Chapter 2

Fostering a more collaborative and citizen-driven Colombian public sector

This chapter analyses the conditions for leveraging digital technology and open data, with the aim of promoting a public sector which is both citizen-driven as well as proactive in establishing approaches for its own use as an enabling platform for the digital government ecosystem. It also examines the context of government transparency and openness, as well as Colombia's position with regard to the digital participation and collaboration of its citizens. Inclusive citizen engagement is also analysed, including the use and leverage of digital technology and open data for promoting a more active citizen role, also considering vulnerable communities.

Introduction

The governments of OECD countries strive to create more user-driven and proactive public sectors in which government performs a facilitating role as a platform for citizen engagement and co-creation of public value in collaboration with public, private and social stakeholders. Thus, the objective is to allow the real needs of citizens to drive the design and implementation of public policies and services (user-driven), replacing the approaches in which governments made assumptions about these needs (user-centred). The evolution from e-government to digital government comes with a change from a user-centred to a user-driven approach (OECD, 2014). The intention is to foster more collaborative administrations that are driven by citizens and service users, thus strengthening the confidence in government and the reliability of its actions (OECD, 2016a).

For Colombia, reconfiguring the relationship between government and citizens in order to strengthen the legitimacy and trust in governmental institutions is both one of its greatest challenges, but also a key instrument in fostering economic growth and social welfare in the post-conflict period. The armed conflict harmed the credibility of public sector institutions and the State. It left deep scars in society and eroded citizens' confidence in the government, especially in the most affected rural areas (OECD, 2017a). In the shadows of the conflict, systemic corruption, state capture and organised crime took advantage to spread itself and interconnect, further undermining state legitimacy. In 2016, the Colombian Government and the main guerrilla group signed the *Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace* (Peace Agreement). Thus, Colombia officially put an end to one of the longest civil wars in recent history. Now, Colombia faces a crucial moment in its history.

Digital government can play a key role in placing citizens at the centre of public efforts to re-establish a context of public trust, while redefining the role of government. This means developing the government's ability to act as platform (government as a platform) and promote collaboration with citizens and businesses to co-create public value and to develop user-driven policies and services. If Colombia wishes to fully benefit from the opportunities that digital technology offers to create a more transparent, participative, collaborative and inclusive State, it must recognise that trust between State and citizens must be built around the needs and challenges of the post-conflict context the country is entering.

This chapter analyses the conditions needed for the government to adopt a role as platform in the digital government ecosystem, promoting a proactive and user-driven Colombian public sector. It also examines the context of policies for openness, as well as Colombia's position as regards digital citizen collaboration. Also addressed are inclusive civic participation and collaboration between non-institutional stakeholders (citizens, businesses and non-governmental organisations) to co-create services and policies. It also considers how to consolidate digital technology and open data to promote a more active role for citizens, including those from vulnerable communities.

Openness as a starting point for citizen collaboration

Political and strategic guidance for a collaborative State through digital technology

Digital technology can increase the State's openness, thus creating the minimum albeit not sufficient conditions for more intensive citizen collaboration. For example, the opening of government data provides a platform for the co-creation of solutions to public challenges. However, the government must not stop at simply publishing open data; rather it must encourage citizen engagement, so data is effectively used (OECD, 2016b). Colombia's current Online Government Strategy embodies the typical approach to e-government based on State openness and transparency thanks to ICTs. It does not take into account the notion of digital citizen engagement, according to which citizens' needs are the drivers of collaboration and co-creation.

The strategic component of ICTs for open government focuses on building a more transparent, participatory and collaborative State, in which citizens are involved in the decision-making process (OECD, 2017b). As such, the Colombian government created several important conditions for e-government, building strong momentum for open data and citizen participation initiatives. However, the shift towards digital government requires looking beyond the principle of openness, with its focus on transparency, and introducing support mechanisms for the co-creation of policies and services based on this openness.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Colombian regulatory framework for digital government contains various elements centred on skills and promoting State openness and transparency through digital technology. As in most OECD member countries and partners (25), government data in Colombia is required to be open by default, and this applies to all public institutions at the national level (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. **Open data by default, in OECD member countries and partners**

At the Central/federal level, are there formal requirements whereby government data should be "open by default" (unless a legitimate justification is provided)?
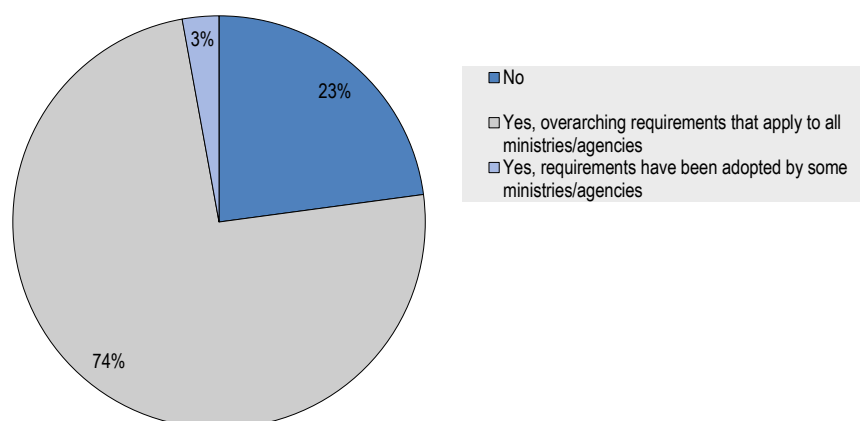
Note: Data from 34 OECD member countries and partners.
Source: OECD (2016c), "Open Government Data Survey 3.0", OECD, Paris.

When asked about the main reasons to promote openness and participation at an institutional level, Colombian public institutions report that their main motivation is to strengthen public confidence in their particular institutions and foster transparency. They also highlighted the fight against corruption as a priority (OECD, 2017c). These interrelated institutional drivers are very well aligned with several measures specified in the Peace Agreement. However, from the perspective of digital government, leveraging digital technology for citizen collaboration with the aim of co-creating solutions in response to the needs of groups affected by the conflict should be a priority.

