



منتدى الخدمات الحكومية
GOVERNMENT SERVICES FORUM



WORLD
GOVERNMENT
SUMMIT

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WORLD GOVERNMENT SUMMIT



GOVERNMENT SERVICES FORUM

A DIALOGUE ON THE FUTURE OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

4th Edition

World Government Summit March 2022

A large, ornate metal frame with intricate patterns, set against a cloudy sky. The frame is made of dark metal with a lighter, possibly copper or gold, inner lining. It has a complex, geometric design with circular and floral motifs. The frame is positioned in the center of the image, and the background is a soft, overcast sky with light clouds.

**"THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THOSE
WHO CAN IMAGINE IT"**

H.H. SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM

FOREWORD

The world is without doubt more connected than ever before and transforming at unprecedented speed. Factors such as technological advances, demographic shifts, the climate emergency, and rising inequality are however contributing to a complex and uncertain environment in which governments have to operate. At the same time, these challenges are compounded by the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has and continues to pose significant economic and social challenges, leaving governments across the world with a tighter purse than ever before.

The past two years have demonstrated however that governments can adapt, react and scale new digital services at speed when confronted with extraordinary circumstances, pressure and support from senior officials. The energy and determination shown during this period must be sustained. Further, governments must seize the moment to absorb lessons learnt and new ways of working to provide citizens with the services they need and expect going forward.

Despite the complex challenges, we are on an unstoppable path toward digital adoption. Citizens have become increasingly reliant on technology in everyday life and are expected to make even more use of technology going forward. More significantly, we may be on the cusp of a new technology paradigm – the metaverse – an immersive three-dimensional virtual realm which promises to fundamentally transform the services and experiences that governments deliver to citizens.

With the possibility of predictive, hyper-personalized and intelligent services, the potential that emerging technologies such as AI, AR and VR present and the metaverse, governments are undoubtedly able to reimagine and transform the services they deliver to citizens. As governments continue to invest and explore new ways of delivering government experiences however, it's imperative that key fundamentals are kept in sight – equity, trust, inclusivity, empathy, human centricity.

In February 2019, we began a dialogue on the future of government services at the World Government Summit, held in Dubai. This saw sixteen leaders from nine different countries come together at the inaugural Government Services Forum held under the patronage of the Emirates Government Service Excellence Program. We continued our engagement at the Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California at Berkeley and thereafter, at GITEX Dubai in 2020. To take this conversation further, a panel of eleven members convened again this year for the 4th edition of this Forum. The Forum offered panel members an opportunity to connect, share experiences and debate several important topics including:

- What are some of the new frontiers that government can explore and invest in going forward?
- How should governments prepare for services in the years ahead and beyond?
- What foundational elements must governments keep fully in sight to improve the services and experiences they deliver to citizens?
- How might governments think like the citizens they serve to deliver exceptional services?

The panelists engaged in a free-flowing conversation as they debated issues, asked questions, cited examples and explored calls to action related to the fundamental transformation of government services. In conclusion, all of us converged around the need to continue this dialogue through the broader GX platform so that we can collaborate effectively and work together to reimagine the way governments design and deliver to their citizens.

I look forward to hosting the next edition of the Forum and many more, as we continue to work towards enhancing the lives of our citizens.

MOHAMMED BIN TALIAH

Chief of Government Services, Government of UAE



PEOPLE, PURPOSE & POSSIBILITIES

Exploring new frontiers in Government Services



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INTRODUCTION

Due to ever-evolving citizen needs and expectations, technological advances and the pandemic, the last two years have seen citizens across the world become increasingly reliant on technology.

In fact, technology has literally transformed the way people work, play, learn, shop and socialize. However, whilst the pandemic has accelerated innovation more than we could have imagined and put governments under pressure to accelerate the digitalization of public services, services being delivered are still perceived by some to lag behind those provided by the private sector. At the same time, whilst technological advances are being made at unprecedented speed – exciting to many, technology advances are perhaps taking place quicker than some are able to adapt to, leaving some citizens feeling overwhelmed, anxious and at risk of becoming disconnected.

As technology therefore, without question, has the potential to transform government services to deliver better outcomes for citizens and communities, and many conversations continue to be centered around this, there is a fundamental need for governments to continue working on progressing the more ‘foundational’ elements that are critical to the success of any transformation effort. This includes continuing to work on factors such as equity, inclusivity, empathy, trust and perhaps above all human centered design.



Based on research and the views of a diverse panel of senior leaders from the public and private sector that participated in the Government Services Forum, this report outlines:

- The new frontiers that governments are exploring to deliver the services of tomorrow.
- The key foundational factors that governments must have in place if governments are to transform services and create long-term value from some of the technologies they may choose to invest in going forward.
- The continued importance that must be placed on putting the human at the heart of all design and transformation efforts.

Ultimately, this report looks to address a number of fundamental questions including:

- **How will government services transform over the next 5 – 10 years?**
- **What have been some of the key learnings over the last two years?**
- **What do governments need to unlearn moving forward?**
- **What key fundamentals must governments continue to address?**
- **What actions will need to be taken in the next 1-2 years to deliver transformation?**

Important note: This report contains extracts of the panel discussion that took place at the 4th Government Services Forum as part of the World Government Summit. However, as the discussion followed Chatham House rules, quotes reflected in this report may appear anonymous.





SECTION 1

**HOW SHOULD GOVERNMENTS
PREPARE FOR SERVICES IN THE
YEARS AHEAD AND BEYOND?**



SECTION 1

How Should Governments Prepare for Services in the Years Ahead and Beyond?

Given the rate at which innovation, new ways of operating and technological advances are being made, governments have the ability to fundamentally transform and reimagine how government operates and the services they deliver. However, with this, comes significant responsibility. For many, it also requires new ways of working and a new mindset to be adopted, and ultimately a radically different approach to the status quo.

The section that follows looks to explore:

- The new frontiers that governments are exploring to transform service delivery.
- How governments should prepare for services in the years ahead and beyond.
- The challenges that governments need to overcome if they are to truly transform services and ensure digital inclusivity.

What are some of the new frontiers that governments can explore and invest in going forward?

We are entering a new era of govtech capability. Compounded by the remarkable potential that emerging technologies such as AI, AR and VR are showing, advances are certainly being made that will enable governments to bring about the next generation of services. AI alone promises to bring about transformative impact on the public sector.

Every so often however, a new technology paradigm emerges which promises to revolutionize the status quo and things as we know them. It's been roughly 10 years since the last such shift – that of social, mobile, cloud. Excitingly, we may now be on the cusp of a new one – the metaverse.

