directly.

## *2. Building public value*

The major policy framework that has dominated governance and the public sector since the 1990s has been the New Public Management approach which encompassed inter alia a strong emphasis on the large-scale adoption of private sector management disciplines.<sup>39</sup> These were mainly related to measurement, target setting and the outsourcing of some government functions to the private sector which was deemed to be more efficient in fulfilling them.

In the 2000s, critics of this approach included a focus on the potential benefits of digitization<sup>40</sup> and, more importantly, proposals for a radically different approach termed Public Value Management<sup>41</sup> which links the changes seen or required in the public sector to networked government and the need for open systems. An overall reappraisal of the notion of public value has been taking place, and it considers the value created by governments together with all other legitimate actors through services, laws, regulations and other actions which are not purely for private or sectional interests, to be like the older notions of public goods and good governance. The engagement and co-governance approach of phase 4 moves towards this broader notion of public value.

In phase 4, policy and strategy aim to build an open governance system consisting of all legitimate non-governmental actors who wish and can contribute to creating public value. The open governance system orchestrates networks of actors and their assets to tackle society's needs. It leverages and coordinates

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<sup>38</sup> Millard, 2015b.

<sup>39</sup> Hood, 1991.

<sup>40</sup> Dunleavy and Margetts, 2006.

<sup>41</sup> Stoker, 2006.

unrealized and untapped assets and resources, which would otherwise lie dormant or need catalysing and are thus in effect ‘wasted’. The Government aims to do this both internally across the public sector as well as across society, so that efficiencies and effectiveness are recognized and realized at the societal level over at least the medium-term where trade-offs and interactions are present between actors and not only at the individual actor level.

The shift from a purely individual actor focus to one also prioritizing the societal level is extremely important, but without sacrificing the needs or dignity of individual actors as it recognizes and nurtures the virtuous circle benefits to both when they work together.<sup>42</sup> This is necessary given that many challenges need to be tackled at the societal, and indeed global, level if they are to be successfully addressed. Examples include environmental degradation (as in SDG 13), social and economic inequalities (SDG 10), gender inequality (SDG 5), and in mainstream services like health care and education, as well as SDG 16 which promotes effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The most effective strategy for any country, including those in the Arab region, to increase public value is to maximize the potential of open government policies through appropriate initiatives, as outlined in this report. This should be inspired and guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which provides clear targets to achieve the whole range of goals from which individual countries or entities can develop their own unique strategy. This needs to be firmly based on full cooperation across all legitimate actors within the context of the open government strategy, guided by SDG 17 focusing on strengthening the means of implementation and partnerships for sustainable development.

### C. PROVIDING INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

Institutional frameworks in phase 4 are like those described in phases 1, 2 and 3, and are built upon them. They have been updated to take account of the policies and strategies outlined above. Specific issues related to the institutional frameworks are outlined in this section.

#### 1. *Institutions*

Institutional arrangements need to be put in place to support engagement strategies. These will include a state/national authority or competence to facilitate and administer engagement, e-engagement and open government data to support engagement.

#### 2. *Governance*

The governance arrangements in phase 4 are like those described in in phases 1, 2 and 3, and are built upon them, but they are designed to facilitate the engagement and e-engagement policy and strategy context as described above. It is thus recommended that phase 4 issues be already anticipated in the phase 1 design.

#### 3. *Monitoring*

Monitoring in phase 4 should build on phases 1, 2 and 3 monitoring as well as include indicators such as the following:

- Quantitative indicators, including the number of full engagements around common and co-creative activities using the full range of ICT tools; the number of engagement ideas presented by citizens; the percentage of initiated and successful projects compared to ideas;

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<sup>42</sup> Millard, 2015b.



- Qualitative indicators, including the changing culture of government departments towards openness and engagement; and overall satisfaction with engaging with the Government.

#### D. SETTING UP LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

The legal and regulatory framework for phase 4 is similar to that in phase 1 (see chapter III, section D) and builds upon phases 2 and 3, but it should be designed to facilitate the engagement and e-engagement policy and strategy context as described above. It is thus recommended that phase 4 legal and regulation framework design should be anticipated in phase 1 and supplemented by developments in phases 2 and 3. Apart from data protection and security, which need to reflect these engagement and e-engagement policies and strategies, some additional specific issues are addressed in this section.