The challenges of corruption and the opportunities offered by the Peace Agreement have been recognised by the Colombian government and the FARC-EP guerrillas. In the course of the Peace Agreement, measures were included aimed at fighting corruption through greater citizen participation, transparency and integrity. Effectively, corruption, whether real or perceived, causes mistrust between citizens and can undermine the legitimacy of public sector institutions (OECD, 2017b). In the OECD survey for the digital government review of Colombia, 53 of the 125 responding institutions reported they had or were drafting policies or initiatives to implement the Peace Agreement in Colombia. Of these, a majority (30 institutions) envisaged a role for ICTs or the use of (open) data in these policies.

Strong political willingness is evident and is supported by institutional arrangements within the national government —materialised in the Transparency Secretariat— aimed at promoting an agenda for transparency, open government and anti-corruption. This impetus has helped to enable various digital initiatives, among which the good practices of the Transparency and Anti-Corruption Observatory are worth highlighting (Box 2.1).

Box 2.1. **Colombian Transparency and Anti-Corruption Observatory**

The Colombian Transparency and Anti-Corruption Observatory is considered a good practice at an international level. The Observatory was originally designed and launched by the Office of the Inspector General of Colombia (PGN) and, in 2012, it was appointed to the Transparency Secretariat. The Observatory is a tool for promoting integrity in government as a whole, in government institutions and levels, as well as in society as a whole, with citizens, the private sector and civil society also under its umbrella.

The Colombian Anti-Corruption Observatory anticorrupcion.gov.co provides relevant anti-corruption information so that people are informed about government efforts and results, for example, time sequences and location of crimes committed.

The main challenge for the Transparency Secretariat is how to share with citizens all the collected information in a transparent and accessible manner; for example, by creating data sets with search functionalities.

The Observatory publishes a Composite Indicator of the Regional Moralisation Commissions (CRM) which assesses the degree of compliance and development of the Action Plan adopted by each CRM. These evaluations are rendered into graphs that show the combined scores, as well as scores by departments. It also provides indicators on the level of attainment of the goals established by the Comprehensive Public Anti-Corruption Policy.

Source: OECD (2017b), *OECD Integrity Review of Colombia,* www.oecd-ilibrary.org/ governance/oecd-integrity-review-of-colombia_9789264278325-en and interview during the OECD mission in June 2017.

Figure **2.2** shows that most Colombian public institutions have a plan or policy that defines the goals for ICT and open data use, with the aim of improving government transparency, citizen participation and accountability. However, more than 20% of the municipalities still lack this type of direction.

Figure 2.2. **Institutional ICT policy for open government**

Does the institution have (a) plan(s)/policy(ies)/strategy(ies) in which it specifies the targets/goals of ICTs for open government (use of ICTs to improve government transparency, citizen participation and accountability, including open data)?
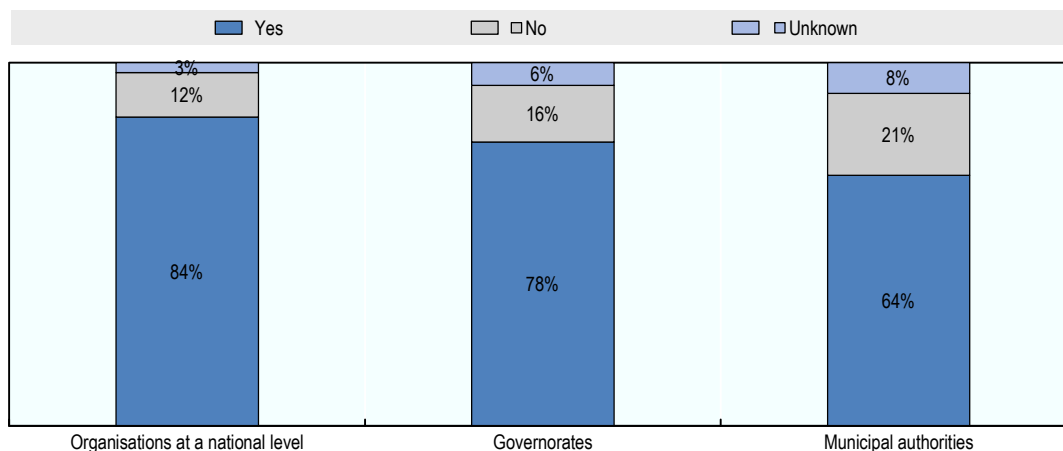
Source: OECD (2017d), "Questionnaire for Assessing the Impact of Digital Government in Colombia", OECD, Paris.

The Peace Agreement and the strong transparency and anti-corruption agenda provide a solid legitimate base on which to advance digital transparency and open government data policy initiatives. Nevertheless, the intense debate around transparency implies a one directional view of data and information dissemination and could overshadow the possibilities offered by digital technologies in facilitating a more active role for citizens in the use of government data and information, and in co-creation efforts to solve society's problems. Indeed, allowing and encouraging this active role will be essential to strengthen public trust.

Collaboration with citizens enabled by digital technology

In using ICTs for the open government agenda, Colombia has gone beyond simply focusing on transparency. It has also encouraged public institutions to develop digital participation initiatives that register the opinions of citizens and involve them in institutional decision-making. Furthermore, the country has implemented open innovation practices to involve citizens in finding solutions to the challenges faced by society. Setting targets in these areas, monitoring their attainment and the provision of technical support by the central government have all created a surge in digital participation initiatives at the national and the territorial government level, as well as the emergence of several open innovation initiatives by governorates and national institutions.

A key factor in increasing digital citizen participation in Colombia has been the Crystal Urn (Box 2.**2**). However, the guidelines provided to the public institutions, such as the *Online Government Manual*, above all focus on the role of institutions as drivers of participation, consultation and collaboration activities in the sense of receiving citizen

feedback. They do not consider facilitating a more active role for citizens, so they may be able to co-create policies and services. For example, in regard to open innovation, the *Online Government Manual*[1] instructs public institutions to assume control when facing societal challenges, supplying resources and administering the collaborative process:

- Institutions identify the problems and challenges to be solved.
- Institutions enable the technological tools and inputs necessary for the collaboration of users, citizens and interest groups.
- Institutions manage the collaborative actions to acquire the solution(s) or improvement(s) for the identified problems or challenges.
- Institutions publish the results of the collaboration process.

