2 Governance for an open and connected government in Thailand

Chapter 2 discusses the governance elements for an open and digital government in Thailand. It identifies the efforts made by the government to date to create an institutional and policy framework for public sector openness and digitalisation, and underlines key challenges in securing a user-driven, coherent and co-ordinated approach in the design and implementation of the open and digital government initiatives *vis-à-vis* OECD good practices and principles.

Introduction

Open and digital government reforms are key enablers of good governance. Clarity in terms of responsibilities (who? which?), goals (what?) and rules (how?) creates an environment where public sector officials are able to pursue reforms and feel a sense of joint responsibility for delivering results.

The provisions of the OECD *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government* (2017[1]) and *Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies* (2014[2]) promote sound governance frameworks to advance open and digital government agendas at the national level. Both recommendations address the need for fundamental institutional, policy and regulatory arrangements, paired with the right human and financial resources and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, as a prerequisite for a successful design and implementation of open and digital government initiatives. Moreover, both OECD instruments stress the importance of data, public communication, inter-institutional co-ordination and multi-stakeholder collaboration as tools and mechanisms that can help governments to maximise and multiply the value of the aforementioned initiatives and foster a more open and connected government.

Creating a citizen-centred policy framework for an open and connected government

High-level policy documents

The inclusion of open and digital government principles in a government's agenda provides a strong mandate to public institutions in charge of promoting them. Commitment through high-level policy documents is a *sine qua non* condition to transform these principles into the basis for the functioning of the public administration of any state. Such an effort to mainstream them across the public sector and move towards an open and connected state is reflected in several policy documents issued by the Thai government. This is an indicator that the government recognises the value and contribution of these reforms to public sector modernisation.

In recent years, Thailand has sought greater coherence in terms of how different strategies contribute to national development in the long run. For such a purpose, the central government issued the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) (Government of Thailand, 2018[3]) with the aim of transforming Thailand into a developed country by 2037. The document is the country's first national long-term strategy developed pursuant to the constitution, whose Section 65 stipulates that the state should provide a national strategy. Its aims have been declared to ensure that the country achieves its vision of becoming "a developed country with security, prosperity and sustainability" (Government of Thailand, 2018[3]) in accordance with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy that has all Thai people's happiness and well-being as its ultimate goal (NESDC, 2017[4]). The 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) also emphasises the importance of stakeholder participation in all sectors for balanced, efficient and sustainable development.

To attain its long-term development vision, the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) sets out five broad objectives (OECD, 2019[5]):

1. Economic prosperity – to create a strong and competitive economy driven by innovation, technology and creativity.
2. Social well-being – to create an inclusive society that progresses without leaving anyone behind by realising the full potential of all members of society.
3. Human resource development and empowerment – to transform Thai citizens into "competent human beings in the 21st century" and "Thais 4.0 in the first world".
4. Environmental protection – to become a liveable, low-carbon society with an economic system capable of adjusting to climate change.

5. Public sector governance – to improve public sector administration and reduce corruption.

The 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) represents an effort to bring together different policy instruments under a single government strategy. For this purpose, it breaks down long-term policy goals into actionable and measurable objectives defined in five-year mid-term plans known as the National Economic and Social Development Plans (NESDPs). The NESDPs aim at increasing the government's accountability and securing policy continuity across different government administrations.

Some of the most important goals of Thailand's 12th NESDP for the period 2017-2021 are to transform the Thai economy into "one that is based on services and digital technologies", and – accordingly – to modernise and decentralise the public sector, capitalise on the opportunities of public-private collaboration, increase the provision of digital services and reinforce public sector workforce digital capability (NESDC, 2017[6]).

The 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) itself consists of six different core strategies (Figure 2.1) focusing on the following topics:

1. National security.
2. National competitiveness.
3. Developing and empowering human capital.
4. Broadening opportunities to improve social equality and equity.
5. Steering towards a green economy and society.
6. Reforming and improving the public administration.

Figure 2.1. 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037)

Source: ONDE (2019[7]), "Open and connected governance in Thailand", Presentation by Dr Piyanuch Wuttisorn, Secretary General, Office of the National Digital Economy and Society Commission (ONDE), in the context of the OECD Open and Connected Review of Thailand.

Among the above (Figure 2.1), Strategy 6 on "Public sector rebalancing and development" envisions public sector reform based on good governance for more transparency and integrity in government. The strategy highlights that "government agencies should be open to intersectoral operations and participation from all relevant parties to ensure quick and transparent responses to public needs. All sectors in the society should value honesty, integrity and frugality while resisting all kinds of malfeasance" (OECD, 2019[5]). Strategy 6 reiterates the necessity of adjustment and development of the public administration, through complete digitalisation, to facilitate services for the public and private sector. Understanding this connection is critical

to ensure that the NESDPs and any specific secondary open and digital government instruments (e.g. strategies, plans, initiatives, etc.) contribute to broader national development goals.

To reach its development goals, the Thai government is promoting a new economic model called Thailand 4.0 (Royal Thai Embassy, n.d.[8]), which describes a model-driven by public sector innovation and co-operation with the public and private sectors. The model draws upon an open and connected, smart and high performing, citizen-centric governance and aims at moving towards a knowledge-based Thai economy (Jones and Pimdee, 2017[9]) (Figure 2.2). To comply with Thailand 4.0, principles of good governance have been put forward focused on the goal "Better governance, happier citizens".

The new Government 4.0 model is created in parallel with the new economic model, Thailand 4.0. Government 4.0 is built on three core principles (OPDC, 2020[10]):

- **Citizen-centric government** related to openness and transparency. Third parties can access or share public information as well as check public work processes and are open to private sector participation. On the other hand, public agencies have to be connected with and integrated among central, regional and local governments.

- **Open and connected government** related to a proactive functioning of the public sector that works for citizens. Big government data and digital technology are used to personalise public services or tailor services. The one-stop service concept is applied through connected service departments, in addition to continuous services and multi-channels such as websites, social media and mobile applications.

- **Smart and high-performance government** related to planning, risk management and innovative thinking and applied knowledge, used to respond to the rapidly changing world in order to create value, flexibility and capability to cope with situations in time. Government agencies are high-performance modern organisations with public officials committed to their work.

Figure 2.2. Thailand 4.0
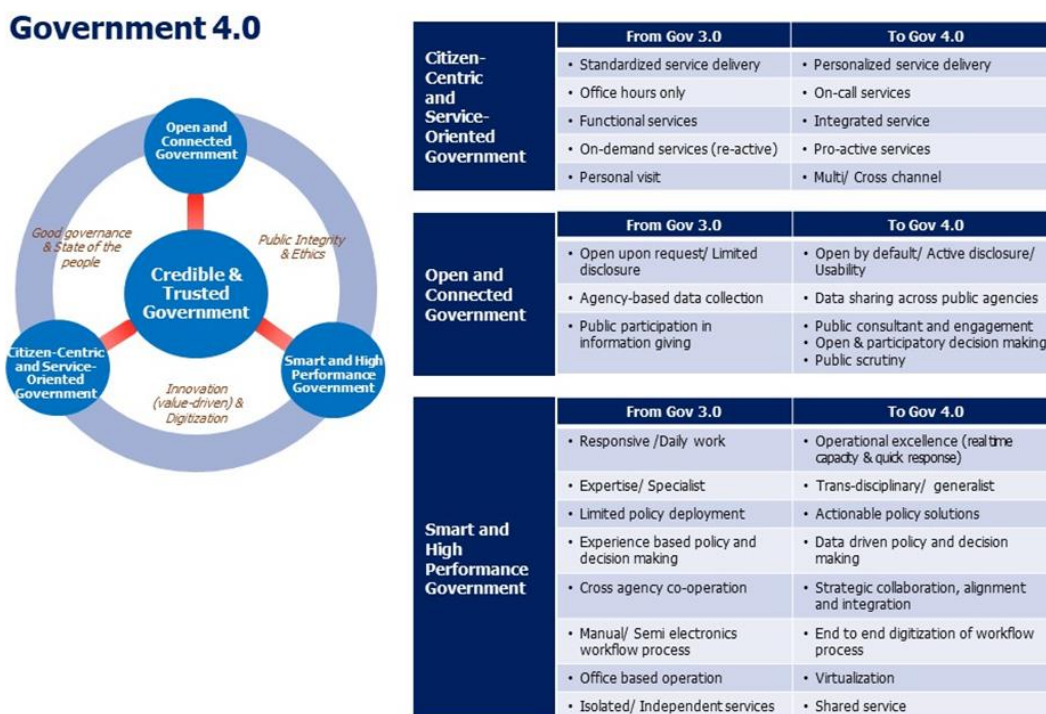
Source: Office of the Public Sector Development Commission (OPDC).

