



AIDE-MEMOIRE

Interregional Capacity Development Workshop on DigitalGov Implementation for Sustainable Development

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Organized by the
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government

Co-organized and hosted by
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Information and Communications Technology and
Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD)



1. PURPOSE

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) through its Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) through its Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), are co-organizing an Interregional Capacity Development Workshop on Digital Government Implementation Toolkit for Sustainable Development (DIGIT4SD). This programmed activity is part of the project implementation of UN Development Account Project DA1617B on “Evidence-based e-government policies for advancing governmental service delivery and accountability in support of the Sustainable Development Goals”.

The main objective of the workshop is to discuss and share various digital government (hereafter referred as “digitgov”) toolkits and explore replicability of lessons learned in target countries of the DA Project (i.e. Bangladesh, Ethiopia) with other least development countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS), and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). In the light of lessons learned during the course of the DA project, case studies of Bangladesh, Ethiopia and others will be shared during the workshop to illustrate lessons learned and good cases in different national, sectoral and situational contexts.

One of the toolkits to be explored in depth at the workshop is the Digital Government Implementation Toolkit for Sustainable Development (DiGITSD). This implementation toolkit is designed to help countries, especially those in special situations, including the LDCs, SIDS, and LLDCs, to develop and implement digital government initiatives/strategies in supporting implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets.

2. BACKGROUND

The current digital revolution, with its pervasive scale, spread and speed of change, is often considered the greatest single enabler, accelerator and multiplier of sustainable development. The [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development has embraced the spread of information communication technologies (ICTs) for their potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge divides and to develop knowledge societies. As highlighted in the [UN Secretary General’s Strategy on New Technologies](#), “digital technologies can offer powerful new ways to achieve our shared commitments to each and every one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) .. and can turbocharge the world’s efforts for peace and sustainable development”.

However, countries in special situations like LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs face geopolitical realities and socio-economic dependencies, along with prevalent development challenges such as the scarcity of resources, spatial segregation, environmental threats, capacity gaps and barriers to major markets.

For instance, LDCs face multiple development challenges with limited resources, capacities and access to technologies. LDCs represent the poorest and weakest segment of the international community. They comprise more than 880 million people (about 12% of the world population), but account for less than 2%

of the world gross domestic product (GDP) and about 1% of global trade in goods. Their low level of socio-economic development is characterized by weak human and institutional capacities, low and unequally distributed income and scarcity of domestic financial resources. They often suffer from governance crises, political instability and, in some cases, internal and external conflicts. Despite the recognition of e-government as both an enabler and multiplier of sustainable development, the LDCs, however, have not been able to reap sustainable benefits through e-government.

As small island states, the SIDS are particularly vulnerable to climate change such as the rise in sea-level and large ocean-atmospheric interactions like typhoons and tsunamis. The SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action [S.A.M.O.A.] Pathway, adopted by the General Assembly in 2014, recognized the enabling role of information communication technologies (ICTs) to sustain high levels of economic and social growth in SIDS. It also highlighted the importance to increase connectivity and enhance the use of ICTs through improved infrastructure, training and national legislation, as well as through partnership with the private sector and other stakeholders. Similar to the LDCs, despite the much-reported benefits of ICTs, its development and adoption by SIDS in general have so far been limited. Reasons for this include lack of awareness of what ICT can offer, insufficient telecommunications infrastructure and Internet connectivity, expensive Internet access, absence of adequate legal and regulatory frameworks, shortage of requisite human capacity, failure to use local language and content, and lack of entrepreneurship and a business culture open to change.

Different from SIDS, LLDCs' poor economic performance and growth reflects the disadvantages of their geography with lack of access to major shipping routes, world markets, fisheries and other marine resources. The LLDCs are generally the poorest countries with the weakest growth rates and are the most dependent on export earnings. Regional infrastructure strategies for integration and administrative coordination are needed to expand LLDCs access to ICT infrastructure. LLDCs also often rely on their neighbours' telecommunication networks as accessing the international submarine fiber networks would incur high administrative and infrastructure costs. Telecommunication networks are especially underdeveloped in rural areas, creating an additional barrier to the promotion of inclusive ICT strategies.