As such, citizen collaboration is largely determined by the perception of a particular institution on the importance of a given matter and its suitability to address it, in co-operation with citizens, in conjunction with the institution's resources and its ability to drive the participation process. This not only means that a great share of responsibility and investment falls on the occasionally small shoulders of public institutions, but that collaboration initiatives to co-create public value are rarely encouraged.

Box 2.2. **The Crystal Urn**

The Crystal Urn is a Colombian Government initiative that leads the strategy for electronic citizen participation and government transparency; since 2017 it has transitioned into Colombia's open government portal. Since its launch in October 2010, the Crystal Urn has consolidated a multichannel platform that integrates traditional communication media, such as television, radio and telephone calls, with digital ones, such as social networks, SMS and websites.

These channels are available to all national and territorial government entities to facilitate the creation of participation forums at all levels, with the aim of improving the relationship between citizens and State. Thus, Colombians can influence the decisions of leaders and know the results, progress and initiatives of the government, transmit their concerns and proposals directly to government institutions, and participate and interact with state management, services and public policies. This creates a binding relationship between citizens and a State with a true vocation to serve.

Since it was launched, the Crystal Urn has received around 20 million submissions, and the web portal has registered around 10 million visits from Colombians looking to access government information or participate in public policy impact exercises or ongoing educational campaigns or consultations. Furthermore, since 2011 it has handled close to 140 thousand questions asked by Colombians through various traditional and digital media made available by the platform.

The Crystal Urn team has responsibility, together with the Digital Government Strategy team and MinTIC, to roll out and operate the initiative.

Lessons learned from this initiative include:

- Create the practice at senior management level. Gaining political will.
- The fundamental value lies in the timeliness and effectiveness when responding to the citizen.
- The information needs of citizens should be transformed into opportunities for collaboration on issues of public interest.
- Digital and analogue channels remain complementary to each other.

Source: OECD (2016b), *Digital Government Toolkit*, OECD, Paris, www.oecd.org/gov/colombia-urna-cristal.pdf, complemented by information shared by the Colombian government in the context of this review.

This scenario is illustrated by the products and results indicators related to a digitally enabled open government, which were conducted for the OECD's *Assessing the Impact of Digital Government in Colombia* (OECD, 2017b). As illustrated in Table 2.1, it is clear that Colombian public institutions, and especially department governorates, have dedicated considerable efforts to creating transparency sections on their websites (Indicator OUP 5), publishing open data (Indicator OUP 6), creating opportunities for digital participation (Indicator OUP 7) and organising open innovation exercises (Indicator OUP 8). The tangible results of their efforts are reflected in the output indicators, where accomplishments are recorded on a scale from 0 to 100. However, when examining the desired outcomes —which require the active participation of citizens and other stakeholder groups in society— indicators are much lower.

Table 2.1. **Digital transparency, participation and collaboration indicators**

|	OUP5	OUP6	OUP7	OUP8	OUC6	OUC7	OUC8	OUC9	OUC10
	Online trans-parency	Open government data	Digital participation availability	Open innovation practices	Use of public information	Re-use of open government data	Digital participation	Digital participation by vulnerable groups	Open innovation solutions
Total	69.9	57.3	74.5	36.1	50.1	19.7	46.6	36.9	31.8
National	76.7	66.4	58.1	54.3	58.0	26.4	55.8	24.0	47.1
Municipalities	68.9	55.0	75.8	33.1	48.1	18.5	44.9	38.9	29.3
Governorates	84.8	67.1	100	62.5	70.5	28.7	65.6	46.4	50.0

Note: All scores are calculated on a scale from 0 to 100.
Source: OECD (2017b), *Assessing the Impact of Digital Government in Colombia,* OECD Publishing, Paris.

This image is also reflected in Colombia's score in the third pillar of the OECD OURdata Index (Figure 2.3). This pillar focuses on government activities to encourage the re-use of open government data. Although Colombia is ahead of the majority of OECD countries as regards this pillar, the country's overall score in the OURdata Index suffers because of this (OECD, 2017e).

When Colombian public institutions are asked about the main barriers for successful digital participation for citizens, an overwhelming 58% refers to (Figure 2.4) the lack of access to technology. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, this is indeed a key obstacle for the progress towards digital government, especially in the rural areas. The other four perceived barriers are linked to the image that institutions have of citizens, and with their will and ability to participate digitally in matters of public interest, which points to the importance of clear communication from the government regarding what citizens can achieve. Only 26% of institutions mention a lack of citizen trust in public institutions among the five main barriers. This indicates that, in general, they do not perceive it as an important obstacle for digital participation by citizens.

Figure 2.3. **OURdata Index, government support for data re-use (pillar 3), 2017**
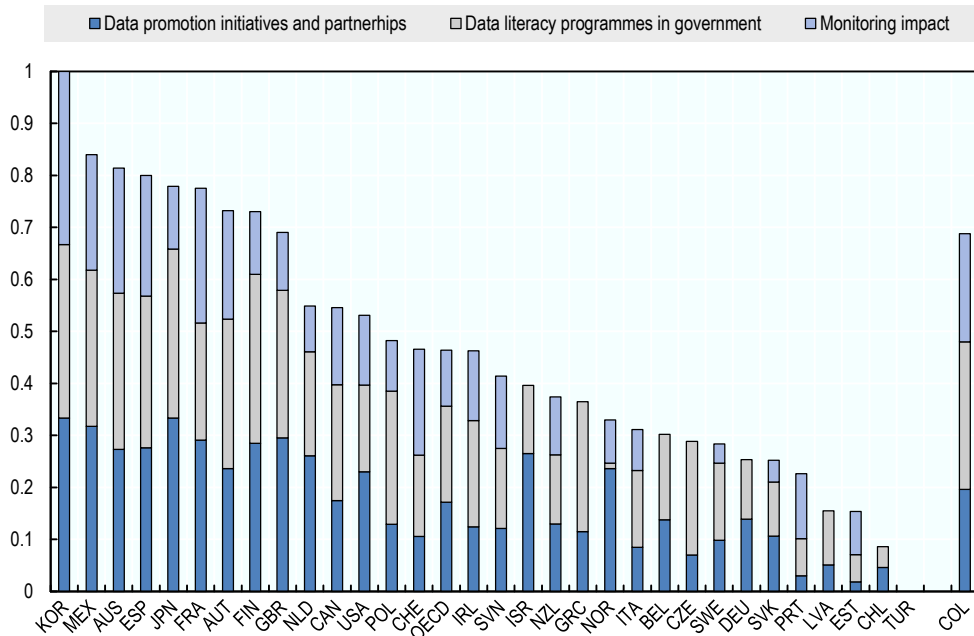
Note: The data from Hungary, Iceland and Luxemburg are not available. Denmark does not have a central/federal data portal and is therefore not displayed in the index.
Source: OECD (2016b), "Open Government Data Survey 3.0," OECD, Paris.

