Digital by design: Steering an inclusive digital transformation of the public sector

The public sector requires to be *digital by design* to fully adapt and take advantage of the digital age for better serving people, improving policy making and maximise government performance (OECD, 2020a). Becoming digital by design requires: 1) setting a strategic vision and clear mandate for digital government; 2) securing solid organisational leadership to steer digital government policies and actions; and 3) establishing effective co-ordination and collaboration within and outside the public sector for government-wide digital transformation in a coherent and inclusive manner.

OECD countries continue to demonstrate their clear strategic vision for digital government through the development and implementation of national digital government strategies (NDGSs), with common priorities such as increasing the accessibility and proactive delivery of services, and treating data as a key strategic asset to create public value. Almost all countries (29 out of 30, 97%) had an NDGS in place in 2022. Since 2019, Sweden has established a common ambition for digital government through a dedicated NDGS. Australia, Mexico, and Poland, which did not participate in the 2019 survey, confirmed they had an NDGS in 2022 (Figure 9.1).

Organisational leadership and cross-government co-ordination are fundamental for delivering coherent digital government policies across the public sector. Survey results highlight that governments continue to consolidate leadership and co-ordination for digital government. In both 2019 and 2022, all countries with data available had a public sector institution responsible for leading decisions on digital government at the central/federal level and co-ordinating their implementation. More notably, countries have made considerable progress in establishing formal co-ordination bodies or mechanisms responsible for steering digital government policies and initiatives in the public sector, such as Korea's e-Government Promotion Committee or Luxembourg's Inter-ministerial Council for Digitisation. In 2019, 18 out of 26 countries (69%) had such a body or mechanism in place, rising to 29 out of 30 (97%) in 2022. This means that seven countries have since established one (Figure 9.2).

Mature governance of digital government also demands the engagement of external stakeholders to build collaborative and user-centred policies and services (OECD, 2021). OECD countries could do more to foster meaningful co-ordination mechanisms with external stakeholders. In 2022, 11 out of 30 countries (36%) had established an external advisory or consultation body for digital projects in the public sector, 5 (17%) have an informal consultation body, and in 2 (7%), external stakeholders participate in the formal co-ordination mechanism mentioned above. However, 12 out of 30 (40%) still do not have any such body (Figure 9.3).

Methodology and definitions

Data were collected through the OECD Survey on Digital Government 2.0, which was designed to monitor the implementation of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies and assesses countries' shift towards greater levels of digital maturity to deliver a human-centric and whole-of-government digital transformation of public processes and services. Survey data will be used for the forthcoming second edition of the OECD Digital Government Index.

The data presented in this section correspond to an initial analysis of the information collected through the survey, launched in November 2022. At the time of writing, responses from 30 OECD countries and 3 accession countries (Brazil, Croatia and Romania) have been analysed. In 2019, 29 OECD countries and 1 OECD partner country (Brazil) participated in a pilot of the survey. Survey respondents were senior officials in central/federal governments, who were leading and/or implementing digital government reforms, and who gathered data from different parts of the public sector as relevant.

Digital by design is the principle by which digital technologies and data are leveraged to rethink and re-engineer public processes and services, simplify procedures and create new channels of communication and engagement with public stakeholders (OECD, 2020b).

Further reading

OECD (2021), *The E-Leaders Handbook on the Governance of Digital Government*, OECD Digital Government Studies, *https://doi.org/10.1787/ac7f2531-en*.

OECD (2020a), "The OECD Digital Government Policy Framework: Six dimensions of a digital government", *OECD Public Governance Policy Papers*, No. 02, *https://doi.org/10.1787/f64fed2a-en*.

OECD (2020b), "Digital Government Index: 2019 results", *OECD Public Governance Policy Papers*, No. 3, *https://doi.org/10.1787/4de9f5bb-en*.

OECD (2014), "Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies", *OECD Legal Instruments*, OECD, Paris, *https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0406*.

Figure notes

2022 data are not available for Costa Rica, Germany, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, Switzerland and the United States.

2019 data are not available for Australia, Costa Rica, Hungary, Mexico, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Türkiye and the United States. For comparison, figures and analyses include the 27 countries that participated in both surveys in 2019 and 2022.