Developing an integrated policy framework for open government in Thailand

In order to bring about a change in the governance culture of the public administration and achieve the shift to Government 4.0 as foreseen by the new economic model discussed in the previous section, the relevant national principles and values of openness need to be identified, discussed and reinforced at every possible opportunity (OECD, 2016[11]). In this regard, the inclusion and prioritisation of open government principles in government agendas and the mainstreamed application of those principles across the public sector are needed to promote reforms.

Thailand's line ministries are already implementing a number of open government initiatives and have included references to open government principles in some sectoral policy documents but in a limited and siloed fashion. A co-ordinated approach that would allow for an increase in the number of initiatives, greater coherence and synergies between the individual efforts could thus positively contribute to the open government agenda and to how the latter can contribute to the achievement of Thailand's wider policy goals.

In practice, most existing open government initiatives are implemented on an ad hoc basis and without an overarching policy framework. As Thailand is not a member of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), the government does not elaborate national action plans that select key open government initiatives. In most cases, ministries implement open government initiatives related to stakeholder participation by fulfilling legal requirements and without following a co-ordinated approach with other institutions.

Every government pursues different objectives in the implementation of its open government agenda. Some governments focus on open government to improve the transparency, accountability, responsiveness and efficiency of the public sector, to increase trust, fight corruption, improve citizen participation or generate growth (OECD, 2016[11]). Open government can therefore mean different things to different stakeholders and policy makers. Delineating an official concept of open government and defining what it shall entail is a pivotal first step for a holistic and coherent approach to open government reforms.

A single definition that is fully recognised and acknowledged by the whole public sector can facilitate the prioritisation and implementation of open government initiatives. Evidence from OECD open government reviews shows that a definition provides the foundation for the effective and efficient implementation of a country's open government agenda when it is widely accepted and co-created with actors at all levels of government (OECD, 2016[11]). Moreover, the official definition should be co-created with external stakeholders in order to be recognised and supported not only by the whole of government but also by citizens, civil society, academia and the private sector. Box 2.1 sets forth an overview of the different benefits a good definition of open government provides.

Because of these benefits, already 49% of countries across the OECD use a single definition of open government. Of that proportion, 29% have created their own context-tailored definition while 20% of countries have a definition that was adopted from an external source such as the OECD or OGP (OECD, 2016[11]). However, none of the countries in Southeast Asia has a country-tailored definition (OECD/ADB, 2019[12]). Thailand has included open government principles in the Government 4.0 model but has not developed its own definition of open government.

In order to clearly define open government and move towards a more structured approach, the OPDC, as the appointed co-ordinator of policies and initiatives that ensure citizen participation in government, could take the lead in creating a single definition that is accepted by the whole public sector and external stakeholders alike. To make sure the new definition reflects a joint understanding of open government across all public institutions and beyond, the government could launch a consultative process for its development that would ensure greater ownership and better diffusion of the definition.

Box 2.1. Benefits of a good definition of open government

The OECD report *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward* (2016[11]) sets out why having a good definition is crucial:

- It informs the public about the essential elements of open government, the extent and limitations of the term.
- It facilitates a common understanding and usage of open government, aligning all stakeholders and policy makers with the same goals.
- It facilitates a robust analysis of the impact of open government strategies and initiatives across different institutions and levels of government.
- It supports international comparisons of open government strategies and initiatives.

Source: OECD (2016[11]), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en.

A single widely shared and recognised definition of open government could be particularly useful for the OPDC's efforts to reach out to other public institutions and encourage them to design and implement open government initiatives that are aligned with and support it. This could also help to apply an open by design approach in the development and implementation of those initiatives contributing to the Thai open and connected agenda.

Also, evidence collected during the OECD's peer review mission to Bangkok in April 2019 showed big disparities in terms of how the Thai government is moving towards an open and connected government that advance both the open and digital government agendas in that regard. Interviews consolidated the understanding that the open and connected government agenda in Thailand is highly driven by digitalisation (see next section "Driving national development and innovation through digital government"), while open government considerations for national development or transparency and participation for example remain secondary and often subordinate to aspects of the digital government agenda as discussed in the following section.

In light of the above, over the medium term, the OPDC could consider upgrading the next National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP), which will enter into force in 2022, by including specific and well-defined open government objectives that go beyond stakeholder participation. Moreover, Thailand may want to explore the development of a National Open Government Plan that codifies goals related to integrity, accountability, digitalisation, transparency and stakeholder participation, which can be achieved over a medium-term timeframe. This instrument could either expand the scope of the proposed Action Plan for Participatory Governance Promotion, B.E. 2561-2564, which was developed by the OPDC's Sub-Committee on Participation or take a similar form.

In the long term, the government could develop a strategic document that outlines shared objectives that go beyond the different initiatives and an overall vision of what Thailand intends to achieve with open government reforms. Such a document could help Thailand to take full advantage of the benefits of open government. For a more strategic approach in the long run, the OECD suggests that countries develop an independent National Open Government Strategy (NOGS). According to OECD research, such a strategy can provide the missing link between high-level commitments (e.g. the open government principles included in the National Strategy on Public Sector Rebalancing and Development) and isolated practices to ensure policy coherence across public institutions. The OECD *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government* defines an open government strategy as: "A document that defines the open government agenda of the central government and/or of any of its subnational levels, as well as that of a single public

institution or thematic area, and that includes key open government initiatives, together with short, medium and long-term goals and indicators" (OECD, 2017[1]).

An NOGS has the potential to consolidate initiatives across government, provide strategic direction, facilitate a focus on long-term and cross-cutting goals, and ultimately change the way government and society relate. Instead of driving individual initiatives, an NOGS can enable a country to set joint priorities and lead to a whole-of-government approach in which public sector organisations across government and at all levels advance towards a common vision and shared strategic objectives. Ideally, the potential strategy would also be linked to the existing Digital Economy and Society Development Plans (see section on "Driving national development and innovation through digital government").

In particular, in light of the challenges the Thai government identified in the OECD Survey on Open and Connected Government in Thailand (2019[5]), an NOGS could have a positive impact on the consolidation of open government initiatives and the development of an open government agenda. The survey found that a "lack of or insufficient co-ordination among main public stakeholders" and "insufficient communication/awareness of the benefits of open government reforms among public officials" are viewed to be among the five most significant obstacles for open government in Thailand (OECD, 2019[5]). Besides promoting open government and raising awareness to generate new initiatives, an NOGS should aim at rendering existing policies and initiatives more coherent and better co-ordinated by providing a common narrative and methodological setting. Box 2.2 sets out some of the benefits an NOGS could deliver.

Box 2.2. Benefits of a National Open Government Strategy (NOGS)

1. An NOGS ensures whole-of-government policy coherence

An NOGS can provide the umbrella for all open government initiatives implemented in a country and ensure that they follow similar methodological guidelines and contribute to a shared vision of openness. As such, besides putting new initiatives in place, a whole-of-government NOGS makes those policies and initiatives that are already being implemented by public institutions more coherent and stronger by working together under the same coherent (and powerful) narrative and methodological setting.

2. An NOGS ensures efficiency and intra-institutional knowledge sharing

An NOGS is a tool to save resources and reduce costs. Government institutions spend time and public resources trying to develop solutions that might already be in place or build on lessons learned by other administrations that have already successfully implemented certain reforms. An NOGS helps to intensify efforts to create collaborative solutions to shared problems. A concerted NOGS can help public institutions to elaborate a common understanding and shared standards relating to open government, thereby harmonising practices. As such, an NOGS can enable the government to achieve outcomes – at a lower cost – that would not be possible to achieve if institutions work in isolation.

3. An NOGS ensures collaboration and co-ordination

The main purpose of whole-of-government frameworks is to enable different government entities to pursue joint objectives in a co-ordinated manner. The Australian government defines whole of government as "public service agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to particular issues (…)". An NOGS that includes clearly assigned responsibilities to the identified goals and objectives can be a valuable co-ordination and collaboration instrument.