Figure 2.4. **Barriers for digital participation by citizens**

What are the main barriers for making use of the digital participation channels available to citizens in areas of public interest? Please arrange the following options such that 1 is the largest obstacle and 5 is the smallest.
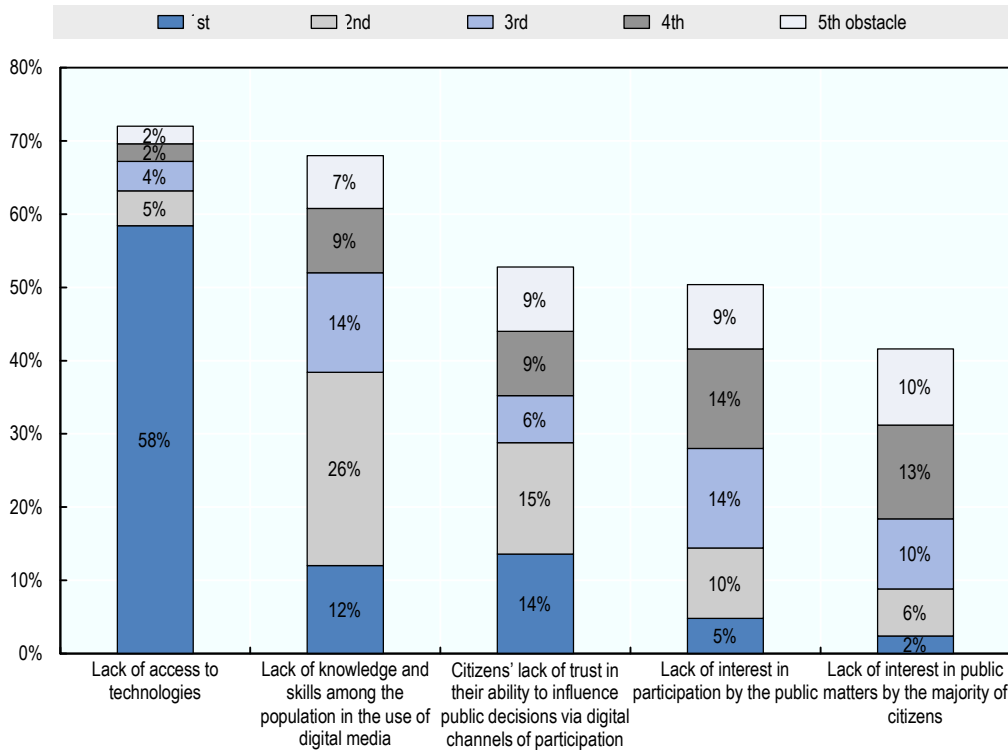
Source: OECD (2017c), "Digital Government Review of Colombia: Questionnaire for Colombian state public institutions", OECD, Paris.

Setting the stage for citizen collaboration

From citizen-centred transparency and participation to citizen-driven collaboration

The Colombian government took an important step in redefining its relationship with citizens by shifting from the top-down rationale typical of an e-government approach to a digital government approach, which requires the government to adopt a facilitator role and operate as a platform. In various parts of the digital government ecosystem in Colombia initiatives are being developed that keep a more active role in mind for citizens in the co-creation of public value.

The Transparency Secretariat works on initiatives to foster transparency motivated by the citizens, in addition to public institutions that collect and disseminate data in the interest of transparency. The idea is to encourage and facilitate citizens to monitor and report incidents related to corruption, thereby making them into civic auditors against corruption. After a big media scandal in 2015 and 2016 in which a teacher posted a video online with photographs of school meals that revealed that suppliers were not delivering the food they should have, the Secretariat now wishes to encourage collective action by the parents to send photos of any deficient school meals in order to test the effectiveness of the food delivery system in schools and see how far meals can deviate from the acceptable standards. The aim is for participating citizens/parents to have the opportunity to provide feedback about the food that the children are given. The Secretariat wants to benefit from knowledge collected by the Crystal Urn to determine the best moment to send a message to parents to ensure their response. Although these initiatives envisage an active role for citizens, it still remains unclear how this role can be encouraged. Additionally, there is no clear alignment with MinTIC initiatives aimed at participation and open data, which is why potential synergies are lacking.

Several OECD countries, such as France, South Korea, Mexico and the United Kingdom consolidate their national open data portals to facilitate citizen engagement in the co-creation of public value (OECD, 2015; 2016b). The Public Challenges initiative in *Mexico* is useful for connecting developers and public institutions with the aim of fostering collaboration on specific questions and policy sectors (Box 2.3). As a result, private sector organisations have developed web platforms and web and mobile applications to improve the provision of public services or to address the asymmetries in citizen access to information. There are other tools that are good examples of the use of digital technologies and open data for risk management, insofar as they link open data initiatives to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Occasionally, apart from the focus on encouraging re-use of government data, the provision of data by citizens and other stakeholders in the open data ecosystem is also facilitated. The *French* central open data portal self-promotes itself as the "Open platform for French public data", which indicates that it reaches beyond simply providing government data: it gives citizens, businesses and other non-government stakeholders the option to upload and share their data, making them available and accessible to a wider audience. As the quality of non-government data cannot be guaranteed, the portal warns visitors of this situation. The portal also allows data users to publish and show examples of open data re-use (government and non-government) and to monitor the use of published data sets. Additionally, the French government used the portal to launch the *Base Adresse Nationale* (National Address Base) project. This involved multiple

stakeholders trying to create a single national address database fed by data contributions from private, public and non-profit organisations.