Touted as the successor to the internet, the metaverse essentially represents an immersive, shared, three-dimensional virtual realm

that mimics the world we live in and wherein people interact with objects, the environment and each other through digital representation of themselves or avatars. The metaverse is not a new concept. Versions already exist. With the COVID-19 pandemic accelerating the convergence of physical and digital, coupled with the evolution of complementary and emerging technologies, the metaverse seems poised to expand into every sphere of human activity and every industry.

Governments specifically are taking note to enable them to provide richer, and more accessible and immersive experiences to citizens, and to increase communication and engagement. Although promising to be a game changer, the concept is still in its infancy, with the pervasive use of the metaverse as the main customer engagement interface likely a few years away. Glimpses, however, are emerging into what the metaverse may look like, how people will use it and the opportunities it will unleash. Enterprises including government agencies should therefore start factoring it into their short and long-term vision.

At the same time, whilst the metaverse perhaps presents an opportunity like no other before, alongside the potential benefits are possible pitfalls and challenges that will need to be carefully managed. Already, regulators are grappling to manage issues related to factors such as personal data collection, data privacy, deepfakes – all of which are challenges that relate to current digital technologies which are significantly impacting the fabric of our society and how companies interact with their customers and employees. At the same time, the metaverse will require a lot of energy to run, as well as faster and more reliable internet speeds. And, as only just over half of households (55%) globally have an internet connection, the metaverse may in fact further increase the 'digital divide'. Therefore, whilst exciting, the metaverse may in fact magnify some of the existing challenges and introduce new ones, requiring laws and data regulations to be updated.

In the nearer term, the most progressive governments will leverage new and existing technologies and continue to focus on improving the delivery of personalised and proactive services, and even look to predict the services a citizen may need or expect. Central to enabling this however is access to data that is stored digitally and government entities working cross-functionally. This will require many governments to break down silos and achieve interoperability of different systems and databases, and coordinate resources across multiple departments to work together, to enable a single view of the citizen to be created. As expressed by a panel member, during the Forum, of equal importance is making citizens part of the journey and showing them how data collected by governments is in fact benefiting them. Essentially, the case for change must be clear to all, to obtain the required buy-in and change the narrative around the experience offered to citizens.



CASE STUDY

The UAE API Marketplace

Outlined below is a brief view of how governments today are increasingly collaborating with diverse stakeholders to deliver improved digital services to citizens.

In 2021, the UAE Government launched the [UAE API Marketplace](#). Set-up in partnership with the private sector, the marketplace marks the launch of a new digital public-private partnership, established to develop government services that are able to facilitate citizen lives through the availability of interconnected, fast and seamless digital solutions and services – in partnership with the private sector, app developers and coders, using APIs provided by the government.

As well as the government in this case acting as a catalyst and promoting increased collaboration and partnerships between the government and private sector entities, the API marketplace is also helping to accelerate digital transformation.





***"TAILOR-MADE SERVICES ARE THE
GOVERNMENT SERVICES OF TOMORROW"***

“At Amazon, innovation always has a very specific purpose. Press releases for a new experience, service or product are therefore drafted, at the start of our journey, for something that may be set to be delivered in years to come. I’d love to be part of the team that creates the zero-touch government press release.”

“Why can’t governments be more proactive? We know when an individual’s driving license or passport is expiring. These data points are available to us. So, we should look to leverage these points to improve the services we deliver to citizens. After all, if platforms such as Netflix can predict what people are interested in watching, governments should be able to anticipate and forecast the services a citizen may require.”



***"IN MY MIND, THE BEST GOVERNMENT
IS ONE THAT IS INVISIBLE - ONE THAT
IS EASILY ACCESSIBLE, PROACTIVE
AND WHERE HUMAN INTERACTION IS
MINIMAL, IF AT ALL REQUIRED"***





How should governments prepare for services of the future?

Many government departments before the pandemic placed significant focus on daily operational needs at the expense of digital transformation. However, as an outcome of the unprecedented challenges and pressures that the pandemic presented entire nations with, digital service delivery has been accelerated dramatically. So too has the level of interaction with citizens and government officials across many areas of government - from health care, social services to education. In fact, the pandemic has seen several governments develop and implement new digital solutions that were previously seen as too challenging, sometimes, in a matter of days.

Despite demonstrating the ability to innovate and deliver at speed when urgency and political support is present however, the perception that governments continue to lag behind services provided by the private sector still exists. Based on an EY study conducted in 2020 - globally, only around half of citizens (53%) think governments and public services effectively used digital technology to respond to the pandemic - with responses differing markedly across countries. At the same time, the study also showed that globally, almost one third (32%) of respondents ranked more use of digital technologies in the provision of public services as one of the top three priorities for governments to improve the quality of services. From this, it's apparent that governments still have some way to go on their digital journey, if they are to meet the ever-evolving needs and expectations of the citizens and communities they serve.

Regardless of the complexities that the pandemic presented and the need for governments to further develop digital offerings however, civil servants must build

on some of the positives that came out of the COVID-19 epidemic. This includes making the new ways of operating that were introduced and adopted during this period, part of the fabric. And, this will require a concerted effort.

Ultimately, governments that were successful during this period were those that "...were agile, able to re-think themselves, those that worked in small teams like start-ups and in an ecosystem, those that were outcome focused and not writing 100-page report, and those that were non-territorial and broke down silos...". In addition to this and key going forward is also that individuals across government are equipped with the right skills and tools. To support this, some governments are training all their civil servants on the 4th industrial revolution - from AI to blockchain to 3D printing - enabling government workers to be knowledgeable about emerging technologies. Moving forward, governments must also learn to work more iteratively and appreciate that whilst some skills should be nurtured internally, gaining perspectives from external sources can prove hugely beneficial. Above all, however, and as reiterated by several panel members during the Forum, for governments to be successful, individuals must have the right mindset and attitude, and operate in a culture wherein experimentation and risk taking is encouraged, and failure is understood to form part and parcel of the innovation process.

"True innovation can only happen if people can experiment and fail. Resistance to failure can in fact inhibit innovation."

CASE STUDY

The REGLAB

In 2019, the UAE launched [the Regulations Lab](#) in partnership with the Dubai Future Foundation. Its overarching goal is to help the UAE become a global innovation incubator and testing ground for future technologies and their applications. To facilitate this, the RegLab focuses on:

- Bringing together different stakeholders such as regulators, the private sector, innovators and business leaders to co-create legislation.
- Granting licenses for the testing and vetting of innovations that utilize future technologies.

Ultimately, through use cases and pilots, the RegLab allows regulations to be drafted, evolved and scaled to provide better, faster, more high-quality services for the public. Outlined below is an example of the RegLab in action:

- In 2021, the UAE granted temporary licenses to test self-driving vehicles – a move that came as part of the government’s continuous effort to adopt advanced technologies across all sectors. As an outcome of this testing / pilot project, a solid case for changing, evolving and/or scaling regulations related to autonomous vehicles may arise and in-turn, change mobility as we know it today.