4. An NOGS acts as a tool for mainstreaming

The design and implementation of an NOGS give visibility to the concept of open government and puts open government reforms on all public institutions' agendas. Hence, an NOGS mainstreams an open

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culture by spreading and implementing the values and principles of open government across the entire administrations and all policy areas. In addition, it communicates to civil servants, citizens and stakeholders that the government embraces a new understanding of the way the state is run. As such, an NOGS creates a powerful, compelling and coherent narrative that inspires policy makers to champion open government reforms in their own areas of work. Lastly, an NOGS can help civil servants and citizens to better understand the added value and concrete output of open government by applying it to the policy area of their interest and expertise.

5. An NOGS is a formidable governance tool

An NOGS allows for effective management of a country's open government agenda. The development of an NOGS is usually led by a high-level official (e.g. minister, secretary-general, senior appointee, inter-ministerial delegate, etc.) and accompanied by concrete efforts to create institutional and governance mechanisms (e.g. inter-ministerial committees, monitor and evaluate mechanisms, training modules, human resources performance evaluations, budget allocations, etc.). The high-level commitment of a politician can also be a tool to foster the impact of the strategy (as per the resources, mobilisation power and symbolism). In addition, the adoption of an NOGS empowers a person or office that will present the open government agenda to the wider public, monitor the follow-up and be the point of contact for the press and the wider public.

6. An NOGS functions as a tool for public accountability

An NOGS commits the government to certain key reforms and creates pressure for institutions to deliver. At the same time, a strategy that commits the government to concrete, ambitious but feasible outcomes can be a message to the citizens emphasising that this is a serious endeavour. The identification of milestones and indicators allows stakeholders to monitor the government's implementation efforts and analyse their compliance with the strategy's objective. Hence, the strategy and commitments made in it are a tool for stakeholders to hold the government to account and avoid "open washing". In addition, civil society can channel its demands through the strategy.

7. An NOGS can give long-term sustainability to the open government agenda

The lack of a national coherent strategy can undermine the long-term sustainability of open government reforms and protects them from government instability. If designed for the long term, an NOGS can give the open government a non-political value and anchor the implementation of open government principles in internal action plans that can continue without high-level political support.

Source: OECD (2020[13]), "Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an open government strategy", OECD Publishing, Paris.

As the OPDC was assigned the responsibility for approaching OGP membership and given its role as the co-ordinating entity for stakeholder participation initiatives and policies, the OPDC could lead the process of developing a possible NOGS. For the design and implementation of the strategy, Thailand could consider involving the legislature, judiciary and independent public institutions as well as subnational levels of government, in addition to different public institutions at the national level.

Even though the OECD proposes that Thailand could consider developing a strategy in the future, an NOGS only represents one option to move towards a whole-of-government framework for open government. The government of Thailand could also look into developing a national law or a directive on open government, as has been implemented in Canada and the United States (Box 2.3).

Box 2.3. Open Government Directives in Canada and the United States

Canada

The government of Canada's Directive on Open Government took effect on 9 October 2014. It applies to federal organisations.

The objective of the directive is to promote information management practices that enable the proactive and ongoing release of government information in order to support transparency, accountability, citizen engagement and socio-economic benefits. As part of the directive, the deputy heads of each department have designated an Information Management Senior Official, who is responsible for the following:

- Maximising the release of open data (structured data) and open information (unstructured documents and multi-media assets).
- Ensuring that information is released in accessible and re-usable formats.
- Developing and publishing a departmental Open Government Implementation Plan (OGIP).
- Maximising the removal of access restrictions on departmental information resources of enduring value prior to transfer to Library and Archives Canada.
- Ensuring that the open government requirements of the directive are integrated into any new plans for procuring, developing or modernising departmental information applications, systems or solutions.

The institution responsible for monitoring and reporting on compliance with all aspects of the directive is the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

As of February 2019, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat is working to develop a digital policy which will consolidate a number of existing policies on information management, information technology (IT), security and so on. A number of directives will fall under this policy, including the Directive on Open Government, which is currently being reviewed for potential revision.

United States

On 8 December 2009, as per the request of the president, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued an Open Government Directive, which was informed by recommendations from the Federal Chief Technology Officer, who solicited public comments through the White House Open Government Initiative.

The directive is intended to direct executive departments and agencies to take specific actions to implement the principles of transparency, public participation and collaboration. In particular, the directive requires executive departments and agencies to take the following steps:

- Publish government information on line: Each agency shall create a dedicated open government website that will allow them to publish information on line in open formats and interact with the public by receiving input to which they will respond on a regular basis. The respective annual *Freedom of Information Act* report shall be published on the website of each agency.
- Improve the quality of government information: Agencies shall follow OMB guidance on information quality and shall designate a high-level senior official who will be accountable for putting in place adequate systems and processes.
- Create and institutionalise a culture of open government: Each agency shall develop and publish an Open Government Plan that will describe how it will implement the three principles

> of transparency, public participation and collaboration into its activities. The plans shall be updated every two years.
>
> - Create an enabling policy framework for open government: Policies shall evolve to adapt to the use of emerging technologies which will open up new forms of communication between the government and the people.
>
> Source: Government of Canada (2014[14]), *Directive on Open Government*, https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=28108 (accessed 14 April 2020); US Government (2009[15]), *Open Government Directive*, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/open/documents/open-government-directive (accessed 14 April 2020).

Driving national development and innovation through digital government

Thailand has put in place an ambitious group of policy instruments on digitalisation, including the digital economy, digital government and data to support Thailand's 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2021) and the evolution towards Thailand 4.0. This structured scenario is the opposite of that observed in relation to the availability of open government policy instruments in the country as discussed in the previous section.

First, the 20-Year Digital Economy and Society Development Plan (2017-2036) or Digital Thailand (Figure 2.2) stands as the overarching digital agenda for Thailand. The development of the plan was the responsibility of the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society (MDES) and the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) (see next section).

Digital Thailand stands as the underlying long-term vision for digitalisation of the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037), with a focus on six core strategies: infrastructure, digital economy, inclusion and equality, digital government, skills and the future of work, and trust (including investments, security, and legal and regulatory frameworks) (MICT, 2017[16]). The responsibility for implementation of the specific goals and strategies lies with different government agencies (e.g. Digital Government Development Agency, DGA), under the co-ordination of the MDES.

Second, and in response to the related goals on digital government of the aforementioned policy instruments, the former E-Government Agency (EGA, which in 2018 became the DGA) developed the Digital Government Development Plan, which so far has been structured in three different stages: 2016-2018, 2017-2020 and 2020-2022.

Altogether, the Digital Government Development Plan aims at: i) developing a more integrated government (including government as one entity, shared services and one-point single access); ii) transforming the public sector (including capacities, processes and leadership); iii) working smartly (including IT, data and analytical infrastructure; and iv) developing citizen-centric services (including user experience, citizens' needs and security) (EGA, 2016[17]).

The Digital Government Development Plan is ambitious for, in addition to the four main goals described above, it also covers five sub-strategies (quality of life, competitiveness, national security and safety, government efficiency, and government services) and a group of eight international indicators (e.g. the United Nations [UN] E-Government Development Index, the Open Data Index, and the UN E-Participation Index), all in which the Thai government aims at improving its ranking as a result of the Digital Government Development Plan (Figure 2.4) (Thiratitayangkul, 2019[18]).

**Figure 2.3. Digital Thailand – Six core strategies**

The results of the survey administered across public sector organisations in Thailand for the purpose of this review confirmed a high level of awareness in terms of the existent policy instruments meant to support the digitalisation of public sectors and further development of digital government in the country. This positive context should not be underestimated or taken for granted as high levels of support or awareness in the public sector in relation to digital government strategies is an essential condition to secure successful advancement towards higher maturity in terms of digital transformation.

Results are, however, diverse in relation to public sector organisations' view on the sustainability of digital government policies across the political cycle in Thailand, with roughly 60% of public organisations stating that is not clear if the digital government policy will be sustained after administration changes (OECD, 2019[5]).[1] Public sector organisations expressed the need for further building the case for digital government at the political level as a means to get regular policy funding, while making clear the value of adjusting policy goals in line with the fast-paced global context for digitalisation.

This evidence supports the case for delivering results on digital government in line with the iterative mid-term goals of the Digital Government Development Plans and the long-term policy ambitions set in the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2036), and of taking advantage of the supportive legal and regulatory framework for digital government, including the Digitalisation of Public Administration and Services Delivery Act, B.E. 2562 (2019), also known as the Digital Government Act.