Box 2.3. **Public Challenges in Mexico**

A platform for creating public value

The Mexican Public Challenges initiative (Retos Públicos) was useful as it produced results in the political and institutional spheres, beyond transparency. Through requests for proposals posted online in the central open data portal the Chief Data Officer (CDO), in co-operation with various state secretariats, invited non-government stakeholders to propose projects. The general aim was to collaborate in the ecosystem to develop data solutions (applications) for "public challenges" based on the mobile/web government.

Public institutions defined the challenges and the winners received public funding to develop the project. The secretariats of Transport (SCT), Education (SEP) and Environment (SEMARNAT), together with public organisations such as the National Council for Culture and Arts (CONACULTA) and the Office of Consumer Protection (PROFECO), took part in this initiative. The mobile and web-based applications were developed as a result of the Public Challenges and are on show in the open data portal, where they are available to download free of charge.

The value of such an initiative is that:

- it acts effectively as a mechanism for public-private-social co-operation,
- it contributes to fostering innovation in the country while seeking to improve public sector efficiency,
- it shows the importance of institution data literacy and visionary leaders for value co-creation, and
- it helps public institutions to have a clear vision about the (value) problem that they are trying to address in collaboration with stakeholders.

From Public Challenges to Challenge Mexico

Towards the end of 2016 the Public Challenges initiative transitioned into Challenge Mexico (Reto México). The aim of Challenge Mexico is to be an open innovation platform for multiple stakeholders to create prototypes and jointly design solutions to address public policy challenges. The initiative aims to design scalable and replicable projects with a view to medium-term sustainability.

While the Public Challenges centred on co-designed solutions for public sector challenges, Challenge Mexico widened the collaboration approach to include the needs of the private sector. Challenge Mexico allows private companies to use the online portal retomexico.org to publish project proposals that can benefit from entrepreneurial ideas driven by data. This allows for a bidirectional collaboration platform in which the private sector takes on an active role in digital innovation and allows micro- and small enterprises to connect with potential clients.

Source: OECD (2018), *Open Government Data in Mexico*, OECD Publishing, Paris, forthcoming publication; OECD (2016b), *Open Government Data Review of Mexico*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264259270-en; http://retos.datos.gob.mx/retos; https://retomexico.org.

To enable the necessary engagement of Colombian citizens in rebuilding the country in a period of peace, while overcoming the challenge of low public trust, efforts must be focussed on the creation of tangible value in collaboration with the citizens and civil society organisations, providing the required legal, institutional and technological support to facilitate the collaboration process. For example, *Latvia* made it legally possible for citizens to initiate amendments to laws via digital means, and followed this up with a public-private partnership for implementation (Box 2.4). In *South Korea*, public sector institutions have a legal obligation to issue a decision within 20 working days with regard to requests received through the central open data portal to release government data www.data.go.kr (OECD, 2016b). Such initiatives enhance citizens' standing to mobilize the political agenda and co-create solutions for issues they consider important.

Box 2.4. **Social e-petition platform, "My Voice", in Latvia**

ManaBalss.lv is a social initiative platform and a legitimate way to submit an initiative, gather supporters and present tangible initiatives to Parliament. Each initiative, signed by at least 10 000 citizens, is sent to Parliament to be included in the official agenda of the legislative branch.

Article 1313 of the Law "Rules of Procedure of the Saeima", stipulates that "at least 10,000 Latvian citizens who shall have reached the age of 16 on the day of filing a submission have a right to file a collective submission with Saeima." The collective submission can be submitted electronically ("a collective submission that is filed electronically shall be supplemented with technical information confirming the signing of the collective submission and ensuring the possibility to verify the number of signatories, their names, surnames and ID numbers").

Thus, the social e-petition platform is legally determined and binding to Parliament. From the launch of ManaBalss.lv in 2011, there have been a total of 905,051 votes and 912,000 unique visitors. Of the initiatives that received the necessary votes, 47% were enacted as laws or gave way to other legislative acts. So far, 14 digital petitions have received more than 10,000 votes (and another two reached the Parliamentary agenda) and 8 digital petitions were voted on in Parliament to go up as amendments to a law. More than 71% of the Latvian population has visited ManaBalss. ManaBalss.lv is recognised worldwide as a successful case of citizen engagement.

Source: OECD (2016a), *Digital government toolkit*, OECD, Paris, www.oecd.org/gov/latvia-social-epetition.pdf; complemented by information provided to the OECD by a representative of ManaBalss.lv, January 2018.

Recently, the Ministry for the Interior launched the *Civic Causes* initiative in support of Colombian citizens to propose and promote government attention for public challenges. Citizens can make use of their own social networks to obtain the support of the 20 000 required digital "likes" to secure the commitment of the ministry to "assist them in the process with those in charge."[2] This is a promising initiative with its multichannel approach and proposed institutional support. However, it is still unclear to what extend proposals that receive sufficient votes to be addressed formally will be legally guaranteed.

Colombia has other initiatives that demonstrate the value of greater participation and collaborative action driven by citizens and civil society organisations. The initiative of the Administrative Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (Colciencias),

MinTIC and the Unit for the Assistance and Comprehensive Reparations of Victims "Science and ICT for Peace"[3] is an excellent example of the government providing a platform so that stakeholders in society can jointly devise a digital solution to a problem which they believe is worthwhile addressing. The call for digital solutions not only addresses a wide variety of stakeholders who can jointly offer the necessary knowledge and skills —which the government probably cannot offer— but also that the challenges to be addressed must be defined by the communities that survived the conflict. This guarantees the relevance of the identified problem along with the value of the potential solution, in public terms. Supported by the President of the Republic, "The Biggest Conversation in the World", is a successful civil society organisation managed on a digital platform allowing conversations between Colombians about their role in the peace process.[4] Additionally, initiatives involving user research labs, such as "ViveLab Bogotá"[5] to engage citizens from the very start in the design of digital services are highly valuable for identifying their needs as service users and co-creating solutions meeting those needs.