Showcased through this case study is a government’s ability and willingness to drive change and innovation using agile methods.





"GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ARE LIKE DATABASES TODAY. CRITICAL GOING FORWARD, IS THAT THEY SPEAK, COLLABORATE AND SHARE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES. ONLY THEN WILL THE SERVICES THAT GOVERNMENTS DELIVER HAVE THE ABILITY TO TRULY TRANSFORM."

“We’re not facing a technology challenge. The challenge today relates to our ability to source and engage talent that has the right mindset and our ability to create the right culture. It’s essential that the right building blocks are in place – infrastructure, policies, talent, regulations, etc. This is what will enable citizens to adopt technology quicker.”

“A clear takeaway from the pandemic is that governments going forward should be outcome focused, reduce bureaucracy and combine this with innovative thinking. Only then will real change start to take place.”

In knowing that we are on an unstoppable path towards digital adoption and that technology will increasingly play a more pervasive role in people’s lives going forward, governments worldwide must anticipate the needs and expectations of the next generation. In parallel however, governments must get ahead of and look to proactively address the concerns that citizens continue to have, if they are to harness the full potential of technology. These concerns include but are not limited to:

Widening social inequality & access:

Often, the most disadvantaged citizens are unable to afford access to new technology and lack the digital literacy skills to use it.

Loss of human interaction:

The increasing reliance on technology as a means of communication and interaction is causing concerns about social cohesion. In a more virtual world, some of the most vulnerable groups in society may become more isolated through the loss of physical support networks.

Encroachment on personal privacy and digital security:

As more people and devices are connected, the volume and variety of data created, and the speed at which it is gathered will increase. This is creating public anxiety around personal privacy and a lack of control over how people’s data is used.





In addition to the challenges above, many governments also continue to face a troubling trust deficit. Likely contributing to this challenge are stories that have circulated and gained mass attention in the media in recent years such as:

- Credit card algorithms that show bias against female card applicants
- Facial recognition software that misidentified professional athletes as criminals

As data and technology advances are increasingly reshaping our world however, a lack of trust can stall their full potential from being achieved. Concerns related to how data and technology are used must therefore be overcome. Without this, organizations including governments will struggle to create long-term value from the intelligent technologies they may invest in such as Robotic Process Automation and Artificial Intelligence.

One way to establish and sustain trust is to ensure transparency and explainability, and by proving that new technologies being introduced are secure, resilient and unbiased. In addition to this, trust can be built by making citizens part of the journey and showing them how their data is being used and the benefits they will derive.

Aside from trust, governments must also continue to build a culture which is more accepting of risk taking. However, as many government officials have fiscal responsibilities and are under increasing pressure to deliver value-for-money, and are frequently scrutinized in the media for the actions they take, many are risk averse and unwilling to experiment. These, however, are the very factors that hamper creativity and innovation, which are imperative if governments are to transform the services they deliver and venture into largely unknown territory such as the metaverse.

“Civil servants are not risk-taking, and taking risks has the potential to get people into trouble. However, it certainly doesn’t have to be this way. A risk-taking culture must be instilled if true innovation is to happen.”

Footnote: The EY research noted above is based on online interviews that were conducted with 12,100 participants of working age, across 12 countries globally between July – September 2020. Quotas were set to achieve a representative sample in each country.

SECTION 2

**HOW WILL THE POWER OF HUMAN EXPERIENCES
HELP REIMAGINE THE SERVICES OF TOMORROW?**

SECTION 2

How will the Power of Human Experiences Help Reimagine the Services of Tomorrow?

People see technology as instrumental in improving many aspects of their lives, and there is a broad appetite among citizens for more digitally enabled public services. Despite this, a large minority of citizens continue to lack the skills or means to access digital services. Further, the issue of distrust still very much exists in many parts of the world.

As governments therefore continue to invest and explore new ways in which to deliver services to citizens, and look to tap into new and unknown frontiers, officials leading transformation efforts must go forward:

- Reflect on what is working well and what might not be hitting the mark
- Develop a thorough understanding of people's relationship with technology
- Not lose sight of the key fundamentals or 'foundational elements' that must be in place such as equity, inclusivity, empathy, trust and human centricity and above all,
- Think like the citizens they serve.

Without this, governments risk disconnecting as many citizens as they connect, and struggle to deliver improved and truly differentiated services.

Highlighted in the section that follows are some of the key questions that need to be addressed if the services of tomorrow are to re-imagined.

How might governments think like the citizens they serve to deliver exceptional services? And, is this enough going forward or do citizens today expect to have a greater say and be part of the end-to-end journey?

As mentioned previously, due to a host of events that have taken place over the last 1-3 years, governments today operate in a complex environment in which they must carefully balance the fiscal, economic, and social challenges they face. As an outcome, there is a fundamental need for governments to develop a deep understanding of how the upheaval of recent years has shaped and potentially altered the views of citizens – in terms of their needs, concerns and expectations, and what they value most. However, what remains constant and undebated as governments continue to look to make improvements to the services they deliver, is the need to keep the citizen at the heart of everything.





“In moving towards a digital future, we must remember the importance of empathy and always design with the end-customer in-mind. Technology should only be considered as a key enabler that facilitates the delivery of a desired experience.”

Putting human interests at the core has been a differentiating characteristic for many organizations. This is not new. But this is more important today than ever before. To support the development of human-centric services and build services around real user needs and life events, many government agencies worldwide have adopted design thinking and set-up customer experience labs. At the centre of all these popular approaches lies ‘empathy’ – our ability to see the world through a customer’s eyes and to understand what they see, feel and experience – to help gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of people’s motivations and thoughts. Other approaches such as government-organised hackathons and open innovation challenges have also proven popular models of engagement. Whilst focused on gaining citizen feedback, these mechanisms also allow for wide-ranging and diverse perspectives to be gathered which can help identify solutions to some of the world’s most complex challenges.

Increasingly, more and more citizens expect to partake and have a voice in how governments services are designed and delivered, as well as what governments spend on. Top-down models of governance will likely no longer be seen as legitimate in many parts of the world. Many now expect decision-making to be shared, open and participatory. As an outcome, digital participation tools such as social media, mobile apps and online digital platforms, as well as open innovation platforms, are increasingly being used to enable inputs to be collected from citizens on a large scale, in-turn providing insights to governments to enrich policy and decision-making. Importantly, going forward, governments should ensure that people are not just consulted but that they also feel empowered to shape the decisions that affect them and that they are able to co-create solutions to the complex social and economic challenges we face.

Notably, as governments start to think about the metaverse, the importance of human-centricity and engaging citizens will certainly take on an entirely new meaning. Successful experiences in the metaverse will more than ever hinge on a true and deep understanding of emerging customer behaviours and expectations. As an outcome going forward, governments will place more focus on human-centered design and to behavioural insights than perhaps ever before.