Challenges remain however in terms of engaging actors beyond the usual ones within the public sector (DGA, MDES and OPDC) and also among those outside the public sector in the development of the digital government plans. Evidence from the OECD peer review mission to Bangkok pointed to the fact that the development of these instruments was not done in collaboration with a broader range of internal and external actors in the country.

Figure 2.4. Thailand's Digital Government Development Plan 2017-2020: Key goals and strategies
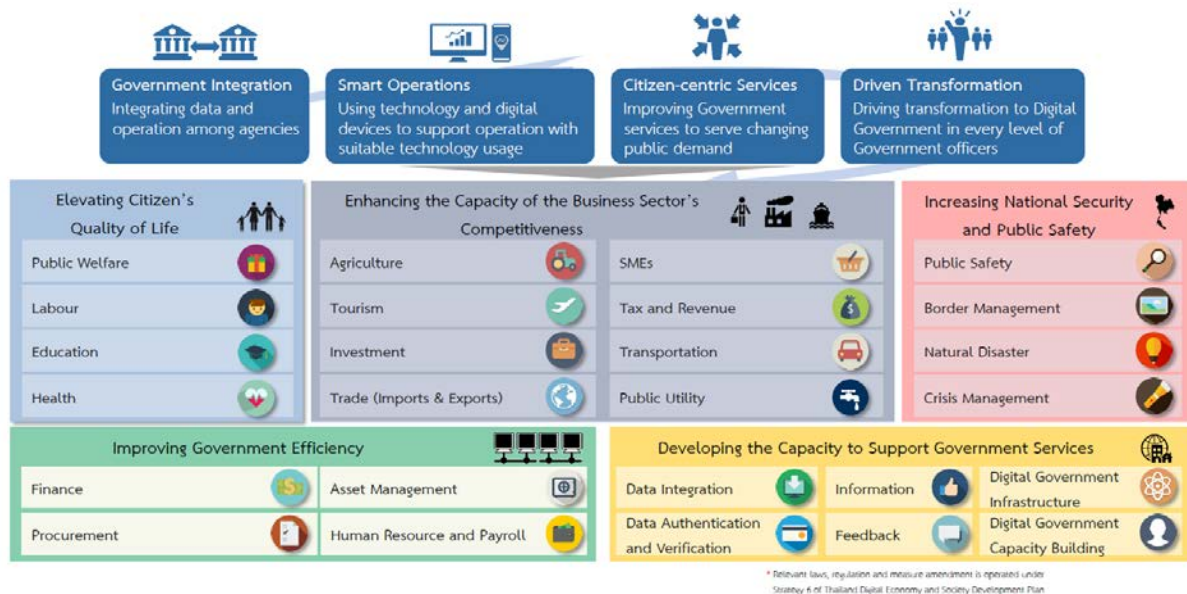
Source: Thiratitayangkul, C. (2019[18]), "Open and digital government", Presentation in the context of the OECD mission to Bangkok, Thailand, 3 April 2019.

Key public sector organisations such as the Office of the Prime Minister (PMO), the DGA, the MDES, the Office of the National Digital Economy and Society Commission (ONDE), and other actors such as the Bank of Thailand, the Stock Exchange of Thailand and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), participated in the elaboration of the Digital Government Development Plans (OECD, 2019[5]).

Yet, public officials expressed the narrow engagement approach in the development of the Digital Government Development Plans, which left aside the views of other public bodies such as the National Innovation Agency and those from specific line ministries and other public sector organisations in charge of delivering sectoral policies (e.g. education). This lack of involvement is a risk in relation to the creation of a shared sense of policy ownership, particularly among those agencies not directly involved or responsible for the digitalisation and digital government agendas.

Also, the OECD did not find substantial evidence indicating the involvement of external actors such as citizens, civil society organisations (CSOs), businesses and academia in the development process of the Digital Government Development Plans. This undermined the possibility of collecting the vision and insights of these actors (who are the main beneficiaries of the Digital Government Development Plans) and of increasing the plans' focus on people and society – praised and sought by the Thai government as part of its open and connected government vision.

The analysis backing this review provides the basis to state that there is an opportunity for Thailand to use the formal engagement of external groups to tap into the value of external and objective expertise as means to inform its policy decisions. In the United Kingdom (UK), the government was accompanied by external expert advice that challenged the leadership of the Government Digital Service (GDS) on its journey towards the digital transformation of the public sector.

For instance, engagement can also help to identify those formalities and public services that should be prioritised for delivery and access through digital and mobile channels and that require streamlining processes on the government side. This evidence also supports the case for further embedding open government approaches in the conception of digitalisation efforts in Thailand. The Thai government should

understand that a digital government is one that is also open to public scrutiny and welcomes external knowledge.

There are some examples at the institutional level that provide good cases of broader engagement efforts that can inspire public sector organisations and the Thai government itself. For instance, the Thai SEC reported consulting both government and non-governmental organisations as part of its efforts to develop and align its institutional strategies with the Digital Government Development Plans and Digital Thailand's goals. These comprised arranging meetings with the MDES, the DGA, the Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA) and the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) but also with external actors such as King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (KMITL), CMKL University, the ASEAN Chief Information Officer (CIO) Association (ACIOA), the Thailand Information Security Association (TISA) and the Bangkok Chapter of the Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA). The outcomes of these discussions informed the SEC's Digital Transformation Strategic Plan, which has been approved by the SEC Board in August 2019.

Monitoring the implementation of the open and connected agenda

A concrete idea of how to implement these goals requires developing actionable objectives and the mechanisms to successfully monitor and evaluate countries' open and digital government reforms. For more comprehensive support to the implementation of the Digital Government Development Plans medium-term (two-three years) roadmap, Thailand could adopt internal and external feedback mechanisms to collect insights from all actors involved or benefitted from the open and connected government agendas. This would envisage regular evaluation of progress by a set of indicators that measure policy development in line with the deployment of mechanisms for this purpose within the public sector.

Currently, measurements are highly driven by international indicators which, on the one hand, can help in driving a national digital government agenda that follows international best practices and international benchmarks, e.g. from OECD countries such as the OURdata Index. However, on the other hand, this leaves aside the need for iterative monitoring controls that can help the Thai government take action or redefine the course of action, even before the end date of each Digital Government Development Plan. It would be convenient to implement measures to monitor developments (such as key performance indicators) in a regular fashion, beyond the three-year milestones set by the Digital Government Development Plans and those for the long term as defined in Digital Thailand.

For instance, in Colombia, the central government put in place different policy measurement instruments such as SINERGIA (a system to monitor the performance of national and territorial entities with respect to their objectives), the Single Management Progress Report Form (FURAG) and the Online Government Index (GEL) as means to monitor digital government developments at the institutional level and "monitor and evaluate the performance of national entities in regard to their progress towards policy-related targets and goals" (OECD, 2017[19]).

There are however some efforts in this regard. The DGA has a specific unit in charge of evaluating and monitoring digital government projects. The Digital Government Development Commission was set up in 2019 under the Digitalisation of Public Administration and Services Delivery Act, B.E. 2562 (2019) to monitor and evaluate the Digital Government Development Plan and related digital government projects. Following the new Digital Government Development Plan (2020-2022), each government agency must now review and submit an agency digitalisation plan for the commission to follow up and help the DGA in consolidating the progress of digital government. On this basis, the DGA can further recommend the adjustment, development and allocation of an integrated annual budget for digital government transformation in the following year.

In Thailand, the vision for the digital government (both medium- and long-term) is clear but ensuring delivery of results will require enabling the flexibility needed to adjust policy measures when needed in the course of the implementation of the vision, reconsider government interventions if needed to target organisational efforts and drive them in a coherent fashion. Monitoring mechanisms can help identify front-runners in terms of digitalisation within the public sector and in ensuring that institutional actions deliver targeted and tangible results for citizens.

With regard to the monitoring of open government initiatives, the OECD *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government* proposes that countries "develop and implement monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms for open government strategies and initiatives" for instance through "fostering a culture of monitoring, evaluation and learning among public officials by increasing their capacity to regularly conduct exercises for these purposes in collaboration with relevant stakeholders" (OECD, 2017[1]). Collecting data on different open government initiatives can help to better understand the challenges related to the implementation of the open government agenda and eventually contributes to better policies. In order to oversee the results, open government policies are delivering while they are implemented, Thailand may consider monitoring the implementation of its open government agenda in a strategic way.

