Digital government

Over the past decades, countries have enacted large-scale public sector reforms to prioritise digitalisation to enable greater efficiency and effectiveness of public services. As part of these efforts, they have been investing considerable resources to adopt new practices to modernise their services and make them more responsive to citizens' needs. Consequently, they have established online service platforms common to several public sector organisations to simplify administrative processes and improve interaction with citizens.

Despite the progress achieved so far, becoming fully digital requires further coherence and integration of decisions and activities within and between public sector organisations. This entails a shift from e-government (e.g. online tax payments systems) to digital government, which refers to the use of digital technologies as an integrated part of governments' modernisation strategies to create public value. It relies on a digital ecosystem comprised of government actors, non-governmental organisations, businesses, citizens' associations and individuals, which supports the production of and access to data, services and content through interactions with the government (for example, open data platforms common to several governmental institutions).

The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies,–adopted on 15 July 2014,-provides a sound basis for countries to establish governance frameworks that secure sound leadership and co-ordination, and that foster system-based decisions.

According to the 2019 Survey on Digital Government, 30 OECD countries have assigned the role of leading and co-ordinating digital government strategies at the central and/or federal levels to one or several bodies. In 44% of these countries, the office/unit responsible for digitalisation strategies is located in the centre of government. In another 33%, the co-ordinating ministry is responsible, and in the remaining 23%, a line-ministry is in charge. The management of these bodies/units is assigned to an appointed official, often referred to as the chief information officer (CIO).

The body in charge of digital government can have both advisory responsibilities (e.g. co-ordinating the development of the national digital government strategy and monitoring its implementation), and decision-making responsibilities (e.g. prioritising information and communication technology [ICT] project investment across the government and providing financial support for their development and implementation). On average, across OECD countries, these bodies have six out of the seven advisory responsibilities and three out of five decision-making responsibilities enquired about in the survey. In the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Korea, Luxembourg and Colombia, these bodies have the widest range of responsibilities. On the contrary, in Belgium, Mexico and Costa Rica, they only have an advisory role. Moreover, Mexico has only assigned three responsibilities to such bodies.

To support the implementation of the digital government strategy, three major policy levers can be identified as substantial tools for strategic funding and budgeting and focused implementation of digital technologies projects: the existence of a business case methodology, of an ICT project management model and of a government-wide strategy for procuring digital technologies. Only 11 out of 30 OECD countries and one accession country (Colombia) have adopted the three policy levers as part of their strategy. The adoption of a standardised model for ICT project management is used by 21 OECD countries as well as two partner countries (Brazil and Colombia). Further, 21 OECD countries have adopted a business-case approach (e.g. conducting cost-benefit and/or cost-effectiveness analyses), and 23 OECD countries have a specific ICT procurement strategy for the public sector, while another 10 indicate having a whole-of-government procurement strategy that covers ICT procurement.

Methodology and definitions

Data for this section are derived from 2019 OECD Survey on Digital Government, which was designed to monitor the implementation of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies, and aims to assess progress made by governments in their evolution from e-government to digital government. The survey was completed by 30 OECD countries, 2 accession countries (Colombia and Costa Rica) and 1 key partner country (Brazil). Survey respondents were predominantly senior officials in central and federal governments dealing with the digitalisation of the public sector.

Policy levers are tools that can be used by governments as a means of action in specific sectors to achieve system-wide change.

Further reading

OECD (forthcoming), *Governance of Digital Government*, OECD Publishing, Paris.
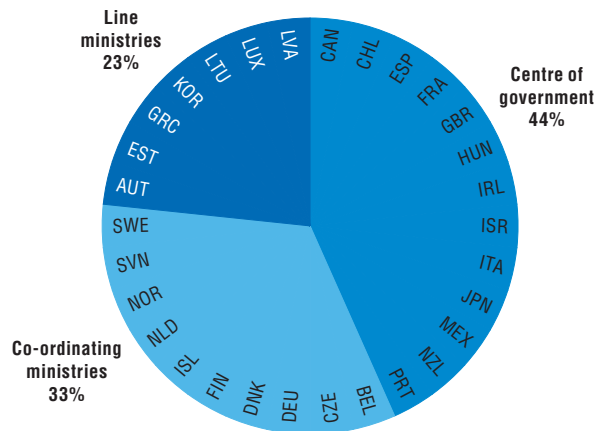
OECD (forthcoming), *The Digital Transformation of the Public Sector: Helping Governments Respond to the Needs of Networked Societies*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