These approaches are not only important for matters related to peace-building, but also for other problems in society. However, addressing engagement of citizens and civil society organisations in this way has yet to become a common practice in Colombia. In the aforementioned cases, the government provided the platform on which citizens created value via digital technologies. The challenge will be adopting this approach on a larger scale and ensuring that efforts are maintainable and will therefore contribute to public trust. There are also valuable and inspiring initiatives at the local level, such as *Bogotá Abierta* (Open Bogota) (Box 2.5).

Box 2.5. **Bogotá Abierta**

Involving citizens to solve social challenges

Bogotá Abierta https://bogotaabierta.co/ is an open innovation platform for the city of Bogota. It was originally conceived in 2016 by the Peñalosa Administration, through work between the ICT High District Council, the District Planning Secretariat and the District Institute for Participation and Community Action (IDPAC) to jointly develop the district development plan with the residents of Bogota, *Bogotá Mejor para Todos* (A Better Bogota for All). For this proposal alone, *Bogotá Abierta* registered 20,252 ideas from 39,370 residents in three weeks. The most important challenge, which was later awarded a prize, was how to improve school transport. Another topic for consultation was how to improve spaces devoted to public, cultural and sports activities.

Bogota's districts jointly decide on the challenges to be published in *Bogotá Abierta*. Above all, public transport was focused on, paying attention on improving mobility and public spaces, especially for minorities. Each challenge specifies deadlines for receiving ideas and how the contributions from Bogota residents will be used. For example, when asking "What is your proposal for women to feel safe in the city's public spaces?" the platform informs users that the most voted ideas will be reviewed and could be included in the 2018–2020 Local Plans for Safety for Women.

A star system was devised to encourage local residents to participate and brainstorm high-quality ideas. The stars will be used in auctions, which are still under development in the platform. Participants are awarded stars for each idea contributed and each "like" they receive.

Through its Digital Cities Awards, the Inter-American Association of Telecommunication Companies (ASIET) recognised the *Bogotá Abierta* platform as the best digital

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government initiative in Latin America.

Source: Interviews during the OECD mission, June 2017; ICT High District Council (2017), ticbogota.gov.co; Bogotá Abierta (2017), bogotaabierta.co.

Leveraging open government data to create economic and social value

In recent years, Colombia has significantly increased the number of open datasets on the Open Data Portal of the Colombian State[6] and has also invested in improving the accessibility of datasets. While these efforts should be continued and expanded, Colombia has much to gain through investment activities aimed at promoting the re-use of open government data. The country boasts several excellent examples, such as the hackathons for entrepreneurs as organised by the Digital Public Innovation Centre, the *ClicSalud* application based on open data of the Ministry of Health for medicine prices and the promotion of data journalism in Tamalemeque.

It is also important to ask potential open data users about the data they would like to use so as to identify their needs. Although the underlying principle of open data is to publish all government data in an open format by default, it is unrealistic to believe that this can be easily implemented with all government data. Therefore, it is important to define the priorities for openness based on the needs of end-users. Such examples should be used to promote data re-use as an integral part of every institution's open government data policy, thus enhancing the impact of open data in economic, social and governance spheres. In this context, it is important to remember that open data users are not only found outside of government, but that public organisations themselves are both producers and users of open data. Accordingly, as explained in greater detail in Chapter 3, it is essential to develop a policy aimed at the strategic use of data within the public sector that takes into account open data as an important source.

The open data portal can be used for this purpose and converted into a platform for data requests and co-creation, as in leading countries like France, Mexico and the United Kingdom (OECD, 2016b). The portal would be a bidirectional collaboration platform that would increasingly contribute to fostering a demand- and value-driven approach for disclosing data, led by users and the data ecosystem in general. As noted in the previous section, the portal could also include tools to enable open data and the provision of metadata by non-government stakeholders, as in ***France***. Integrating data request mechanisms in the portal could be equally important, not only to improve user-driven data dissemination, but also to collect information on the *ex ante* expected impact of opening government data, as for example in the ***United Kingdom*** through online data request forms.

When asking Colombian institutions about their main target groups, those at the national level stated that their target population was the public at large. Several national institutions also identified specific social groups, but it was clearly territorial institutions that identified specific groups most of the time (Figure 2.5). Nine groups stand out as key target groups for more than 70% of territorial institutions, with farmers (92%), young people (87%) and female heads of household (85%) as the three main groups.

Figure 2.5. **Social target groups for Colombian public institutions**

Which social groups are the main beneficiaries/users of your institution's services?
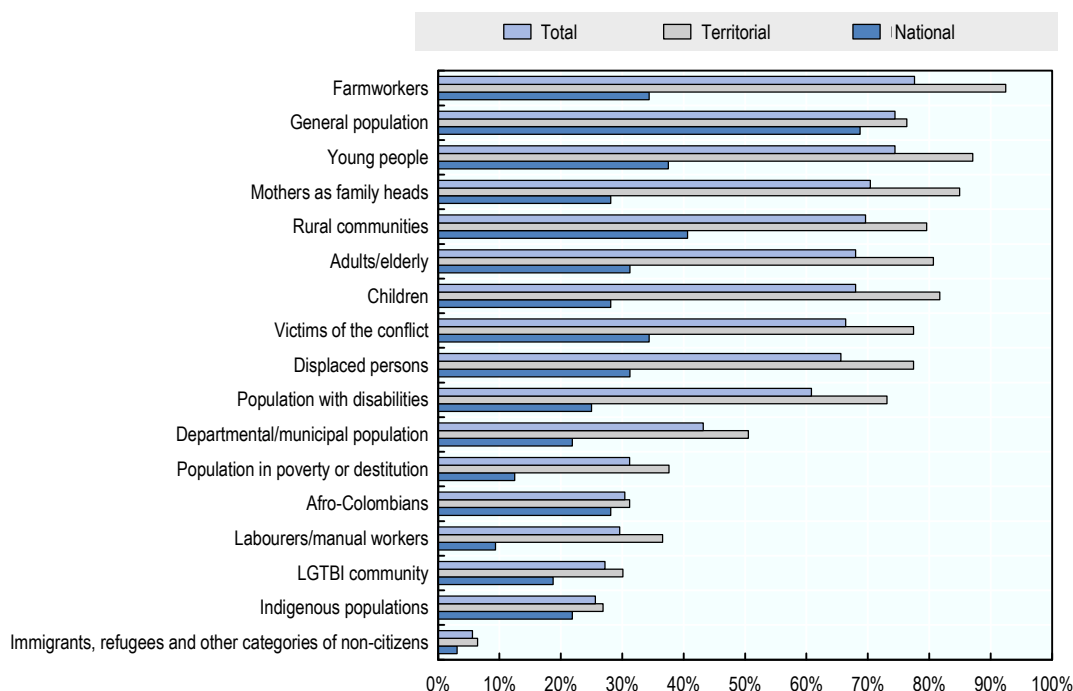
Note: Total = percentage of the 125 institutions that answered the questionnaire; National = percentage of the 32 institutions that answered the questionnaire; Territorial = percentage of the 93 institutions that answered the questionnaire.
Source: OECD (2017c), "Digital Government Review of Colombia: Questionnaire for Colombian public institutions", OECD, Paris.