##### 1. *Legal and legislation*

Legislation and/or regulations need to be put in place to support engagement and e-engagement policies and strategies. These will include legislation and/or regulations reflecting policies on engagement, such as requiring specified government entities to enable engagement and the right of non-government actors to fully engage in specified ways and contexts. In this context, it is strongly recommended that there be legal and/or regulatory provision for an independent, neutral trusted third-party service, not controlled by government institutions, to be identified or set up in cooperation with other actors (chapter 7).

##### 2. *Open government data*

The most relevant level of the five-star scheme for open data in phase 4 is 5 stars, meaning that data are machine readable, in a standard format using open standards, and the data are electronically linked to other data sets, for example, open government data are linked with all other appropriately open, formatted and linked data.

#### E. UPGRADING GOVERNMENT CAPACITY: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

The government capacity building blocks for phase 4 are similar to those described in phase 1 (see chapter V, section E) and they are built upon phases 2 and 3, but should be designed to facilitate the engagement and e-engagement policy and strategy context as described above. It is thus recommended that phase 4 government capacity building blocks should be anticipated in phase 1 and supplemented by developments in phases 2 and 3.

Apart from strengthening professional communities at every level and countering the challenges, which need to reflect these engagement and e-engagement policies and strategies, some additional specific issues are addressed in this section.

##### *Government as a platform and the changing roles of government*

Conceiving of the Government as a platform arises directly out of the open governance approach as part of phase 4 engagement. In one manifestation, this might be an open source service platform in the cloud providing government services, data and enablers as building blocks which promise significant increases in both efficiency and effectiveness. There is a need to examine both digital and non-digital platforms, as well as their interrelationships, to support the creation of public value through co-creation with other actors. Better understanding is needed as to how the Government can adapt its roles as facilitator and orchestrator, to provide appropriate tools and supports including big, open and linked data, to better manage assets and to ensure sustainability and balanced public value.

Co-creation is understood as the active flow and exchange of ideas, information, components and products across society which allows for a better understanding of, as well as participation, engagement and empowerment in, policy development, creating and improving services and tackling societal challenges. Co-creation encompasses co-innovation, co-configuration, and co-production of products, services and content through modularization and digitization, the role of social entrepreneurs in these new processes, and creating platforms for creative organizations, for example around ‘standard toolboxes’ for niche needs or markets.

Experience has shown that it is often at city level that governments are successfully experimenting with these new roles especially enabled by ICT. Better understanding is required of how such practices can become more widespread at a variety of governance levels and across different national, political and cultural contexts. Government as a platform can support a range of actors to collaborate with each other, as well as with government itself, to generate public value. Using ICT, citizens, communities, civil groups, as well as businesses, are no longer simply passive consumers of data and knowledge but increasingly become active producers. Box 13 and box 14 provide examples of value created at the city-level by ICT innovations.

#### **Box 13. Kenya: Map Kibera**

Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya, is one of the largest slums in Africa and was a blank spot on maps until November 2009, when young Kiberans created the first free and open digital map of their own community using simple GPS devices and OpenStreetMap.

The volunteer mappers are young people living and working in the map area (Kibera slum). By surveying communities, they create new public information and lay out pathways, clinics, water points and markets with the goal of sharing that information as much as possible in the community, thereby creating an essential social and economic resource. In addition to providing useful information to the local government, volunteers acquire new professional skills in the field of cartography and geospatial information systems.

The initiative has unfolded in three phases. First, basic data about the location of clinics, toilets, health, security, education, and water/sanitation, places of worship, were collected, then a storytelling layer was added, capturing personal accounts, stories and news of Kibera residents. Out of this has developed the *Voice of Kibera* website, an online news and information-sharing platform for the Kibera community.

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Source: <http://mapkibera.org>.

#### **Box 14. United States of America: Chicago Complete Street Design**

The innovative Streetscape and Sustainable Design programme of the Department of Transportation strives to rehabilitate Chicago’s neighbourhoods, commercial areas, river walks and bicycle facilities into active, attractive places for Chicagoans to live, work and play.