The OPDC could be charged with creating an overarching monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for Thailand's open government agenda. Moreover, due to its role as the co-ordinating entity for open government, it could promote the development of other institutions' frameworks that are linked to the national framework. Following the guidance provided by the OECD *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*, such an M&E framework with different indicators (e.g. process, outputs, outcomes or impact indicators) could be developed in collaboration with a broad array of stakeholders. Box 2.4 provides an overview of the OECD's work on the development of open government indicators.

Box 2.4. The OECD's work on the development of open government indicators

Following the instructions of the OECD *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government* (2017[1]), the OECD Working Party on Open Government is currently leading the development of indicators that will allow for the first-ever holistic and robust cross-country measurement of open government reforms and their impacts.

The work on open government indicators will produce three concrete outputs:

- **The Open Government Dashboards**: These dashboards will contain open government indicators related to the initial stages of open government, namely inputs and processes. Hence, they will focus on existing preconditions for open government in a country, such as laws and governance structures. At the same time, the dashboards will examine the processes that promote a culture of openness, such as a country's communication about open government reforms. The Open Government Dashboards will be available in the third quarter of 2021.

- **The OECD Openness Index**: This set of indicators sheds light on the outputs of open government, i.e. answer the question of how "open" a government effectively is. This contains aspects such as the extent to which a government makes information and data publicly available. The Openness Index will be published over the course of 2022.

- **The Results Indicators**: Lastly, results indicators will measure the results of open government reforms, i.e. both outcomes and impacts. What are the broader effects on the relationship between government and citizens? For example, has citizens' trust in government increased? This work will be released in 2023/24.

Related data collection efforts are twofold. On the one hand, they rely on existing information and data in the form of previous OECD survey results, administrative data collected by countries, survey data from national statistical institutes and other reliable sources. On the other, the work draws on the results of the 2020 OECD Survey on Open Government, a comprehensive questionnaire addressing all provisions of the OECD *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*.

Source: OECD (2020[20]), "Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments", OECD Working Paper, OECD Publishing, Paris; OECD (2017[1]), *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*, http://www.oecd.org/gov/Recommendation-Open-Government-Approved-Council-141217.pdf.

Fostering clearer institutional governance for the effective implementation of the open and digital government agendas

Due to the highly transversal nature of open and digital government reforms and the need to involve a large array of different stakeholders, strong institutional arrangements with clear mandates and co-ordination mechanisms are needed (OECD, 2019[21]).

OECD experience has shown that the right institutional arrangements, understood as the existence and interaction of different stakeholders in the government that have a mandate and/or a role to play in the open or digital government agenda, can facilitate the effective and efficient horizontal and vertical co-ordination of open and digital government reforms and can ensure that implementation efforts "are aligned with and contribute to all relevant socio-economic objectives" (OECD, 2017[1]). However, the impact of open and digital government initiatives does not only rely on the establishment of an adequate institutional framework.

In order to become the drivers of broader policy agendas, institutions also need high-level political leadership. Only through political support can public sector efforts and good governance practices be effectively promoted and sustained. In Thailand, as in many OECD countries, such political commitment also needs to align with the long-term policy ambitions of the government, including those stated in the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2036). Moreover, leadership is also needed from stakeholders such as CSOs, parliamentarians, political parties and younger generations of decision makers as a means to move towards co-responsibility in the delivery of policy results.

High-level leadership is essential to ensure that the open and connected government agenda permeates across the public sector. The restructuration of the Thai government following the elections in March 2019 provided an opportunity in this regard. The OPDC was appointed co-ordinator for good governance, which placed this body as one of the leading public sector organisations in the area of digital government and eventually in the area of open government, and as a key player overseeing the further implementation and coherence of the open and connected agenda with other policies.

The Thai government and the OPDC provide implementation support focused on how open and digital government drives the country's progress in creating Government 4.0 to line ministries and government agencies. Based on the Strategy on Public Sector Rebalancing and Development, the OPDC is encouraging public institutions to steer public digital innovation and involve the public and stakeholders in developing a more open and participatory government administration.

During the peer review mission to Bangkok, the OECD Secretariat and peer reviewers witnessed that multiple public sector agencies have a strategic role regarding digitalisation and digital government, and are responsible for addressing the underlying challenges in that regard. The responsibilities and roles in relation to open government are not as clear cut in light of the lack of an overarching policy framework, as

discussed in the previous section. Key leading public sector organisations in relation to digital government are presented in Box 2.5.

Box 2.5. Key players for open and digital government, digitalisation and innovation in Thailand

Office of the Public Sector Development Commission (OPDC)

The OPDC is one of the departments under the PMO to whom it directly reports. It is the main body for public administration development and is responsible for supporting the Public Sector Development Commission (PDO) through the provision of recommendations. Pursuant to Order No. 6/2559 (2016) of the PDO, the OPDC oversees the design and implementation of the government's policy on participatory government. This gives the OPDC the mandate and lead role for promoting open government across the government and co-ordinating with other ministries, secretariats and other public and non-public entities.

Sub-Committee on Participatory Public Administration

Formed by the OPDC, the committee consists of civil society representatives who advise the government on the open government agenda and propose open government initiatives related to stakeholder participation. The committee is tasked with assessing the status of Thailand's open government reforms and bringing the country closer to OGP membership.

Ministry of Digital Economy and Society (MDES)

The MDES is responsible for the planning and implementation of the Digital Economy and Society Development Plan. It promotes and supports e-transactions and e-commerce in Thailand, covering policy, law, standards, security and technology innovation. The MDES has as part of its structure:

- Four government agencies and supervisory bodies: the Office of the Permanent Secretary (OPS), the Office of National Digital Economy and Society Commission (ONDE), the National Statistical Office (NSO) and the Thai Meteorological Department.
- Two public sector organisations: the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) and the Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA).
- Three public companies in telecommunications and ports.

Among the above, the ONDE, established in September 2016, on the one hand manages and enhances the co-operation and integration of Thailand's Digital Economy and Society Development Plan. The MDES is the secretary of the commission with three other committees. The DEPA, on the other, was established in January 2017 to promote and support the digital and innovation industry and adoption of digital technology.

Additionally, the ETDA acts as secretary for the Electronic Transactions Commission which works on developing the strategy and implementation of tools and platforms for business digital transactions and e-commerce. It sets standards for: i) authentication; ii) electronic transactions; iii) eID; iv) e-payments in the banking sector; v) exchange of data in the financial sector; and vi) eSignature.

Digital Government Development Agency (DGA)

The DGA used to be under the MDES but, since 2018, moved to the PMO to give more leverage to facilitate digital government policies. In the same year, the DGA changed from the EGA. It answers to the prime minister and provides technical advice and support to public sector organisations in the design and implementation of their digital government initiatives. This includes the development of digital and data tools and infrastructure as explained in the chapters that will follow.

> **National Innovation Agency (NIA)**
>
> The NIA was created in 2003 and comes under the Ministry of Science of Technology. It is in charge of promoting digital business and social innovation in Thailand in collaboration with actors from the private, public and social sectors in the country. For this purpose, the NIA follows an "innovation diplomacy" approach which aims at increasing collaboration among government innovation offices worldwide, potential investors and the start-up ecosystem in Thailand (NIA, n.d.[22]). The agency has established a set of guidelines for the development of innovative projects with the goal of transforming supply chains into value chains and encouraging national competitiveness.
>
> **National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA)**
>
> The NSTDA is a government agency established to promote the development of science and technology in Thailand under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI). One of the NSTDA sub-agencies is the National Electronics and Computer Technology Centre (NECTEC). The NECTEC provides technical support for government agencies and private sectors in the development of big data and open data platforms in supporting digital government initiatives.
>
> Source: Based on information collected during the OECD mission to Bangkok (April, 2019).

Thailand's institutional arrangements for the implementation an open and digital government

Box 2.5 shows that Thailand's institutional governance for open and digital government is complex and challenging, in particular in relation to the co-ordination and implementation of the digital government agenda. Responsibilities are clear but the real challenges are at the implementation level, as expressed by public officials during the OECD's peer review mission to Bangkok. Public officials also expressed concerns in terms of the highly bureaucratic government structure and the lack of collaboration among public sector organisations.

It is clear that public sector organisations are aware of the importance of developing and implementing digital government initiatives to create public services and policies that focus on the citizen but there is a lack of clarity in terms of how institutional plans (if available) are aligned – or will be aligned – with central development plans in the short term. This also responds to the lack of clarity among public sector organisations, as expressed during the OECD peer review mission to Bangkok, in relation to what the Digital Economy and Society Development Plan and the Digital Government Development Plans mean in terms of implementation, which might be evidence of the lack of horizontal collaboration at a more operational level. Also, notably, some public sector organisations with strong sectoral responsibilities but not providing services to citizens did not self-identify as having a role in the digital government agenda.