Establishing partnerships with civil society organisations or supporting their activities can play a key role in successfully developing digital initiatives aimed at vulnerable populations. Some OECD countries state that they support civil society projects and identify policy solutions to challenges faced by marginalised communities by using open government data (Box 2.6).

Box 2.6. **Using open government data to support vulnerable populations**

Finland. A map helps visualise and understand the flow of people that seek asylum in European countries over time; www.lucify.com/the-flow-towards-europe/.

France. The Ministry for Family Affairs is organising a hackathon addressing the inequality between women and men as regards their free time (domestic chores). The winner will receive training and mentoring from specialists (paid by the ministry). The winning project must focus on a solution that reduces the inequalities between women and men, https://hackathon.ogpsummit.org.

Israel. In order to help find missing relatives, the Freedom of Information Office worked with various representative organisations to release data collected by three government committees over several decades to investigate the claims that Yemeni children were covertly taken away from their parents at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s.

Japan. Some projects focus on identifying policy solutions to challenges faced by social groups, www.soumu.go.jp/menu_news/s-news/01toukei09_01000010.html. Additionally, the "Open Data App Contest" in the city of Ube, supported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, http://opendata.city.ube.yamaguchi.jp/contest2016/index.html, is an initiative to develop applications that aid regional revitalisation and support communities in business development. A member of the ICT National Strategy Office and an open data evangelist attended the event as facilitators.

United Kingdom. The Government Digital Service focuses on several projects to identify solutions to challenges faced by marginalised communities. One of these concentrates on developing a user-centred tool to include data from the ongoing race disparity audit. The aim is to understand the scale and nature of these disparities, and provide evidence to politicians with the decision-making powers to address them, www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-orders-government-audit-to-tackle-racial-disparities-in-public-service-outcomes. Some projects received funding from the Release of Data Fund; www.gov.uk/government/publications/breakthrough-fund-and-release-of-data-fund.

Source: OECD (2016c), "OECD Open Government Data Survey 3.0", OECD, Paris.

Demonstrating the impact of citizen engagement

A key element in regaining the trust of the population is reinforcing the government's ability to demonstrate the results of public participation exercises; to show Colombian citizens that they are being heard, taken seriously and that their efforts to participate are not in vain.

The Crystal Urn portal devotes a section to showing the results of all participation exercises carried out on the platform. Notwithstanding an excellent section in the website where the results of participation exercises and awareness campaigns are presented systematically, there are other ways to produce a more valuable experience for citizens. This goes beyond informing on levels of participation (for example, number of participants or comments), but rather expanding on the policy implications of this participation. This aspect is related to the communication strategy needed to guarantee the successful implementation of the Digital Government Policy, as specified in Chapter 1.

The *Public Challenges* initiative (Box 2.3) in **Mexico** is a good example of providing information to the public both about the process and the results of public-private partnerships. Not only does it show the results, but also the website functionalities that allow stakeholders to follow the progress in the resolution of a given challenge. For each challenge a webpage includes features providing transparency on the process and results, such as:[7]

- **Status bar**. Shows the stages of the process: four phases (ideas, idea selection, prototypes and prototype assessment) and five moments (launch, closing of ideas, finalist announcement, closing of prototypes and challenge conclusion).
- **Key points**. Important features and dates provide a quick overview of challenge content.
- **Evaluation methodology**. How were the proposed solutions evaluated?
- **Data**. Data used/generated for the solution.
- **Comments**. Website visitor comments and government replies are recorded.

As regards digital interactions with vulnerable groups, only a minority of Colombian public institutions fail to monitor or evaluate them at all (Box 2.7). In general, questionnaires are still the preferred method for collecting feedback, along with web statistics, focus groups and suggestions inboxes. These results indicate that public institutions collect a large volume of citizen data. However, it is unclear what information is extracted in reality from this data to adequately evaluate the digital initiatives that involve vulnerable populations.

This is not only about increasing the transparency of these processes and allowing engaged citizens to monitor the results of their collaboration. It also concerns changing the way in which these results are measured and how the Colombian government addresses the issue of monitoring and evaluating digital government, as set out in the report entitled *Assessing the Impact of Digital Government in Colombia* (OECD, 2017b).

In other words, government-driven indicators could be complemented by user-driven indicators and thus leverage innovative data sources. The Government of the *United Kingdom*, for example, uses data request forms in the open data portal to evaluate the *ex ante* impact of the value created (OECD, 2016b). Information is collected on the potential use and users (i.e. for research, commercial and personal use, among others), and on the general benefits users expect to receive as a result of data access and re-use. Additionally, the British government evaluates the expected economic and financial benefits resulting from access to these data sets (new jobs, expected income, among others). Collecting such data is useful for strengthening the business case for open data in the United Kingdom, as it is the users who share information on data re-use and, more importantly, on the potential impact of disclosing open government data. The creation of this specific data request mechanism by the British government (and the work of the Open Data User Group) helped public institutions and users to differentiate between "access to information" and "open data", and the different purposes of their respective access mechanisms.