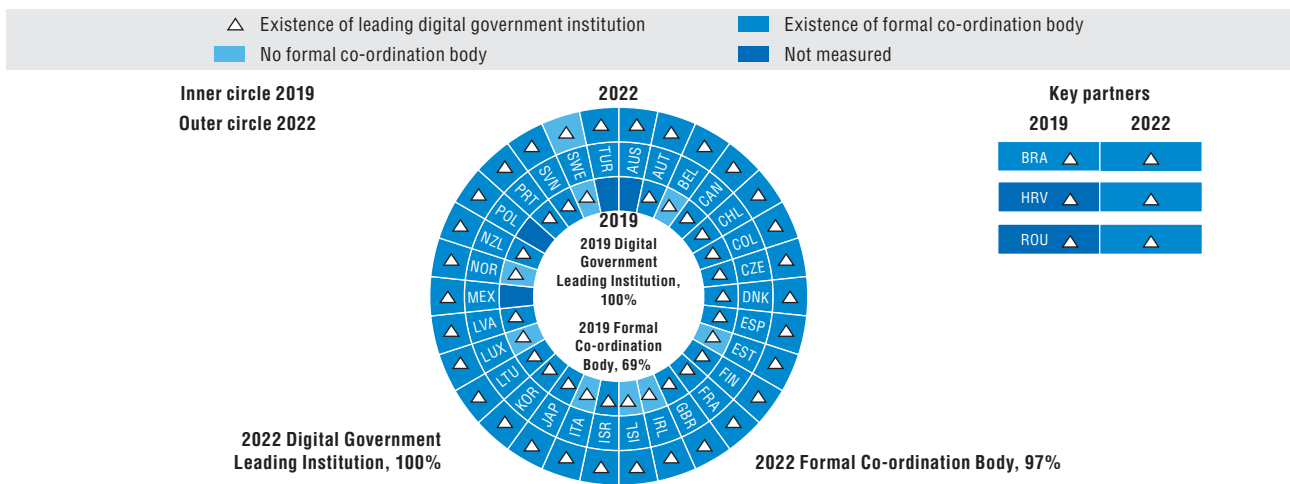### 9.1. National digital government strategies, 2019 and 2022

Source: OECD (2022), Survey on Digital Government 2.0.
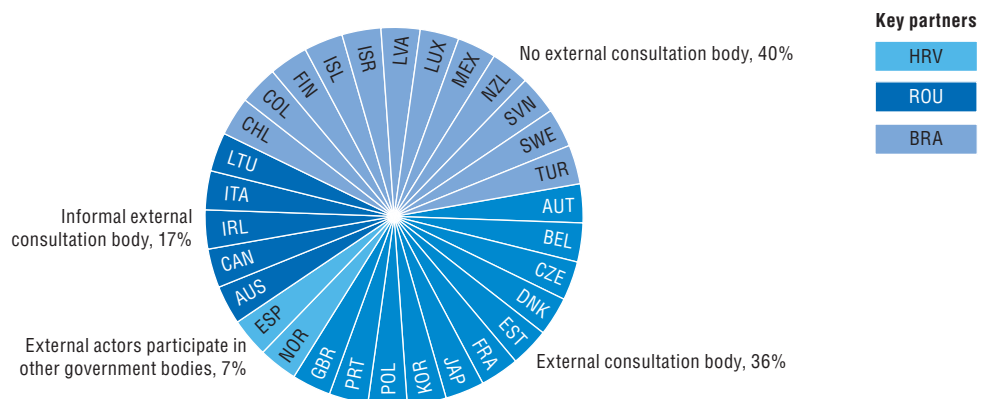
StatLink https://stat.link/di7n4o
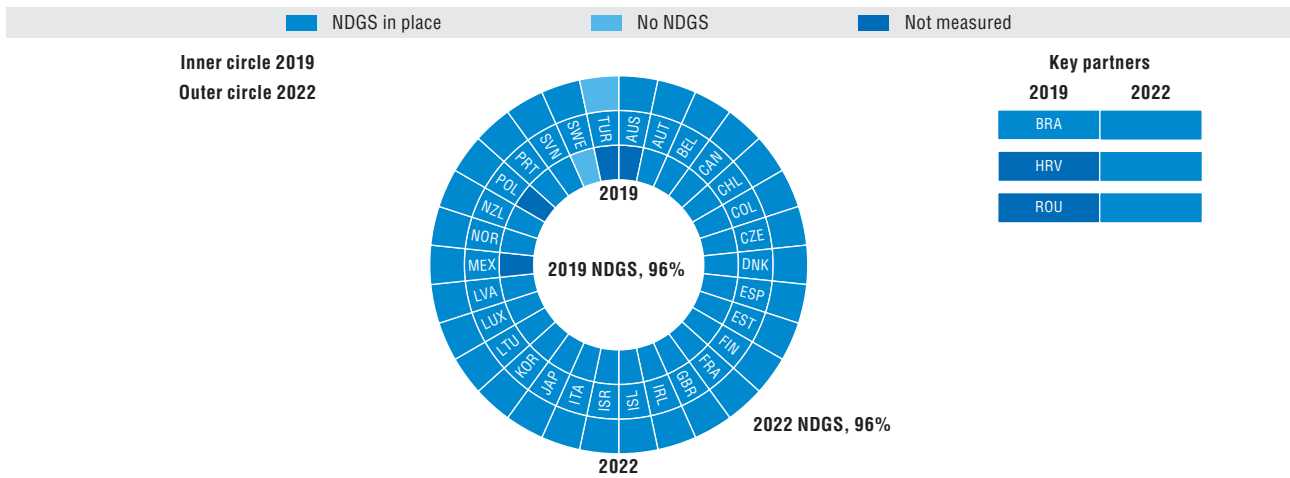
9.2. Institutional structures for the governance of digital government, 2019 and 2022

Source: OECD (2022), Survey on Digital Government 2.0.

StatLink https://stat.link/r3cqw9

9.3. External advisory bodies for digital projects in the public sector, 2022

Source: OECD (2022), Survey on Digital Government 2.0.

StatLink https://stat.link/67fc0x

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