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

Figure notes

Data from Australia, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States are not available. On data for Israel, see *http://doi.org/10.1787/888932315602*.
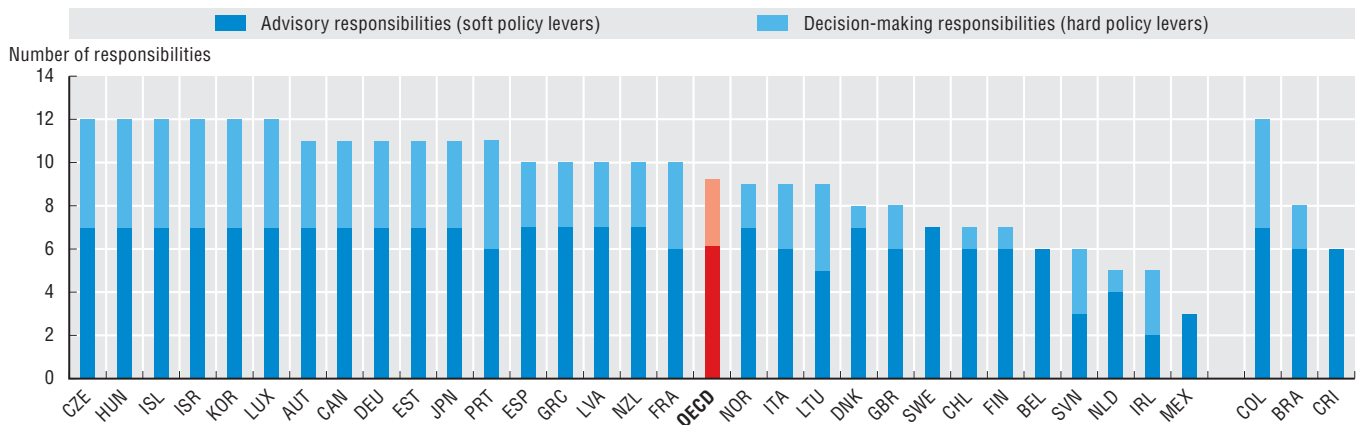
9.1. Location of the body responsible for the digital government strategy, 2019

Source: OECD (2019), *Survey on Digital Government*.

StatLink ⟶ https://doi.org/10.1787/888934033023

9.2. Responsibilities of the body in charge of the digital government strategy, 2019

Source: OECD (2019), *Survey on Digital Government*.

StatLink ⟶ https://doi.org/10.1787/888934033042

9.3. Use of standardised policy levers at the central/federal government level, 2019

Source: OECD (2019), *Survey on Digital Government*.

StatLink ⟶ https://doi.org/10.1787/888934033061
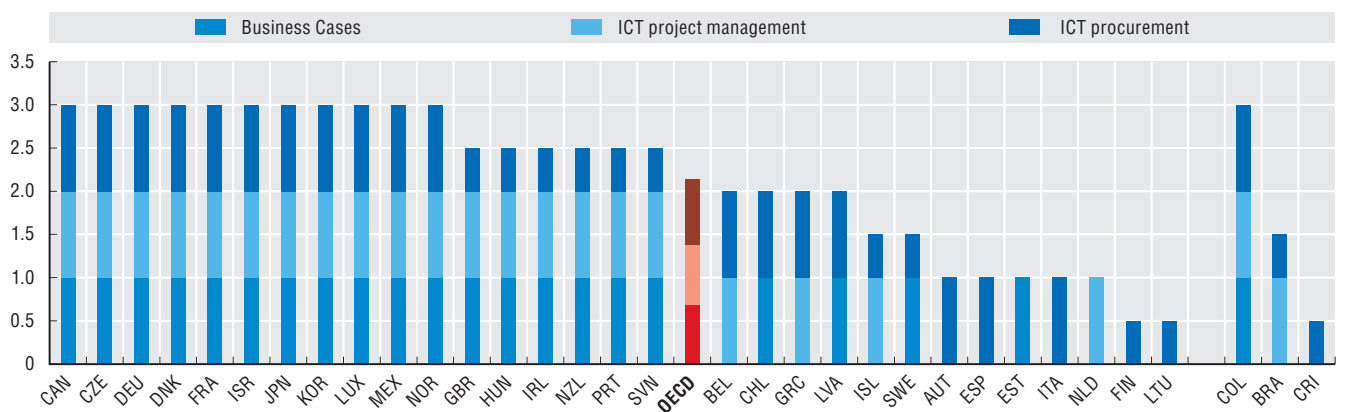
From:

Government at a Glance 2019

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/8ccf5c38-en

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2019), "Digital government", in *Government at a Glance 2019*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/c77e9a28-en