Social networks are another important channel that could be used both to reinforce the user-driven approach in collaboration processes, as well as to obtain data to evaluate the impact of digital government. The analyses of citizen data published in social networks can be used as an indicator for the government to monitor social problems that may be on the rise. The extracted data from social networks offer new opportunities to reduce political exclusion, for example, by allowing diffuse and *ad hoc* stakeholders to propose topics for the political agenda, and by "sharing" ideas, suggestions and comments critical of the government (Mickoleit, 2014). An example is GitHub, an open code platform for collaboration with reusable source code for www.data.gov (United States), www.gov.uk (United Kingdom) and many other projects. The "government" category of the repository platform experienced rapid growth since 2011 (OECD, 2016b).

With a strong focus on the governance of the government data value chain, a data-driven public sector (Chapter 3) can support a sustainable impact assessment methodology for digital government.
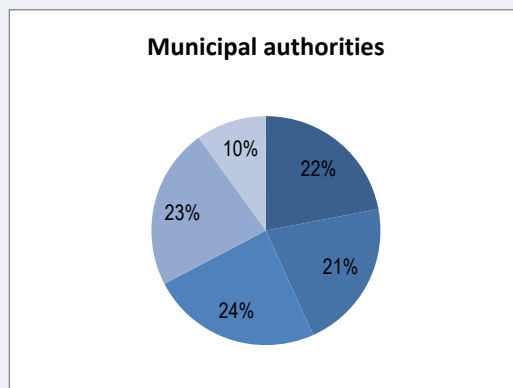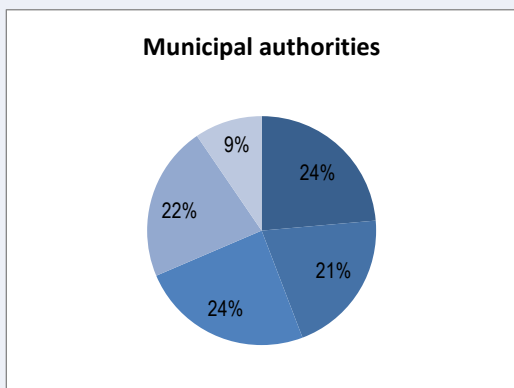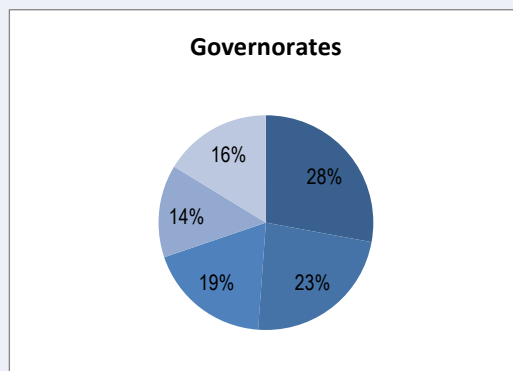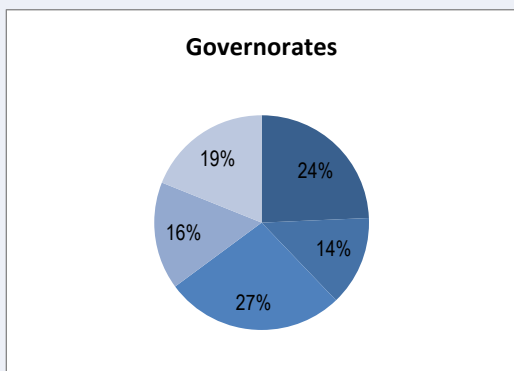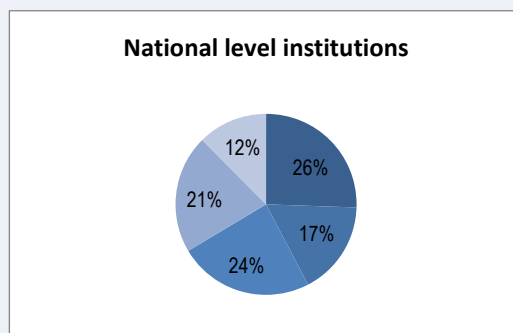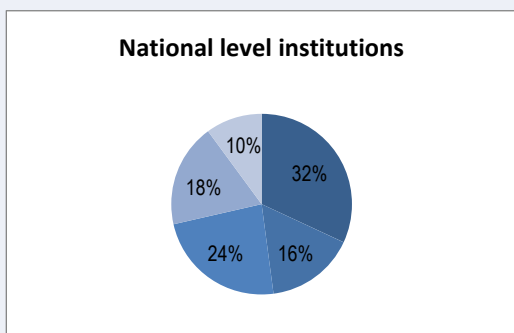
Box 2.7. **Measuring interactions with digital groups**

Digital transactions and participation by vulnerable groups in Colombia

Select the way in which your institution collects/generates data on the online transactions of vulnerable groups (afro-descendants or indigenous population, displaced population, population living in poverty).

Select the way in which your institution collects/generates data on online participation of vulnerable groups (afro-descendants or indigenous population, displaced population, population living in poverty)

■ The institution doesn't collect data on this issue ■ Website statistics ■ Surveys ■ Mailbox for suggestions ■ Focus groups

National level institutions

10% / 32% / 16% / 24% / 18%

National level institutions

12% / 26% / 17% / 24% / 21%

Governorates

19% / 24% / 14% / 27% / 16%

Governorates

16% / 28% / 23% / 19% / 14%

Municipal authorities

9% / 24% / 21% / 24% / 22%

Municipal authorities

10% / 22% / 21% / 24% / 23%

Source: OECD (2017d), "Questionnaire for Assessing the Impact of Digital Government in Colombia", OECD, Paris.

Notes

1. http://estrategia.gobiernoenlinea.gov.co/623/articles-7941_manualGEL.pdf (in Spanish).

2. www.mininterior.gov.co/el-ministerio/viceministerio-para-la-participacion-e-igualdad-de-derechos/causas-ciudadanas (in Spanish).

3. www.ideasparaelcambio.gov.co/node/604 (in Spanish).

4. www.laconversacionmasgrandedelmundo.com (in Spanish).

5. www.vivelabbogota.com (in Spanish).

6. www.datos.gov.co/en/.

7. http://retos.datos.gob.mx/retos (in Spanish).

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