CASE STUDY

The Challenge Tender

For some time now, governments across the world have been running open innovation challenges and hackathons to generate ideas that can potentially solve some of humanity's most complex challenges.

The Israeli government is no exception to this. The government has been issuing 'challenge tenders' – enabling start-ups and vendors to pitch their idea to tackle a particular problem that the government is facing. Hence, rather than tendering for a pre-defined solution, the government is, in this case, asking vendors to submit their idea to collect their thinking on how to solve a specific problem. Subsequently, shortlisted vendors are requested to pitch their solution, and solutions are then selected for trials which, if proven successful, are then scaled.

This approach represents a shift away from the traditional procurement approach many governments continue to use. This approach may attract start-ups and relatively smaller vendors to pitch their ideas and not just the traditional, big companies. At the same time, it will encourage increased creative and diverse thinking to be put forward which could lead to more innovation solutions being identified.



***"CAR MANUFACTURERS DON'T SELL CARS ANYMORE.
THEY ARE SELLING MOBILITY. AS GOVERNMENTS,
WE SHOULDN'T LOOK TO 'SELL' SERVICES ANYMORE.
INSTEAD, ALL OUR FOCUS SHOULD BE ON THE
EXPERIENCE WE OFFER AND HAVE TO WORK ON THAT."***

CASE STUDY: CYPRUS



Kyriacos Kokkinos
Deputy Minister to the President
for Research, Innovation and
Digital Policy,
Republic of Cyprus

Delivering faster, simpler, better Government Digital Services, through a holistic citizen-centric Digital Services Factory – The Case of Cyprus

In today's globalized world, defined by transformational challenges and untapped opportunities, the competitiveness of any economy is deeply rooted in its resilience, readiness to adapt, and ability to compete and excel in a new norm. The Republic of Cyprus, like many countries across the globe, is faced with unprecedented challenges -and opportunities- for a step change in its social prosperity and economic competitiveness through leveraging technological and scientific advancements. The key prerequisite is to efficiently and quickly accelerate its human and technological/scientific capabilities and keep pace with the ongoing rapid migration to digital technologies through a well-crafted digital transformation plan that puts the people and citizen at its centre.

Cyprus has set forth an aspirational vision to become a fit-for-the-future society and knowledge-based economy enabled by digital technologies, to stimulate business activity, create new jobs, drive social prosperity, sustainable growth and international competitiveness. To realize this vision, the Ministry has crafted a transformational strategy and kicked-off its execution through a holistic and comprehensive program of targeted and concerted initiative streams in the domains of eGovernment Transformation and Digital Skills, Innovative Entrepreneurship, Connectivity and Communication, as well as Space and Earth Observation Technologies. The hallmarks of this strategy are: Revisiting architectural, structural and operational models and mechanisms, embracing new, emerging technologies, following a synergistic approach with all Ministries and competent Authorities and promoting an elevated, more relevant and more efficient public-private partnership.

Digital public services are an imperative in this journey – and particularly amid Covid19. Digitizing services helps governments meet public expectations, build trust and credibility and become more efficient and resilient. Digital interactions are easier, less time consuming and more convenient for citizens, while offering tangible benefits for governments, reducing administrative burden and backlogs, boosting productivity and freeing up resources for other priorities.

The bar on customer experience is high and citizens today expect governments to keep up. To create a seamless experience, Cyprus focuses on consolidating digital channels via "Gov.cy", a new online platform where citizens can navigate and access both information (websites) and services based on life or business situations. This platform is created with a coherent look and feel, and a consistent quality across the public services landscape, based on user needs, openness and transparency.

To mitigate the complexity of the task and secure the delivery of next-generation services in an accelerated manner, the Ministry has introduced a new function: the Digital Services Factory (DSF). DFS is mandated to design and industrialize a new citizen-centric approach to delivering services in a simpler, faster and scalable way. The DSF Team is being supported and coached by UK's Government Digital Services (GDS), UK's Agency that has developed and operates the equivalent function of Gov.uk. The DSF is a game-changing initiative which aims to support standardization and methodology across government, as well as design a conducive and efficient framework enabling the private sector to actively participate in the rapid deployment of services.

This is driving a radical re-think of government services paradigms, utilizing design thinking methodology and agile practices to rewrite the digital interactions' rules of engagement and introduce a delightful user experience, through a single front door: gov.cy. This is a truly complex and intriguing task, which requires careful planning, proper orchestration and decisive action, to transcend impediments and move forward faster. And by impediments, I refer to mental challenges, rather than technical or regulatory.

Perhaps, the strongest challenges in driving sustainable change can be outlined as follows: creating genuine excitement around a common vision and keeping stakeholders continuously involved and engaged in meaningful ways; and, accelerating professional upskilling and reskilling and creating ambassadors for this new way of working – in our case, the DSF team –, while communicating progress frequently and in tangible ways, to generate support for the effort, especially before a successful track record is established.

This journey has just begun for Cyprus.

We are, though, confident that leveraging on emerging technologies, a future-proof and truly digital workforce, and infusing a transformative mindset in services innovation across government, enterprise and society, we can break free from past limitations and inspire a new era of govtech capabilities and a renewed relationship between the citizen and the State; responding, adapting and embracing change, while maximizing impact and paving the way for sustainable development.

CASE STUDY: AZERBAIJAN

Effective Public Service Delivery in Azerbaijan: A Leap into the Future

In the past years, public administration reforms for improving service provision have gained substantial attention all around the world. The public sector has been shaped by increased citizen demands and public-sector reform initiatives, which have also led to the creation of brand new possibilities. Due to the shifting demands, the public sector is in need of strengthening its citizen focus.

For that purpose, the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (hereinafter SAPSSI) was established in July 2012 to provide high-quality public services to the citizens of Azerbaijan and promote innovations in this sphere. Its activity areas include public service delivery, digitalisation, innovations, and social projects.

The goal for further optimising, simplifying, and aligning public services with citizens' demands and desires has led to the development of one-stop shop models of public service delivery. Thus, "ASAN service", overseen by SAPSSI, was established upon the initiative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan as an integral part of the reforms in the public administration realm.

"ASAN service" center are one-stop shop-based entities for providing public services. These centers bring together representatives of 11 government organisations and 30 private companies providing more than 300 services through a public-private partnership.

The citizen-centric approach of "ASAN service" brings together many service providers that supply public services at one site to rural populations effectively as they cannot otherwise access such services easily. Mobile services, which include 10 large well-equipped buses and 1 "ASAN train", are operating by traveling to conveniently reachable locations in the regions and remote areas that do not have "ASAN service" centers.