There are some cases of ministries or other public sector organisations which have taken immediate action to align their institutional agendas to the central open and connected government agenda but this approach is not widespread. For instance, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) developed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with eight public sector organisations for further co-ordination and implementation. Other examples include those of the Ministries of Justice, Health and Commerce and their digital action plans.

The abovementioned cases also illustrate how commitment and leadership at the institutional level are fundamental to apply digital and open connected approaches to sectoral and state policies. For instance, the SEC's Secretary-General appointed a Head of the Office of Digital Transformation in June 2019 and

two sub-committees supporting the SEC's digital strategy: the Capital Market Subcommittee and the Digital Strategy Steering Subcommittee (OECD, 2019[5]).

Yet, these cases are the exception and not the rule, as evidence from the OECD mission to Bangkok and from the survey pointed to limited digital leadership at the institutional level, beyond those agencies directly involved in the digitalisation and digital government agendas. For instance, the Office of the Civil Service Commission (OCSC) (in charge of public employment policies) has a CIO position which was established more than a decade ago. The responsibilities of the OCSC CIO also cover that of a Chief Technology Officer (CTO) and data stewardship (e.g. Chief Data Officer or CDO). But it is not clear however if such a role has evolved in line with global digital transformation.

As a result of the previous scenario, peers expressed that ensuring the availability of digital and open government champions in public sector organisations is fundamental to deliver citizen-centred services and policies and increase the chance of success of wider government digital transformation objectives. As discussed in Chapter 4, the OCSC is taking action in this regard as part of its efforts to modernise and upskill the public sector workforce in Thailand.

The DGA could help other departments and agencies to find and build digital leadership for their own organisations, ensuring that they have officials with the relevant digital experience in place and the necessary leadership skills to help in advancing digital government at the institutional level. In the UK, these leaders formed a network to help further digital transformation in government. Thailand could learn from this approach as, currently, internal networks for public officials to gain knowledge or learn from best practices do not exist.

In the case of open government, an effective institutional framework is still under development. While the OPDC is responsible for promoting the establishment of policies and mechanisms that ensure citizen participation in government, it does not yet have a clearly defined mandate for open government reforms beyond citizen participation, which is rooted in a firm legal basis. In order to further streamline and clarify responsibilities for all initiatives related to open government, Thailand could consider providing the OPDC with the mandate to act as the principal institution in charge of open government while stressing its key role as a driver of the open and connected government agenda.

OECD evidence shows that the existence of a single institution in charge of open government facilitates the mainstreaming of open government reforms, contributes to establishing more coherence in their implementation and supports the evaluation of impact (Figure 2.5). Such an office can moreover support public officials in addressing challenges and ensuring accountability regarding the result and impact of the open government agenda. It can also provide advice, capacity-building support, guidance, leadership and new impetus for ministries' open government initiatives.

The majority of OECD countries (77%) have established a dedicated office that leads the open government agenda and is responsible for institutional co-ordination (Figure 2.6) (OECD, 2016[11]). As in the case of Thailand, the reforms on open government are driven by an institution that is either located in the office of the head of government like the OPDC, in the cabinet office/chancellery/council of ministers or an equivalent institution (Figure 2.6) in 62% of OECD countries (OECD, 2016[11]).

Locating the office in charge of open government in the centre of government (CoG) as in the case of the OPDC provides several benefits. The CoG can facilitate the link between open and connected government strategies and initiatives and broader national objectives, including development objectives such as the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The location of the DGA within the PMO also provides an ideal scenario to further capitalise on policy synergies using the institutional arrangement at hand.

Figure 2.5. Responsibilities of offices in charge of open government
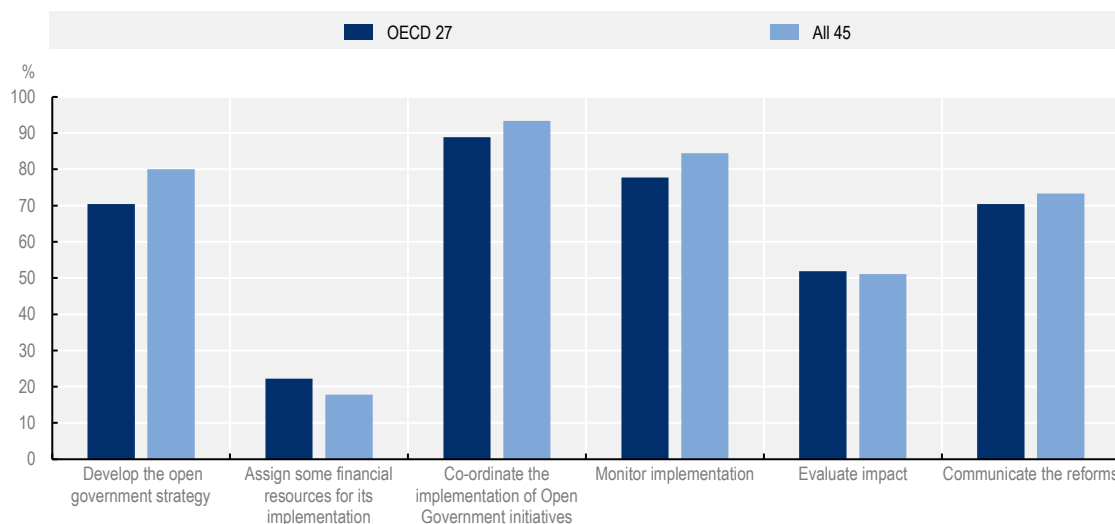
Note: All 45 countries refer to the number of countries that answered this question in the 2015-2016 OECD Survey on Open Government Co-ordination (2015[23]).
Source: OECD (2016[11]), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en.

Figure 2.6. Existence and location of a dedicated office responsible for the horizontal co-ordination of open government initiatives in OECD countries
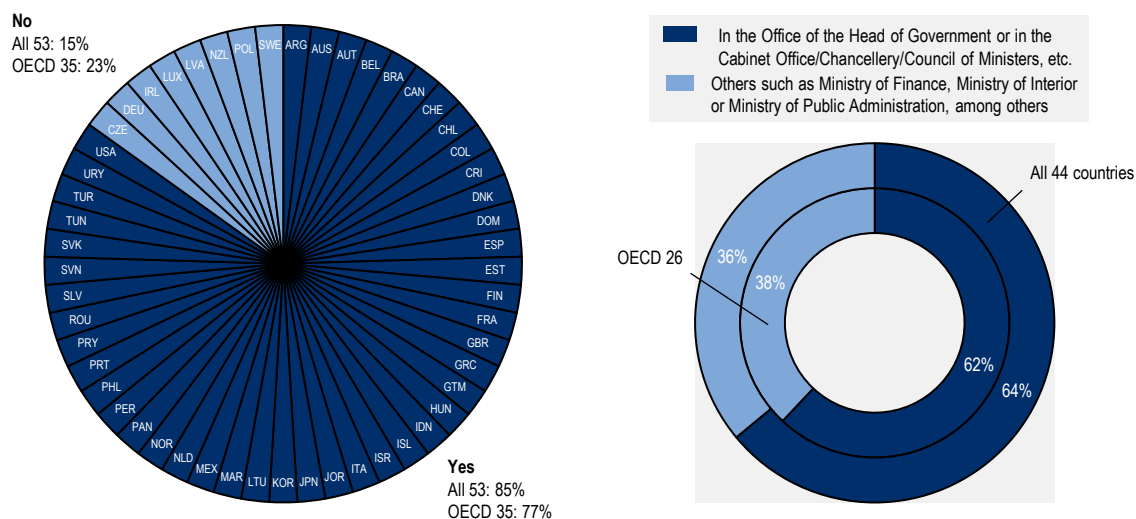
Note: All 53 countries refer to the number of participating countries in the 2015-16 OECD Survey on Open Government Co-ordination (2015[23]). Only those countries (44 of the 53) that have an office were asked about its location.
Source: OECD (2016[11]), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en.

Through their institutional anchorage in the CoG, the OPDC and DGA can:

- Connect open and digital government initiatives across government (including different sectors, levels of government and non-state actors) in order to foster a shared vision.
- Promote good practices in the area of open and digital government – as well as institutional champions – across government and among citizens.