The programme applies a large range of techniques, including road diets, storm water best management practices, unique community identifiers and educational seminars. Projects include green alleys, sustainable streets, rails to trails, river walks, bicycle stations, highway beautification programmes, master plans and public plazas.

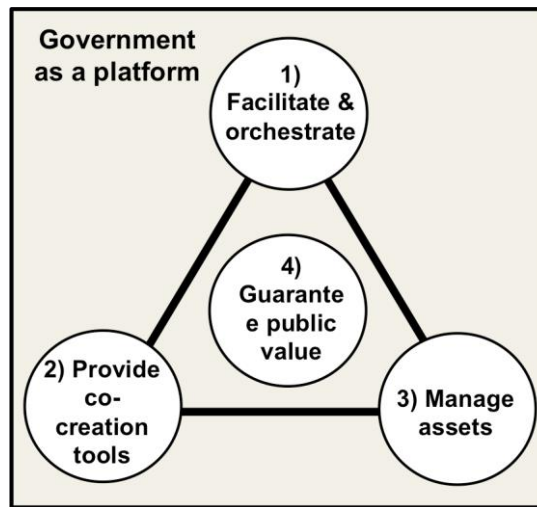
Direct community involvement and leadership is vital to implementing successful streetscapes. The community is engaged early in the design process whenever possible and is fundamentally involved in the decision-making process. This partnership results in unique community branding, through elements such as community-specific identifiers, landscaped planters and historical kiosks that accentuate a sense of place. Personal involvement also leads to improved community consensus and satisfaction and reduces incidences of vandalism or neglect. The Streetscape and Sustainable Design programme has constructed over 135 projects throughout Chicago.

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Source: <http://chicagocompletestreets.org/streets/streetscapesustainable-design/>.

This is illustrated in figure 4 which indicates four new or enhanced roles which the Government needs to adopt in the context of phase 4.

**Figure 4. Government as a platform for new roles**



Source: Millard, 2017.

These four new or enhanced roles of the Government in the engagement phase are:

1. Government as facilitator and orchestrator: When the Government sets up engagement platforms at many levels, its role is to coordinate, facilitate and enable, while also regulating and arbitrating the activities of others in delivering public value. Government's role is to ensure that public value is created by the most appropriate means in terms of what works best in each context and for given needs. As described earlier, this could involve the Government having either a minor or major role, but even in the latter case the Government needs to be a facilitator and orchestrator to ensure that it creates public value.
2. Government as the provider of tools, guidance and incentives for co-creation: Although the bottom-up, participatory co-creation of services and engagement in government processes can lead to more effective and personalized experiences, doing so can increase the burden placed on citizens and other actors. For example, the adoption of e-government services often results in government outsourcing some of the work it has previously done itself to the user. Co-created or fully user-created services take this step much further. Developing more cost-effective and efficient public services should mean more than assuming citizens will contribute time and other resources to create their own services. To counter this, Governments should provide structured guidance within which service co-creation with users can take place. 'Guided' support for co-creation should also be designed to reduce the burden of participation on users, while optimizing benefits for both public administrations and citizens. In addition, governments should provide incentives by highlighting the benefits service users can derive from the co-creation process, giving them more power to make decisions about their services in adapting them to their own needs and supporting them with relevant data and other resources.
3. Government as the manager of societal assets: Government also has an increasing role in managing the assets society has. Especially in the context of the pressing global challenges, as articulated through the SDGs, there is a need to identify and deploy all society's available assets and resources. These are often underused if they are used at all. These available assets, including the Government's own, could encompass people's time and expertise, finance, organizational structures and competences, data, knowledge, content, networks, capacity, infrastructures, service building blocks,

things, places, buildings, spaces, vehicles and so on. The role of the Government in using the power of ICT, particularly in collaboration with other actors, is to identify, match, orchestrate, broker and coordinate assets which can be shared and converted into public value impacts, instead of doing nothing while those assets go to waste. Already many non-government actors are launching typically bottom-up and small-scale ICT-based platforms that have such a role, for example as part of the so-called sharing and collaborative economies, such as the civil society organization “Shareable” based in the United States.<sup>43</sup> In many cases, however, the Government has greater power and scope to do this by linking actors and sharing its own assets internally, and this is both a growing challenge as well as a huge opportunity. This would involve widening the scope of ICT-based content management systems to become asset management systems.