"ASAN service", known as an innovative model, has laid the foundation for an exceptional paradigm in increasing citizen satisfaction, reaching a remarkable 99.5% satisfaction rate.

"ASAN service" has received numerous awards and international standard certificates in recognition of its high-quality work and achievements in the delivery of public services. First and foremost, the "ASAN service" was the recipient of the 2015 United Nations Public Service Award. The United Nations Public Service Award is the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service.

Moreover, the priorities of the SAPSSI include harnessing disruptive technologies to serve the citizens more effectively and efficiently, moving from the one-stop shop to a non-stop shop model. For that purpose, the "E-GOV Development Center" was established under SAPSSI.

The Center's functions include the development, administration, and integration of the e-Government Information System (EGIS), the creation of products and services within a single EGIS, building or adopting systems of state importance, implementing public-private partnership projects, and providing advice and support for digital projects.

In 2019, a new personal cabinet-based e-government portal – "my-Gov" - was launched. This portal offers digital solutions in obtaining references from different sources, and accessing documents and information provided by government institutions through mobile devices, while allowing single-on access to government portals, regulating access to personal data, and eliminating data deficiencies in information systems. Azerbaijan received a UN "Special award for advancing public service through the application of digital government" for this project during the UN Public Service Forum in Baku, organized by SAPSSI on 24-26 June 2019.

The concept of digital and modern government requires effective management of large amounts of information. Each government agency stores and manages its own information. However, in order to better serve the citizens, various agencies must constantly transmit the necessary information to each other safely and quickly. The National Information Exchange System "ASAN Bridge" - an integrated module of EGIS - provides coordination of state information resources and systems, as well as fast, stable and secure exchange of information between those resources and systems.

Another essential project of "E-GOV Development Center" - "ASAN Visa" has been created to simplify the visa issuance procedure for foreigners and stateless persons planning on coming to Azerbaijan. "ASAN Visa" system's directions include electronic visa issuance through the online portal of www.evisa.gov.az, and provision of visa issuance upon arrival at International Airports of Azerbaijan. People who plan on visiting Azerbaijan can apply for an electronic visa before coming to the country. Only the details of national passports of individuals wishing to visit Azerbaijan are required during the application process for the electronic visas. Depending on the applicant's choice, visas can be issued within 3 days or 3 hours. Furthermore, as a holder of the United Nations Public Service Award, "ASAN service" has received the attention of countries wishing to modernize their public service delivery systems based on the "ASAN service" model. Therefore, Memorandums of Understanding with more than 15 states, such as Montenegro, Morocco, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Uganda, etc. and several international organizations (ICESCO and UCLG-Africa) have been signed.

In conclusion, the innovative experience of "ASAN service" has proven itself through the vast increase of service satisfaction rates and the decrease of excess bureaucracy. The smooth transition from one-stop-shop to non-stop-shop in the digital age has also brought extra convenience for citizens, as digital services have become available one click away through electronic devices. In addition, international experience of "ASAN service" and "E-GOV Development Center" shows the adaptability of the Azerbaijani models of service delivery in foreign countries, making the future of public service delivery turn into a present reality.

State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan



The State Agency for Public Service
and Social Innovations under the
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan



***"TO DELIVER THE SERVICES OF TOMORROW,
GOVERNMENTS MUST HAVE THE RIGHT INTENTION
AND AMBITION. THEY MUST LOOK TO DESIGN
SERVICES FOR THE BENEFIT OF CITIZENS AND NOT
THE BENEFIT OF THE GOVERNMENT."***

POINT OF VIEW



Ott Vatter
Founding Partner,
Vertikal Digital

**vertikal
digital**

Government Services 2030

Government services are in a constant change, especially in the last few years the pace has rapidly increased and the expectations of citizens have grown exponentially. We now live in a world that is more interconnected than ever. This entails on-demand services provided by the government similar to the apps we use daily.

Consumers expect the same kind of customer service, response and experience from government services as they get from private companies. Governments need to become more customer centric, constantly challenging the level of experience provided, taking the time to talk to their citizens who are ultimately their customers.

We've seen some good practices in the UAE with connecting government services to a single application, this should be the norm everywhere else. Dabbling between different government websites and entering the same data over again should be a relic of the past. Every government has that data available but a modern government has made use of it and will not ask for it repeatedly.

Tax declarations could be pre-filled and life services as we know it could be pre-emptive as we can predict with a fair bit of accuracy when a child will need to go to school. These applications could all be prepared and offered to the users with prepared information fields readily available.

Citizen centricity is a good starting point which can't only be solved with technological innovation. There is also a need for a legally permissive environment and a human component in service design. There are plenty of bad examples of digitizing paper based processes just to take services online. It is a combination of technology, legal environment, also the basic understanding of human behavior and psychology.

The ultimate goal should be to simplify the lives of humans but we shouldn't forget that not everything can be solved with technology. Experts in cognitive sciences should be included in the development process in addition to developers, techno- and bureaucrats.

The role of governments will decrease in time and we can already observe this with the rapid development of web 3.0 services. DAO-s or decentralized autonomous organizations can substitute for many of the aged public service functions. The next generation customers will want more autonomy, openness and collaboration; they are immensely interconnected with their peers and less with official government services. This does not mean that they don't have a voice or wouldn't like to interact. It's just that the structure and principles of communicating with the government are going to change.

POINT OF VIEW



Siim Sikkut
Former Government CIO of Estonia
and Partner at Digital Nation



Outstanding services need outstanding delivery

Proactive services. Predictive services. Seamless services. Life-event services. Cognitive services. The list goes on. There are many good visions and aspirations about what government experience and best possible digital public services should look and feel like.

However, how many such services there are 'live' in the world that people can enjoy? Of course, there are frontrunner governments that have made some progress in making some of these directions become a reality for their citizens and entrepreneurs.

Nevertheless, it seems that in most cases there is more talk than doing. For example, think about how long the idea of seamless life-event services has been around – but how few such services actually are available anywhere in the world?