- Strengthen the strategic use of performance data across the public sector, in order to support M&E of the impacts of open and digital government strategies and initiatives (adapted from OECD (2016[11])).

Establishing clearer co-ordination and collaboration mechanisms

Results from the survey administered for the purpose of this review confirmed that most public sector organisations acknowledge the leadership of the MDES, OPDC and DGA with regard to the digital and open government agenda (OECD, 2019[5]). However, collaboration issues among leading bodies and among public sector organisations in general were one of the most prevalent concerns during the OECD's peer review mission to Thailand. This is also reflected in the response to the OECD questionnaire.

It seems that co-ordination happens at a high level but is not systematic (beyond specific policy sectors) which would enable to ensure coherent implementation and the delivery of joint policy goals in the long term. For instance, the MDES has a solid management mechanism to steer Thailand's Digital Economy and Society Development Plan structured in three different work chapters: i) commissioning; ii) policy funding; iii) co-ordination.

- The first (commissioning) sets the policy direction and key initiatives to advance Thailand's digital economy and society development and involves the Digital Development for Economy and Society Commission, the Digital Infrastructure Committee and the Digital Economy and Society Promotion and Development Committee, with the prime minister as the chairperson.
- The second (policy funding) is directed by the Management Committee of the Digital Economy and Society Development Fund, which is chaired by the deputy prime minister and administers the funds in those areas.
- The third (co-ordination) focuses on co-ordinating the different public bodies involved in the implementation of the Digital Economy and Society Development Plan, led by the Digital Committee for National Economy and Society Development.

Another example is that of the National Science Technology and Innovation Policy Committee (NSTIC) chaired by the prime minister and under the supervision of the National Science Technology and Innovation Policy Office (NSTIP). The NSTIP manages the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategic Plan and issues policy recommendations to enhance Thailand's competitiveness and socio-economic sustainability. It works together with the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) (the national economic planning agency of Thailand) under the PMO. The NESDC advocates for open science and adheres to the OECD Principles and Guidelines for Access to Research Data from Public Funding.

However, in Thailand, policy challenges are not as significant in terms of the co-ordination of specific policy agendas, as confirmed by results from the survey the OECD conducted for this review (2019[5]). In general terms, survey data indicates that public sector organisations agree on the relatively good co-ordination achieved so far to advance the digital government policy in Thailand. It was instead difficult to assess how these leading organisations collaborated and worked together.

Public officials also underlined overlaps in terms of implementation and the lack of integration across different digital plans at the institutional level (OECD, 2019[5]). For instance, the ONDE's remit included digital transformation at a national level as well as an intelligence and policy design unit. But it was unclear how it interacted with other government agencies or how it influenced them. Indeed, evidence from the survey was dispersed in relation to public officials' perception of the current state co-operation and collaboration among public sector organisations at a more hands-on level (Figure 2.7). During the OECD mission to Bangkok, peers clearly expressed that, alongside the civil service reform that is currently underway, the space for cross-government collaborative networks could be promoted to improve knowledge sharing across government.

Figure 2.7. Co-ordination vs. collaboration in the context of the digital government policy in Thailand

Perception from selected public sector organisations
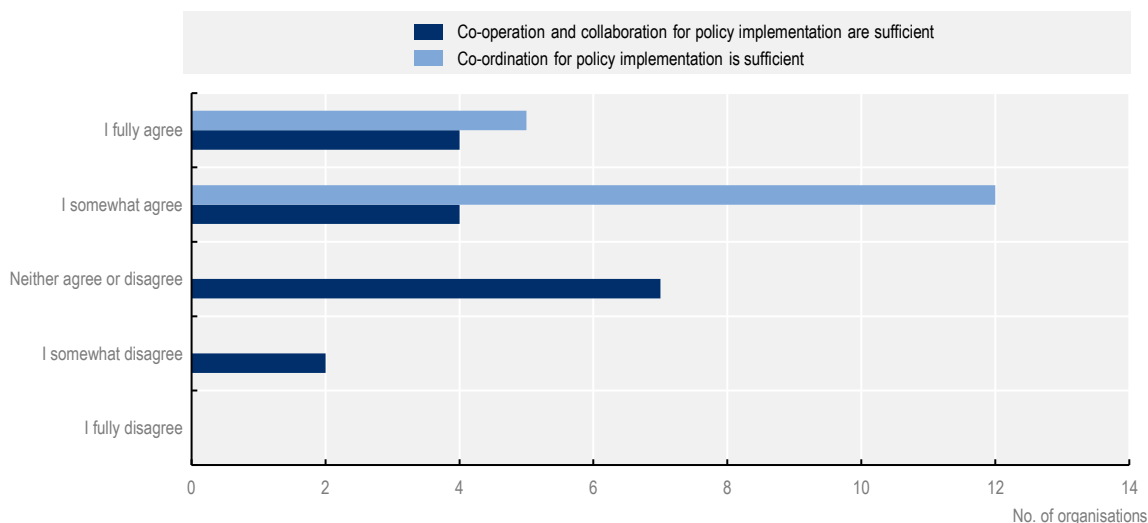
Note: Public sector organisations responding to the following questions: "Question 21. Respond to the following statement: I believe that the current level of inter-institutional co-ordination for policy implementation is sufficient to advance the digital government policy in Thailand"; and "Question 22. Respond to the following statement: I believe that the current level of inter-institutional co-operation and collaboration for policy implementation is sufficient to advance the digital government policy in Thailand".

Source: Questionnaire for public sector organisations - Digital government: Questions 21 and 22 in OECD (2019[5]), "OECD Survey on Open and Connected Government in Thailand", OECD, Paris.

In light of the abovementioned evidence, challenges are mostly related to collaborative leadership at all levels (the sense of the lack of collaboration among leading bodies and public sector organisations) and the need to translate clustered plans and discussions into coherent action.

Some opportunities could be further capitalised on to help in achieving greater collaboration at the operational level. For instance, the OPDC is transiting its role from that of a rule-maker to a mentor and government laboratory for digital policies. This lies in the OPDC's willingness to overcome the siloed thinking and work culture across the public sector in order to connect actors, knowledge and initiatives. For instance, the OPDC launched the Government Innovation Lab in 2018 with the purpose of enabling a space for digital innovation and promote an open culture in the public sector. However, the potential role of the DGA as a hub for further inter-institutional collaboration in the context of digital government should also not be ignored in this regard.

In terms of open government, the OECD survey for this review finds that the three main challenges the OPDC experiences with the co-ordination of open government policies and initiatives relate to a "lack of or insufficient incentives to collaborate (career, financial, etc.) among other government institutions", a "lack of or inadequate strategic direction" and a "lack of or insufficient political will/leadership" (OECD, 2019[5]). Similar challenges (Figure 2.8) were also mentioned by open government co-ordinating bodies in countries in 2016 (OECD, 2016[11]).

The horizontal co-ordination of open government initiatives can take place at different levels and through various mechanisms such as ad hoc institutional structures and sector, project or ministerial level arrangements. Almost half of the countries (49%) surveyed for the 2016 OECD publication *Open Government – The Global Context and the Way Forward* (OECD, 2016[11]) reported the creation of an ad hoc mechanism such as an Open Government Committee, which consists of different stakeholders. In

the majority of cases (77% of respondent countries and 58% in OECD countries), the committee includes NGOs, which have traditionally played a central role in advancing the open government agenda. In addition, in many countries, local governments, private sector representatives, independent institutions, academics, trade unions and the judiciary are members of such a mixed co-ordination mechanism (Figure 2.9).