Given their characteristics, it is critical that LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs have the technical know-how to take advantage of the opportunity to leverage digital government to support the implementation of the SDGs and its Targets. In addition to the need for knowledge transfer through development assistance and smart investments in ICT infrastructure, there is also a need to build capacities for the effective use of digital government to bring about substantial returns on investment supporting the sustainable development agenda. Under the right conditions, such efforts will in turn deliver multiple benefits such as better access to essential services, including for the poorest and most disadvantaged groups. It can create savings by streamlining and simplifying government processes as well as enhance accountability and transparency. At the same time, the increasing digitalization and data explosion in today's society has put privacy and security in the spotlight and it is equally critical to address related security and privacy issues.

3. About DIGIT4SD

DIGIT4SD is a toolkit designed to build and strengthen institutional capacity for planning, implementing and evaluating digital government initiatives in SDG implementation, through data-informed evidence-based approaches. It draws on project experience gained through the implementation of UN DESA's Development Account Project DA1617B. It also offers a spectrum of best practices of digital government initiatives globally by including case studies.

The toolkit includes various modules that will help targeted countries to develop digital government initiatives in supporting selected SDGs or targets. It also builds on the findings, policy options and recommendations in past editions of the UN E-Government Survey¹. Due to the all-encompassing character of the toolkit, it may be used by individuals as a self-learning tool and in classroom settings. It is possible for the user to take all modules and courses but also to only go through those that are selected by the personal preferences of the user.



¹ See for reference: <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb>

Module 1 – Getting Started

This introductory module provides a general background on why and how the implementation toolkit is developed, why digital governance is important and how it can help to reach SDGs and its targets. It elaborates on the objectives of the toolkit and what its use is in line with the broader Development Account project (1617A). Finally, it provides an overview of all modules including their objectives. The learner may skip this module in case he or she is already familiar with the project. Nonetheless, it is advised to take part in this module as it provides a good introduction and may guide the learner in either taking or skipping certain modules if already familiar. Included submodules are: 1.1 Background; 1.2 Objectives; and 1.3 Overview.

Module 2 – Fundamentals

This module offers a general overview of the sustainable development agenda and how digital governance is linked to the SDGs. Apart from general digital government concepts, the e-government survey is also explained. This survey not only includes analyses and evidence of how governments can use digital government and ICT for resilient societies but also includes research and measurements of indicators to which governments are ranked. Furthermore, the module includes information on the relevance of data and how we can strive towards e-participation and digital inclusion. Included submodules are: 2.1 SDGs; 2.2 Digital Government Fundamentals; 2.3 E-Government Survey; 2.4 Data; and 2.5 E-Participation.

Module 3 – Planning & Analysis

Module 3 focuses on the planning and analysis phase that should take place before the implementation of any project or initiative. In this specific module, the learner learns about methods to identify target and priority areas and how they can be aligned to the sustainable development agenda. It also covers data, policy and implementation gaps and why it is necessary to identify them. Furthermore, a clear scope of the stakeholders is important both for partnerships and effective implementation. Finally, a clear planning of timeline and intention is essential to reach targets both effectively and in a timely manner. Here, it is necessary to identify performance indicators for proper evaluation and measurement of success. Included submodules are: 3.1 Identification of Target Areas; 3.2 Stakeholders & Partnerships; and 3.3 Performance Indicators.

Module 4 – Design & Implementation

Module 4 is concerned with the implementation phase of ICTs. It includes the explanation and innovative practices on the use of the implementation canvas. The canvas serves, among others, as a snapshot on the current state of play and provides a proper overview on what aspects still need further attention. Furthermore, this module includes theory on policy integration and coherence in digital government approaches and covers standards and architecture in digital government interoperability. Finally, the module focuses on the implementation at local level. Included submodules are: 4.1 Implementation Canvas; 4.2 Integration & Interoperability; and 4.3 Implementation at Local Level.

Module 5 – Monitoring & Review

Module 5 includes measures for monitoring and reviewing both in the planning as well as the implementation phase. It covers tracking methods for measuring the implementation of the policies or

activities and evaluation and audit methods for SDG implementation. Moreover, it will touch upon the use of ICTs for monitoring and tracking. Furthermore, the use of audit tools for review and evaluation are included. These are essential to review the effectiveness and outcomes. Equally important, they can connect the outcomes to the SDGs. Included submodules are: 5.1 Monitors & Trackers; and 5.2 Evaluation & Audit.