4. Government as guarantor of public value over the longer term: Seeing the Government as a platform ensures that public value is appropriately created and deployed. It is important to recognize, however, that even when the Government collaborates with other actors in producing public value, this does not necessarily imply that the Government has become just one actor among many, given that it still needs to fulfil roles that other actors normally cannot. Such roles include being responsible for overall quality standards and mechanisms for asset sharing, quality and legal frameworks, even in situations when these are formally delegated to other actors. Accountability for services and performance, and responsibility especially if things go wrong, is a critical issue. Other such roles include data protection and security. In this context, it is important to recognize that innovation and change in the public sector is not the same as in the private sector. Government cannot pick and choose its customers and government services cannot afford to ‘fail’ in the same way as in the private sector. Because the Government is the only institution democratically accountable to society, only it can ensure sustainable and balanced public value where all parts of society derive benefit and where trade-offs are seen as proportionate and fair. This shows the importance of the overall sustainability of the governance system. Governments provide longer-term stability and continuity which other actors are not able to do, and this is needed so that people and communities are able to live stable lives and so the market can have confidence that unpredictable governance changes will not upset their investment and innovation strategies. Governance systems with short-term horizons encourage short-term thinking in business and an unstable society. Instead of always the sole actor, the public sector is becoming one player among many, albeit with unique responsibilities in new forms of open and collaborative governance.

#### F. ROLLING OUT TECHNOLOGY FEATURES AND CHANNELS: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

Focusing on phase 4, there is a further escalation in the intensification of ICT use compared to phase 3, building on the shift to the social media expression and Web 2.0 applications in phase 2, and that additionally focuses on using the participation and collaboration tools and features examined earlier for engagement activities.

The building blocks of the technology features and channels for phase 4 are similar to those described in phase 1 (see chapter V, section E) and they are built upon phases 2 and 3, but should be designed to facilitate the engagement and e-engagement policy and strategy context as described above. It is thus recommended that the phase 4 technology building blocks should be anticipated in phase 1 and supplemented by developments in phases 2 and 3. Apart from e-voting/e-polling, e-petitions, participatory budgeting and collaborative co-production, which need to reflect these engagement and e-engagement policies and strategies, the emerging technologies likely to impact open government are addressed in this section.

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<sup>43</sup> See [www.shareable.net](http://www.shareable.net).

## *1. Tools and features for engagement*

The technology currently being used for engagement includes social networks in their various forms for supporting decision-making in a non-hierarchical manner, allowing all non-government voices to be heard and engaged with. There are several critical factors that affect the extent to which technology contributes to engagement, including the costs involved; ensuring that results achieved are consistent with the objectives, given that the technology enables more effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation; and the institutional acceptance of the changes and of the technological tools used in this process.

## *2. Emerging technologies likely to impact open government*

Government is typically one of the largest single users of ICT and other new technologies, but also is often the most hesitant. There are arguably understandable explanations for this, but it is also clear that, sooner or later, governments will wish or need to avail themselves of new and emerging technologies. This is not least to save resources and become more efficient, but also because the demands on governments for new and better services of all types is growing, including from the Internet generation.

However, it is also important to recognize that ICT has become a general-purpose technology<sup>44</sup> underpinning most if not all technological innovation and development. This means that examining ‘digital’ government purely in the traditional narrow sense, of back-office and process re-engineering and front-office online services, no longer makes much sense. Many of the main emerging technologies are having, and are likely to continue having, significant impacts on the way Governments are organized and operated, as well as on how Governments are perceived and used. These technologies are arising out of the so-called ‘fourth industrial revolution’.<sup>45</sup> Some of these technologies are described below:

- The ‘Internet of Things’ links everything including physical objects to the Internet, for example to coordinate traffic and services, or to monitor environmental pollution. This is now developing into the ‘Internet of everything’ which includes people;
- Cloud computing enables access to shared pools of configurable infrastructures (such as computer networks, servers, storage, applications and services), either openly or within a private network. This enables, for example, the reduction of ICT costs within a large organization like a government, the provision of open data and the creation and sharing of services;
- Wearable technology with sensors attached to the human body monitors vital life signs, which is especially valuable in preventative health care;
- Robotics takes over most if not all manual and repetitive tasks in factories and offices and helps people with disabilities and older persons who are housebound;
- Artificial intelligence automates tasks and decision-making processes in the public sector as well as in factories and offices, education and health;
- Virtual reality and augmented reality use software-generated content to replicate or supplement a real environment or an imaginary setting, and which the user can interact with. Commercial or public sector applications of virtual reality and augmented reality include real-time business intelligence, or medical consultations;
- ‘Big data’ analysis enables businesses to understand markets and target customers, and can be combined with open government data for greater transparency and accountability;

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<sup>44</sup> Perez, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Schwab, 2016.

- Social media facilitates the creation and sharing of information, ideas, advice, support, user-generated content, service-specific profiles and online social networks. The total number of social media users worldwide in 2017 is estimated as 2.41 billion;<sup>46</sup>
- Smart electrical grids improve the efficiency and effectiveness of power supplies;
- Digital and biological fabrication, such as three-dimensional printing and other additive manufacturing technologies, produces one-off or specialized components for a wide range of personal, commercial and technical tasks. For example, in war zones this enables the rapid fabrication of prosthetic limbs for the injured;
- Unmanned transport, such as drones, enable surveillance, monitoring and delivering vital medical or other supplies to remote areas or in emergencies;
- Remote sensing and imaging, for example by satellite, can be used for navigation, environmental and logistics monitoring and weather forecasting;
- Blockchain technologies are used for secure and distributed archives, registers and records, participatory decision-making and so on.

#### Box 15. United Kingdom: FixMyStreet

Sometimes when a public service is needed but the Government is unable or unwilling to provide it, other actors simply take over. Such services usurping the role of the Government but also engaging with it, often start by asking what citizens need from public services to make their lives better, and how the services can improve the daily life of citizens where they live and work.

One example is the FixMyStreet service in the United Kingdom designed and run by the mySociety<sup>a</sup> civil society organization staffed by volunteers. This service allows any citizen, via a website or mobile app, to report any problems in their street or neighbourhood ranging from broken street lights or paving, abandoned vehicles, rubbish or graffiti and to upload relevant photos or other material.

The citizen does not need to know which authority is responsible as the site automatically passes the complaint to the correct department and then traces and tracks its progress on behalf of the citizen until the problem is solved. To do this, mySociety obtained relevant public sector information and data about authorities' roles and procedures, contact points and so on. Although much of the data were already in the public domain, they were widely scattered and not easily accessible digitally. The value added which mySociety brought was to bring the information together, 'mash' it in appropriate ways, and present it in an easy to use format for citizens. They had to reach across administrative silos, something perhaps difficult for the public sector to do itself.

Source: <http://www.fixmystreet.com/>.

<sup>a</sup> More information is available at <http://www.mysociety.org/>.

### G. IMPROVING PUBLIC CAPACITY: LESSONS AND GUIDANCE

The public capacity building blocks for phase 4 are similar to those described in phase 1 (see chapter V, section G) and they are built upon phases 2 and 3, but should be designed to facilitate the engagement and e-engagement policy and strategy context as described above. It is thus recommended that phase 4 public capacity building blocks should be anticipated in phase 1 and supplemented by developments in phases 2 and 3. Thus, building citizen collaboration from the bottom and actively supporting participatory, digital and political literacy need to reflect these engagement and e-engagement policies and strategies.

<sup>46</sup> Available at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users/>.





## VII. THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENT ACTORS AND THE RECONFIGURATION OF TRANSPARENCY, PARTICIPATION AND COLLABORATION THROUGH ENGAGEMENT

As described and exemplified above, open government gives critical roles to the whole range of non-government actors, and especially citizens. While the Government is changing and needs to change much more, citizens and other non-government actors are also increasing their awareness and leverage on the Government. It is not yet clear whether their future partnership with the Government will be a positive one.