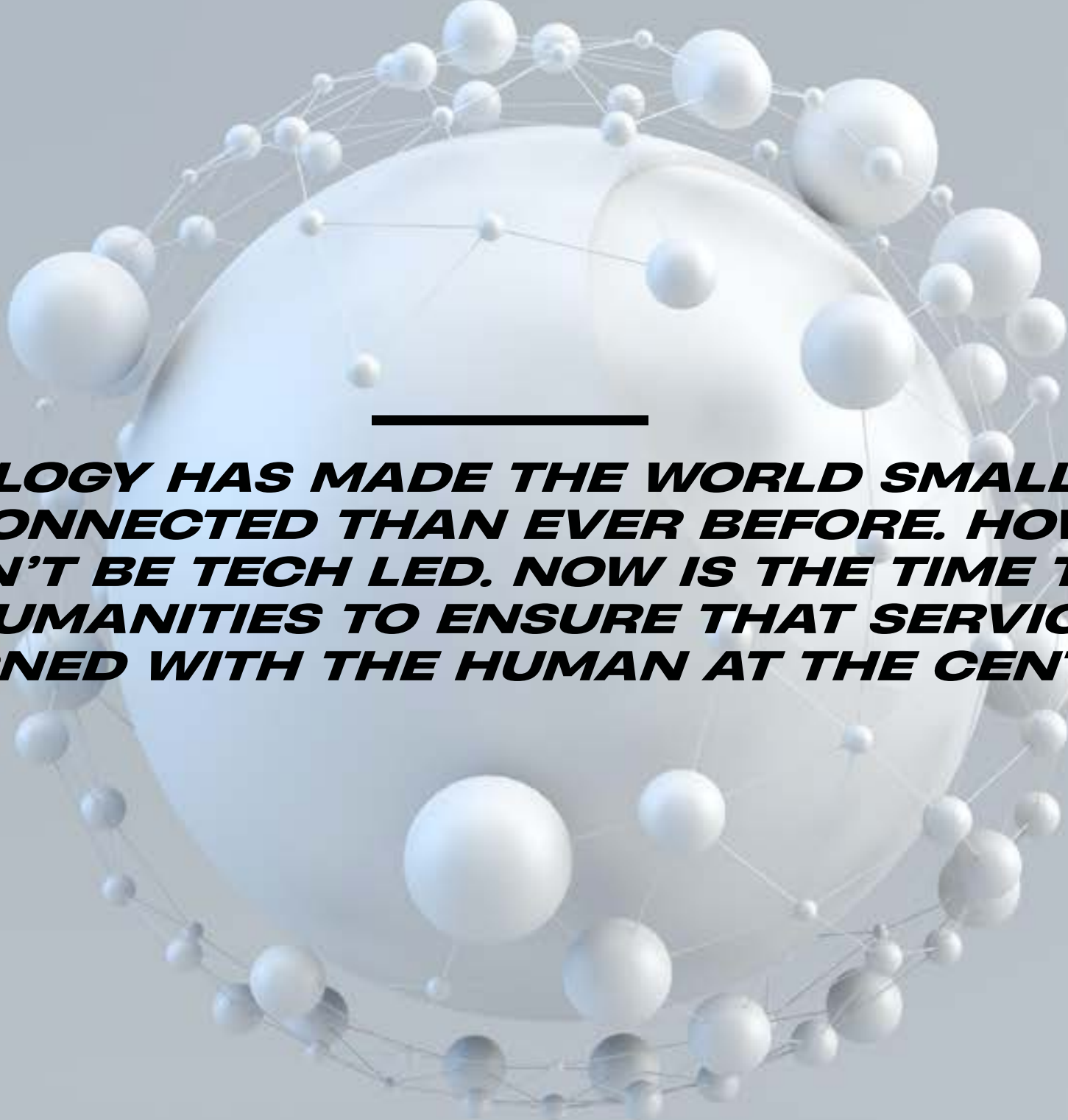
Innovation only really happens when a good idea or new method is actually implemented. Ideas alone do not make life better. Delivery of the ideas, delivery of the visions makes lives and governments better. That is why the most effective governments and most effective digital leaders are focused on delivery first. While we need ideas, we do not need constantly new ones. We instead have to be putting our prime effort into making the many existing visions and ideas to action. All of us, we have to deliver more and better.

It is easy to do a prototype, a pilot, a flagship showcase. It is quite another ordeal, harder and often tedious, to make change happen at scale. Even in frontrunner governments the visions are still to realize across the whole relevant public sector.

While there is no silver bullet to effective delivery and the necessary steps will differ case by case (country to country at least), certain practices and working methods seem to work often. You can see their results in my own Estonia, but in any digitally advancing government just the same.

For example, doing beats talking. Just start, even if you do not have the whole plan ready. Experiment, iterate, pivot if necessary. That is a lot how tech companies and start-ups work, not coincidentally. For lasting impact, you must put in the governance mechanisms to push things across government. Support capacity building. Empower frontrunners but also assist those agencies who lag behind. Build things as platforms and reuse. There are many ways to make delivery happen.

In order for future visions to become a present reality, you have to have relentless focus on delivery. Then the future will arrive.



"TECHNOLOGY HAS MADE THE WORLD SMALLER AND MORE CONNECTED THAN EVER BEFORE. HOWEVER, WE MUSTN'T BE TECH LED. NOW IS THE TIME TO BRING IN THE HUMANITIES TO ENSURE THAT SERVICES ARE DESIGNED WITH THE HUMAN AT THE CENTRE."

POINT OF VIEW



Ryan Androsoff
Founder & CEO,
Think Digital



Rethinking how government works to enable the next generation of citizen services

Governments around the world are facing unprecedented change. The digital revolution has upended expectations around service delivery in all sectors of society. The COVID-19 pandemic forced both citizens and government employees into more fully online modes of interaction than ever before, and it is very likely that much of that change in how we work and receive services will be “sticky”. Put simply, there is no going back.

The challenge for governments however is how to evolve their operating model to be successful in today’s digital reality. We are seeing a broad consensus emerge in the digital government movement globally that public sector organizations need to move towards more agile, human-centered ways of developing and delivering services to citizens and businesses. However, we are also seeing that efforts to bring in these new ways of approaching service delivery are coming up against systemic barriers within their own organizations. In our experience, governments around the world are often being held back by laws, policies, and internal processes that were developed with a very different set of assumptions on what constitutes a successful public service organization. Without focus and effort on changing the ways in which government organizations work from the inside-out, efforts to build the next generation of client-centric services will face continued friction.

Frequently the starting and ending point for attempts to modernize how government delivers services for the digital age is the development of a digital services strategy. This is not to suggest that strategies are not useful. If done well, the process of developing them can serve to engage key stakeholders and provide a common vision to strive towards. Too often however we have seen completed strategy documents spend more time collecting dust on a shelf rather than inspiring tangible results. Why is this?

The familiar adage of management consultants is that “culture eats strategy for breakfast”. This is without a doubt true, and the best digital services strategy will not gain traction if the culture of the organization does not align with its aims. Strategy without culture change is doomed to fail. However, this is not the entire story. Culture change can be elusive, and too often is dependant upon the personal efforts of a small number of inspired senior leaders to drive it forward. While this can be effective - indeed necessary - in the short-term to build momentum, it rarely leads to sustainable change. The reason is that organizational culture is like an elastic band – unless there is something pulling on it, naturally it wants to snap back to its previous shape. Ambitious change initiatives can often fall victim to the reality that leaders may move on to other organizations or by necessity must turn their attention to other priorities over time.