Module 6 – Moving Forward

Module 6 includes various case studies on best practices of countries, both on LDCs as well as more developed countries, that have used ICTs in order to enhance the SDG targets. The intention is to include a wide variety of cases of which the learner can extract lessons learned. The module also comprises a selection of templates that have been mentioned in other modules as well as other useful print outs. A final checklist is included for the user to review its readiness according to the implementation toolkit and the learning objectives. Included submodules are: 6.1 Case Studies; 6.2 Templates; and 6.3 Checklist.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

The Workshop aims to bring together mid-level to senior government officials and practitioners from country groups (LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs) to build individual and institutional capacities learned through various digitalgov implementation toolkits, particularly the DiGIT4SD toolkit, and share and discuss contextual perspectives on how digital government practices can fully capitalize on the promises of digital technologies in supporting sustainable development. Non-government experts and other key stakeholders are also invited to stimulate discussions on advancing digital government and innovative practices in implementing the SDGs and targets.

LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs stand to benefit from good practices and lessons learned from other more established digital government entities, as identified in the UN E-Government Surveys and illustrated through the DIGIT4SD toolkit. This will help to avoid possible costly pitfalls and to leap frog in digital government for sustainable development where possible. In order to reap the full benefits of digital government in target countries, it is essential to work towards all three conditions of digital government, which include enhanced literacy skills, effective online presence and services, and improved ICT access especially in Internet broadband, through both national efforts and international cooperation.

The goal of strengthening the capacity of an institution is to improve administrative and management functions, to increase the effectiveness of service provision, to enhance the organization's structure and culture, and to further its sustainability and performance. Institutional strengthening in digital government will lead to results, such as specific digital government implementation in supporting specific SDGs and/or sectors.

5. EXPECTED RESULTS

This two-day meeting will be tightly structured, with a clear focus on capacity development through the DIGIT4SD toolkit and to share lessons learned among participating countries and other experts and stakeholders. It aims to:

- Build individual capacity and improve institutional capacity in countries to collect, analyse and use digital government data and related sectoral data;
- Build individual capacity and strengthen institutional capacity in countries to implement evidence-based government policies and strategies, in support of selected SDGs and targets;
- Offer knowledge exchange and innovative practices to both improve existing projects as well as trigger new initiatives
- Reflect on the use of digitalgov development toolkits at the national level

6. ORGANIZATION

6.1. Participants

The Workshop will be attended by several mid-level to senior government officials and practitioners in the field of ICT and digital government, from LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs, and relevant experts from a variety of fields, including academia, the United Nations system and other relevant international organizations. DPIDG's UN Project Office on Governance (UNPOG) will provide support in mobilizing participants from the Asia-Pacific region.

6.2. Structure of the meeting

The Meeting will be organized over the course of two days with plenary sessions and interactive discussions. Participants will be invited to interact and share their lessons learned. All participants will be guided in exploring various digitalgov toolkits, including the DiGITAL4SD toolkit, towards the implementation and use of ICTs for achieving SDGs and its targets. The first day includes plenary sessions on the DA project and toolkit, ICT4SDG fundamentals and the planning and analysis module. The second day includes plenary sessions on implementation, and monitoring and review, after which the session touches upon the way forward. As the focus of both the toolkits and workshop will be on the core modules (planning and analysis; implementation; monitoring and review), those will also be given most attention to. As a proper introduction and conclusion are needed and for good context, other modules will also be touched upon. All this will be done in a compressed version of the toolkit and in class room setting as it is not possible to elaborate extensively on each module due to time constraints. Furthermore, the toolkit is the guiding mechanism in the workshop. Not only should its use be demonstrated, but participants should also be encouraged to use and promote the toolkit in their fields. Moreover, participants are also invited to provide feedback on the toolkit in order to improve its use. Over the course of two days, case studies

serve as clarification as well as for the purpose of sharing best practices. They should give participants a good view of what effects the use of ICTs can have for SDGs but also guide them on how to handle such initiatives.

Interactive Discussions

Throughout the meeting, all participants are encouraged to think of the applicability of the shared knowledge in their own field. This will be further challenged during breakout workgroups that will occur after each session on the three core modules. Participants are advised to use the identified target area in the first breakout workgroup as a case example for both workshop days in order to get the full experience.

Breakout workgroups should contain a variety of experts from different fields and countries in order to stimulate both knowledge exchange and exposure to various perspectives. Each should be moderated and facilitated by UNDESA/ESCAP officers.

6.3. Official languages

The official language of the Workshop will be English.

6.4. Online communication

A mailing list will be created for participants to have discussions before and after the meeting.

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

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