Although they need strong support from a pro-active Government as examined above, citizens should be ready take more responsibility and become more constructively critical and productive, but this is in many ways the biggest challenge of all. Members of the upcoming 'Internet generation' are already acting in this way in their private and working lives enabled by digital technology, and are starting to demand that their relationships and dealings with the public sector should take place on the same basis.<sup>47</sup>

The challenge is whether government can and will respond to these demands, and this depends a lot on the adoption of appropriate policies, structures and mindsets, as well as the education and incentives for citizens to support this. Critically, it depends on government changing its roles in the ways described above. Since early 2009 when President Obama launched the open government movement with a focus on transparency, participation and collaboration, making the United States the first country to explicitly do so, there have been clear developments in how these three pillars are perceived and are playing out in practice, particularly vis à vis citizens.

First, transparency has increasingly become the *sine qua non* of the successful development of open governance systems but is also becoming better understood. Total transparency is not the goal, given that citizens, public employees and politicians all have areas of legitimate privacy, the former in terms of the protection of their personal data and the latter two as they need confidential spaces for dialogue and brainstorming. The decisions themselves, as well as the evidence and rationales for them, should be transparent.

Limits to transparency also need to be set by legitimate interests, the potential for the misuse of information, slander, disrespect, 'alternative facts' and troublesome moves to a 'post-truth' society, etc., but the nature of such limits and their definitions need to be clear and open to debate. However, robust transparency is clearly necessary as this is the basis for accountability and for tackling corruption in government as well as in the rest of society.<sup>48</sup>

Second, the understanding of participation in open governance is moving towards a broader notion of engagement in an open process. The latter sees citizens and other actors being invited to engage in all legitimate aspects of public sector activities, not just decision making which in most parts of the world has tended to be the focus of e-participation. In some ways therefore, participation perceived like this only requires a reactive citizen, while engagement is more mixed and can — through transparency and accountability — imply that citizens are more proactive and take into their own hands activities which traditionally have been purely public sector responsibilities.

Third, collaboration is starting to be exemplified through co-creation and innovation, as discussed above, and especially in the context of new forms of open, social and inclusive innovation. The current governance and market systems are becoming extremely good at 'sweating' assets on the supply side, so that both public

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<sup>47</sup> Tapscott, 2009.

<sup>48</sup> European Commission, 2014a; OECD, 2014b.



and private producers become incentivized to squeeze their financial, human and other assets to the maximum extent, and thereby increase their performance and productivity.

However, on the demand and consumption side, there is often massive asset waste, resulting from the widespread practice of exclusive asset ownership. This has been challenged in the last decade by a new sharing economy growing from a small base, in which organizations, companies and individuals share with each other an increasing range of their assets. These include skills, competences, time, spaces, vehicles, tools, buildings, facilities of all types, organizational capacities and even financial resources. Much of this sharing is enabled by ICT developments like crowdsourcing and crowdfunding.

An important underpinning of both the sharing and collaboration economy is the trend towards co-creation, originally conceived as a business strategy for identifying new forms of customer engagement, it is being increasingly applied in other environments including in the public sector and by non-profits and citizen groups.

## Annex

### **Public Administration Reform**

It is very important for any e-participation and open government policy approach to ensure maximum alignment and coherence across all ‘e’-areas, and with important non-‘e’ areas like Public Administration Reform (PAR), as well as public-private partnerships (PPPs) and public-civil partnerships.

The most systematic source for PAR is the SIGMA (2016) joint initiative between the European Commission and OECD, which has agreed a comprehensive definition of public administration covering six core areas for the European Union’s European Neighbourhood Policy that covers most Arab countries.\*

1. **Strategic framework of Public Administration Reform:** The leadership of public administration reform is established, and the strategic framework and administrative resources provide the basis for implementing prioritized reform activities aligned with the country’s financial circumstances.
2. **Policy development and co-ordination:** Policy planning and co-ordination; and policy development.
3. **Public service and human resource management:** Policy, legal and institutional frameworks for public service; human resource management.
4. **Accountability:** Proper mechanisms to ensure accountability of state administration bodies, including liability and transparency.
5. **Service delivery:** Administration is service-delivery oriented; the quality and accessibility of public services is ensured.
6. **Public financial management:** Budget management; internal control and audit; public procurement; external audit.

The United Nations Development Programme (2015) also deploys a PAR approach but this appears to vary from country to country according to the latest available source.

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\* European Union, 2015.

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