Figure 2.8. Challenges in co-ordinating open government initiatives
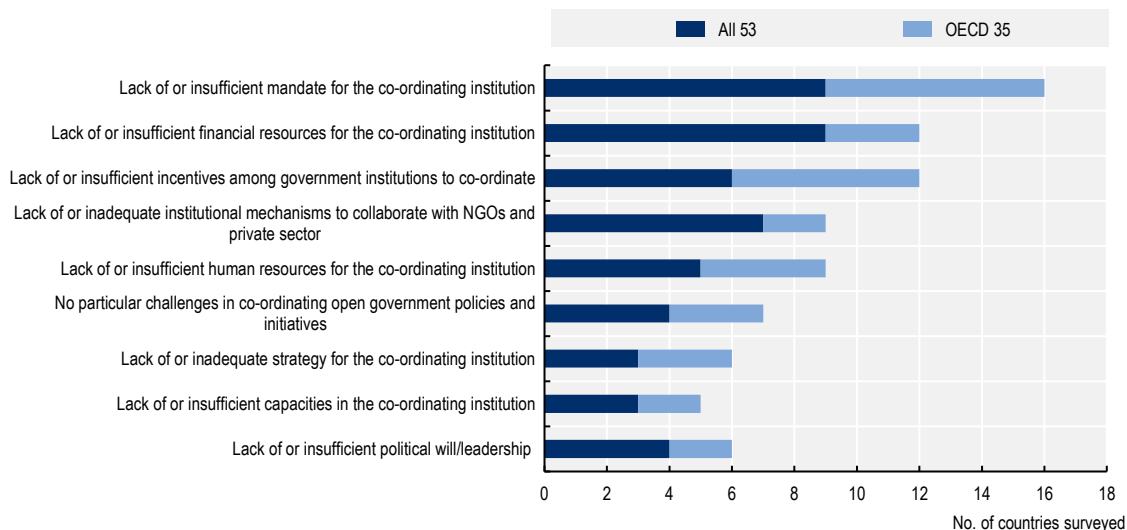
Note: NGO: non-governmental organisation. This graph illustrates the main challenges in co-ordinating open government initiatives of countries. All 53 countries refer to the number of participating countries in the 2015-16 OECD Survey on Open Government Co-ordination (2015[23]). Source: OECD (2016[11]), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en.

Figure 2.9. Members of the horizontal co-ordination mechanism on open government
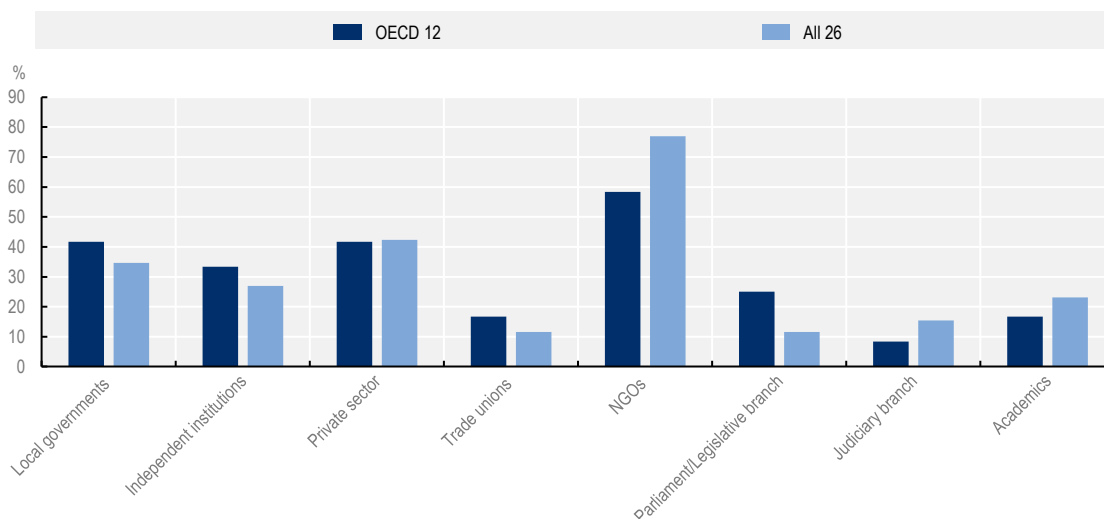
Note: Only countries responding that co-ordination happens through the creation of an ad hoc mechanism such as an Open Government Committee were asked this question.
Source: OECD (2016[11]), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en.

OECD experience shows that the formal creation of a mechanism such as an institutionalised Open Government Steering Committee (OGSC) can support co-ordination of open government initiatives across government, can generate additional visibility and can help foster continuity of initiatives and strategies. A steering committee could thus help the government to meet the challenges of a "lack of or insufficient co-ordination among main public stakeholders" and "insufficient communication/awareness of the benefits of open government reforms among public officials", which were reported to be among the five most significant obstacles for open government in Thailand (OECD, 2019[5]). Moreover, a permanent OGSC could function as a space to co-design the suggested National Open Government Strategy (NOGS), as discussed in the section "Developing an integrated policy framework for open government in Thailand".

The OGSC could then also follow up on the high-level commitments included in a national strategy and help translate the vision into concrete actions both in general as well as for thematic areas (e.g. access to public information, stakeholder participation or the SDGs, etc.). Box 2.6 provides some examples of co-ordination mechanisms for open government in Canada, Mexico and the UK.

In order to also ensure co-ordination of open government across levels of government, the OGSC could envisage organising regular open state meetings. The OECD defines an open state as the moment "when all public institutions of the executive, parliament and the judiciary, independent public institutions and all levels of government join forces and collaborate with civil society, academia, the media and the private sector to design and implement a reform agenda to make public governance more transparent, accountable and participatory" (OECD, 2017[1]). Following the concept of an open state, some countries have progressively started to develop independent "open judiciary", "open parliament" and "open subnational government" strategies and related initiatives (OECD, 2019[24]). Regular open state meetings could thus represent a space for continued exchange of good practices and experiences (e.g. on access to information, citizen participation, etc.) between branches of power, independent public institutions and subnational levels of government.

Box 2.6. Co-ordinating mechanisms for open government in Canada, Mexico and the UK

Canada

In Canada, open government initiatives are co-ordinated through the interdepartmental OGSC. The OGSC is an Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM)-level body, chaired by a Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS), the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of Canada. The OGSC meets on an as-needed basis but as frequently as quarterly. The TBS is in the process of developing a Director-General body (one level below Assistant Deputy Minister) to support the OGSC as Directors-General would be the key executive leads for issues within the government of Canada. In addition to these two bodies, the President of the Treasury Board (the minister for the TBS) is advised by the Advisory Panel on Open Government.

This panel consists of experts from civil society, business, academia, including independent commentators from Canada and abroad. The panel advises the president on how to best harness open government opportunities for innovation and knowledge sharing and explore how federal organisations can do an even better job of consulting Canadians by making effective use of new tools like social media. The panel meets roughly once per year. Federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments also collaborate on open data issues through the Open Data Canada Subcommittee. This working group focuses on principles, standards, licensing, and outreach and engagement issues relevant to open data in Canada and thus contributes to an enabling environment for open government in Canada.

> **Mexico**
>
> Mexico created a co-ordinating committee that is integrated into the Presidency of the Republic Committee, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Public Administration and the departments and agencies of the federal government that are responsible for the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Action Plan commitments. This committee is chaired by the Office of the President of the Republic and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support the international agenda of the OGP and the Secretariat of Public Service to promote the national agenda.
>
> On the one hand, it has an inward-looking component in which it facilitates regular meetings and constant communication among the officials involved. It also organises meetings in which officials responsible for the open government commitments as well as working meetings are held to ensure the proper implementation of the commitments. On the other, the committee has a cross-cutting component to participate in the Technical Tripartite Secretariat (*Secretariado Técnico Tripartita*), which is composed of the Co-ordinator of Civil Society, the Federal Institute for Access to Information and Data Protection (*Instituto Nacional de Transparencia, Accesso a la Información y Datos Personales*, or INAI) and the Government of the Republic and it is the highest decision-making organ of the alliance in Mexico.
>
> **United Kingdom**
>
> In the UK, the Open Government Network (the Network) is a self-formed group of civil society organisations that are interested in working with the government on OGP commitments. The Network is co-ordinated by the British think-tank Involve and meets regularly with the cabinet office to co-ordinate the development and implementation of the UK's OGP National Action Plan (NAP). At a more senior level, the Network has selected a group of individuals to act as a steering committee for the Network, meeting the minister for the cabinet office and senior cabinet office officials to raise issues and agree and drive forward priorities. In addition, the government has a number of mechanisms in place to co-ordinate input to the development of the next NAP. They have established a group of theme leads (from both civil society and government) who are working together to agree on a strategy for their theme and the desired commitments. The UK also has a network of departmental leads that are responsible for co-ordinating their respective department's input to the NAP and on the ongoing implementation process. At the level of specific commitments, there are various mechanisms in place to bring together relevant stakeholders to agree and implement commitments around a common theme as departments determine their own arrangements in consultation with interested civil society organisations.
>
> Source: OECD (2016[111]), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en; Country responses to OECD (2015[23]), "OECD Survey on Open Government Co-ordination and Citizen Participation in the Policy Cycle", OECD, Paris.

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Note

1 Questionnaire for public sector organisations: Digital government: Question 3.

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