



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



2020 United Nations E-Government Survey

Asia Pacific Regional Webinar

Digital Government in the Decade of Action for Sustainable Development

Date: 20 August 2020 (Thursday) 20 August, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. (Bangkok time)

The year 2020 witnessed a transformational change in the global development agenda as the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced the launch of the Decade of Action for Sustainable Development. The Decade of Action is central to bolster efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, including efforts to eradicate poverty and to improve economic growth, social protection, health, education, energy, water and sanitation, sustainable transport and infrastructure, and Internet access.

Since early 2020, the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has reinvigorated the role of digital government. The utilization of conventional digital government services is becoming more widespread as social distancing drives online interaction, but digital government platforms are also being used to manage the crisis through innovative ways.

While shelter-in-place and quarantine restrictions have brought many “normal” economic and social activities to a halt, e-government is undergoing a stress test. When face-to-face interaction is impossible or discouraged, digital government solutions become vitally important. Countries with strong, versatile digital government systems in place have been able to provide clear, up-to-date information to the public, local authorities and health providers while also working with and alongside other stakeholders, such as platform providers, to reduce the spread of misinformation and to address cybersecurity and data privacy issues. The evolving pandemic has created opportunities for e-government to serve the public in new and vital ways. However, it has also heightened digital divides, as many among the poorest and most vulnerable in society lack access to digital government services and support.

It is in this context that the 2020 United Nations E-Government Survey was published and launched globally in July 2020. The Survey provides a review and analysis of both global and regional trends based on the 2020 E-Government Development Index (EGDI), constructed using primary data collected by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). It also highlights regional challenges, opportunities and initiatives relating to e-government development based on valuable contributions from the United Nations regional commissions and desk research. The assessment of local e-government in 100 major cities was included using a methodology similar to that employed for the global Survey assessment but based on research carried out within the framework of a pilot study. In addition, three thematic areas are covered in the Survey, namely: (i) the focus of online participation as reflected in E-Participation Index (EPI) data, providing an analysis of relevant policy trends; (ii) the importance of data governance at the national level and summarizes the prevailing trends surrounding data-centric digital services; and (iii) the broader scope of capacity development for digital government transformation. A special addendum relating to the COVID-19 pandemic has been added to the 2020 Survey to illustrate how the role of e-government and efforts

to achieve digital equity have been amplified by the nexus of digitalization and the societal impact of the pandemic.

Contributing to the global report, the UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) highlights the challenges and opportunities of digital government in the Asia Pacific region (in Chapter 3 of the 2020 E-Government Survey). In addition, ESCAP also places emphasis on the use of information and communications technology (ICT) during all phases of disaster risk management, underscoring how ICT presents substantial opportunities to reduce disaster risks, enhance coping capabilities, and provide inclusive preparedness and response.

Asia-Pacific is among the world's most disaster-impacted regions prompting governments to step-up disaster risk reduction efforts through digital connectivity and innovations. Digitally-driven emerging frontier technologies, such as AI, are expected to offer unparalleled levels of data availability, insights and coping capabilities to support countries address this formidable challenge and advance the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Broadband connectivity for all remains critical to the success of e-governance. Towards this end, ESCAP continues to support the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) initiative to seamlessly increase the regional availability, affordability and resilience of broadband networks as a platform for e-resilience.

The primary objective of this side event is to bring government officials, experts, practitioners and other stakeholders at the Committee on Information and Communications Technology & Science, Technology and Innovation, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, to discuss how governments can tap on digital technologies for building inclusive, resilient and sustainable societies, and ensuring social inclusion and leaving no one behind. It aims to allow a joint reflection and dialogue based on the analytical findings and recommendations of the 2020 E-Government Survey. It is expected that the discussion outcomes would be connected to prior and future, and both UN and non-UN, fora/events on similar subject of digital government and e-resilience. Guiding questions are as follow:

- What are the current global and regional trends of digital government development? How similar or different are the trends in the Asia and Pacific region?
- What would it take to mobilize transformative potentials of digital government to build inclusive, resilient and sustainable societies, including the managing the COVID-19 pandemic and support recovery? What are the opportunities, risks and challenges moving forward especially in context of the Asia and Pacific region?

Programme

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Venue: Virtual and live streamed (tbc)

Organizers

The event is co-organized by (i) Digital Government Branch (DGB), Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and (ii) Information and Communications Technology and Development Section (IDS), Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)