So how can we provide that pull on our organizational culture in a more sustainable way to enable successful implementation of a digital transformation strategy? We call this our “Pac-Man” model of organizational change. It suggests that if culture eats strategy, then incentives eat culture, and structures eat everything else.



Incentives are focused on how people are rewarded or disciplined in an organization. What gets someone promoted or demoted? What types of behaviours attract more resources to a team or see them taken away? What gets measured in the organization, including at the individual level through tools such as annual performance assessments?

Structures deal with how decisions are made in an organization. What is the process for allocating budget or human resources? What are the governance and project gating processes? Who gets to make these decisions? What laws, regulations, or policies are in place that constrain or influence how decisions are made?

When embarking on efforts to evolve government organizations to deliver client-centric services, issues around institutional structures and incentives cannot be ignored. Indeed, a good digital services strategy must take an honest look at existing institutional structures and incentives and propose tangible, actionable changes that will help align the culture of the organization. This can be difficult and unglamorous work. However, it may be the single most important area for government leaders to put their focus on if they want to be successful in leverage the latest technological advancements to enable the next generation of client-centered services.

CALLS TO ACTION

1. Establish digital infrastructure

Invest in and regulate high-speed, reliable and robust digital infrastructure, achieve interoperability of different systems and databases, and provide one-stop access to public services. Advanced telecom networks including enhanced 4G and 5G mobile networks and data centers are the backbone of a digital economy. Given the high development costs, government agencies are increasingly teaming up with private partners to put this infrastructure in place.

2. Consider inclusivity

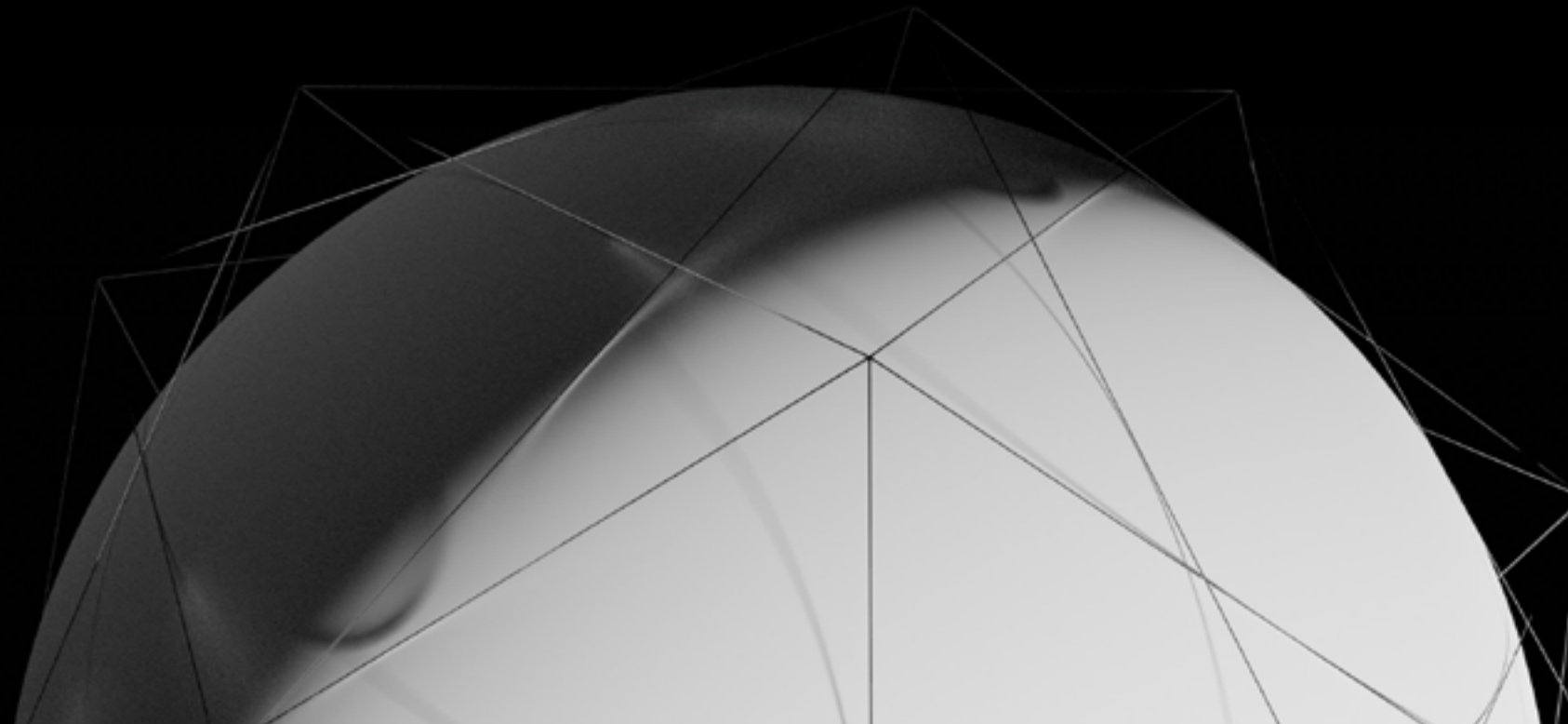
Proactively address often stark urban-rural and economic divides to achieve inclusive digitization. Without this, governments risk disconnecting as many citizens as they connect. Governments can also help by providing devices (such as laptops and tablets) to get people online, backed up by support and training for individuals to improve digital literacy. However, offline channels will remain vital in coming years to ensure all citizens retain equal access to public services.

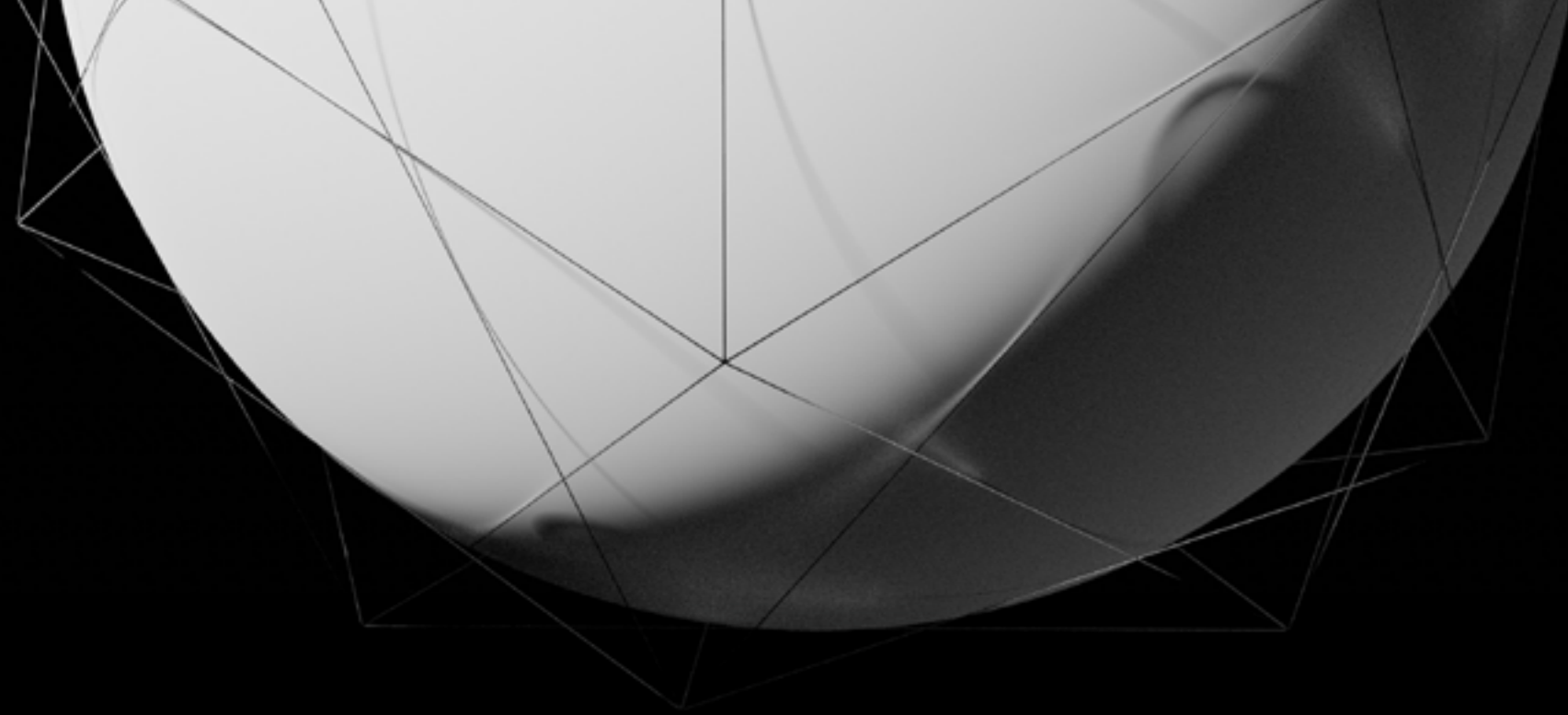
3. Drive whole-of-government transformation and collaboration

Ensure that individual government entities invest in government-wide outcomes and promote interdepartmental and government-wide collaboration, rather than siloed solutions.

4. Set and enforce policies, regulations and standards

Set and enforce policies, regulations and standards that help safeguard citizens' basic rights, ensure fairness and protect against risks, as new technologies start to permeate all aspects of people's lives.





CALLS TO ACTION

5. Experiment and work in agile

Adapt the culture and working practices to one which encourages innovation and experimentation, and that support agile delivery mechanisms and risk-taking.

6. Secure the right talent

Recognise the need to develop the workforces' digital skills and capabilities to capitalize on the potential of technological advances. Further, bring in new talent if required – perhaps including resources such as data scientists, product owners, UX/UI designers. Of equal importance, source the knowledge and resources of the wider ecosystem, partnering with external stakeholders when required.

7. Be human-led over tech-led

Develop a thorough understanding and appreciation of the potential that technological advances and data have the ability to deliver but, place the citizen at the heart of all design initiatives, using approaches such as design thinking. Consulting and making citizens and external stakeholders part of the journey to bring in diverse thinking and perspectives will become more common place going forward.

8. Adopt new business models

Partner with external vendors to harness emerging and disruptive technology solutions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services.

EPILOGUE

As expressed by panel members, governments still need to overcome several fundamental challenges that relate but are not limited to factors such as trust, risk-taking and digital inclusivity, if governments are to transform the services they deliver and venture into new and unknown territories such as the metaverse.

However, over the last one-to-two years, governments have, without doubt, made significant progress in terms of embracing digital technologies at pace. Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that new ways of working and operating will naturally continue. Rather, as the pandemic eases, governments must now seize the moment to reflect on and absorb lessons learned and determine how operational models can be re-created to provide citizens with the services they want and need going forward. Maintaining the momentum gained during the pandemic will therefore, likely require careful nurturing and further investment.

Of equal importance, whilst appreciating the potential that technology advances and data offer in terms of their ability to better serve citizens, multiple panelists highlighted the need to be human-led over tech-led. Significant emphasis was made on the need to place citizens at the heart of the design process while remembering that technology is merely an enabler that facilitates the delivery of a service. However, of critical importance going forward, as confirmed by panel members, is the need to ensure that government officials have the right mindset and operate in a culture that encourages experimentation, working iteratively, bringing in external perspectives and that supports risk taking. These are all key to enabling innovation to happen and to sustain.

Those governments that rise to the challenge and are able to balance the challenges and opportunities will reach a new level of maturity and achieve better outcomes for their citizens in the future.





***"A SERVICE CAN BE DELIVERED IN 100
WAYS. CREATIVITY, INNOVATIVE THINKING
AND ENTREPRENEURIALISM HOWEVER
HAVE THE ABILITY TO TRULY TRANSFORM
A SERVICE AND THE EXPERIENCE
DELIVERED TO CITIZENS."***





**"THE FUTURE DOES NOT WAIT.
THE FUTURE CAN BE DESIGNED
AND BUILT TODAY."**

H.H. SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM

THE ROUNDTABLE

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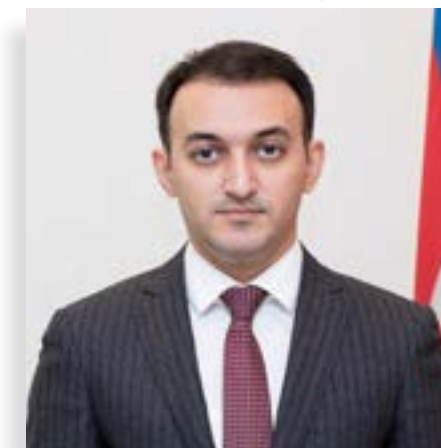
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The Government Services Forum was first launched by the Emirates Government Service Excellence Program (EGSEP) at the UAE Prime Minister's Office in 2019 with the inaugural edition being held at the World Government Summit in Dubai, UAE. The 2nd edition of the Forum was held at the Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California at Berkeley in February 2020, and the 3rd edition convened at GITEX in December 2020. To find out more about the Government Services Forum, please visit the Government Experience portal at <https://gx.ae/> - a global platform, established to share knowledge, enable interaction and activate ideas on government services.

The Emirates Government Services Excellence Program was launched in 2011, in line with the vision of the UAE to be one of the best countries in the world. His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai launched the program to raise the efficiency of government services to a seven-star level, by focusing on customer centricity and enhancing government efficiency.



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