

5 The Uptake of Digital Government Tools and the Development of User-driven Digital Services in the Czech Republic

This chapter analyses the governance of digital government in the Czech Republic. It focuses on two facets of the OECD Framework on the Governance of Digital Government – Facet 2: Institutional models and Facet 3: Policy levers. The first section assesses the formal and informal institutional arrangements that would enable the Czech government to provide the necessary leadership and secure co-ordination and collaboration across the public sector. The second section discusses policy levers that can help strengthen the institutional capacities to better design and deliver quality services to users. The last section explores policy recommendations for the Czech Republic for strengthening its governance of digital government to design and deliver better services and promote public sector innovation.

Introduction

In today's geopolitical climate, governments are expected to be resilient, responsive and agile to mitigate unexpected challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the undeniable value of the strategic use of digital technologies and data when responding to these challenges. Over the past two years, governments have prioritised digital transformation in their national agendas. Governments need to continue their efforts and sustain advancements in the digital transformation of the public sector.

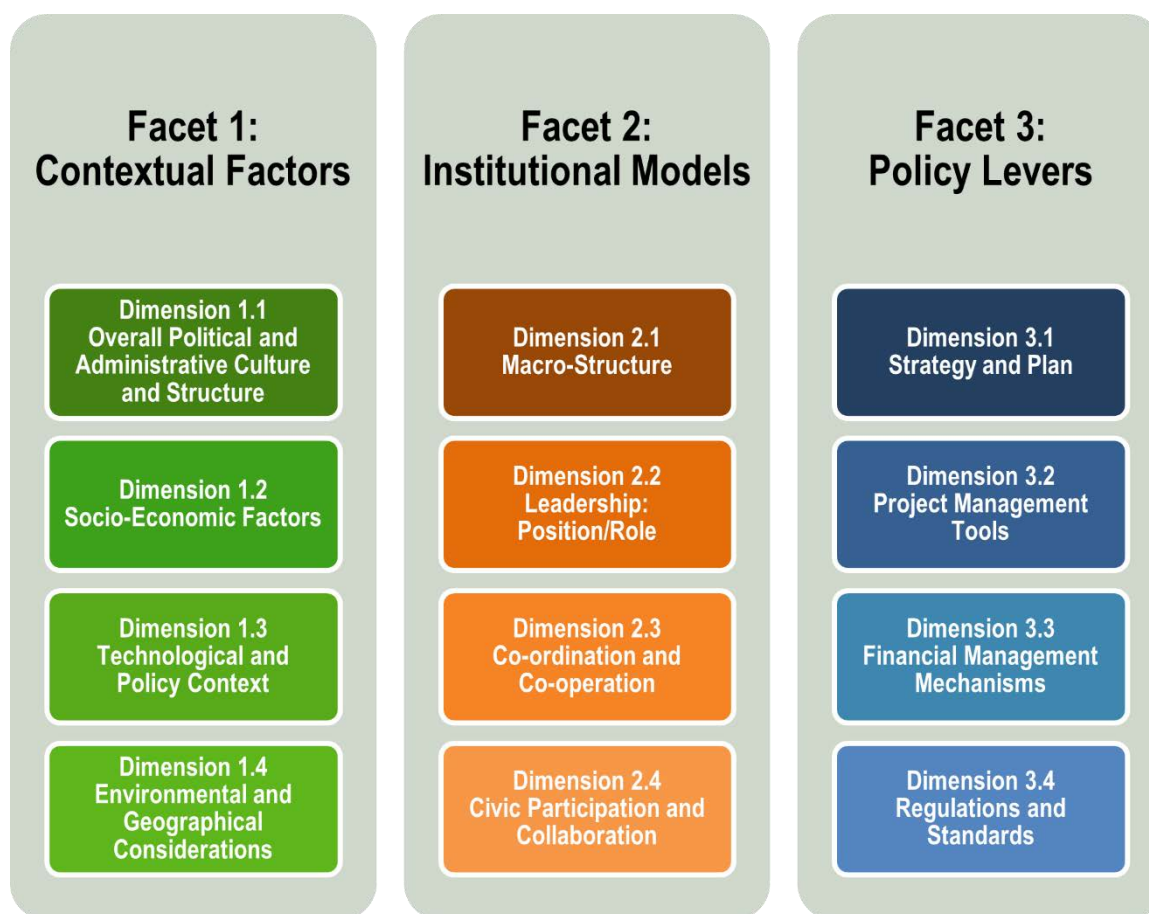
Robust governance is key in navigating the complexity of the digital transformation to drive change across the public sector. With such governance, governments can envision and enable a holistic digital transformation, fostering a collaborative and inclusive digital ecosystem across the public sector. The results of the OECD Digital Government Index 2019 highlight the importance of solid governance of governments to become digitally mature (OECD, 2020^[1]). Such governance allows governments to move away from thinking in silos towards a strategic system-thinking approach, providing the foundation for designing and delivering user-driven public services.

In line with the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies (OECD, 2014^[2]), the OECD Working Party of Senior Digital Government Officials (E-Leaders) developed the *E-Leaders Handbook on the Governance of Digital Government* (OECD, 2021^[3]), building on the insights, knowledge and good practices of OECD member and partner countries. The handbook presents the OECD Framework on the Governance of Digital Government, which supports governments in establishing effective governance frameworks and institutional capacities towards digital maturity.

The OECD Framework on the Governance of Digital Government introduces three critical governance facets (Figure 5.1):

1. **Contextual factors** defines country-specific characteristics – political, administrative, socio-economical, technological, policy and geographical – to be considered when designing policies to ensure a human-centred, inclusive and sustainable digital transformation of the public sector.
2. **Institutional models** presents different institutional set-ups, approaches, arrangements and mechanisms within the public sector and digital ecosystem, which direct the design and implementation of digital government policies in a sustainable manner.
3. **Policy levers** enumerates policy instruments that support governments to ensure a sound and coherent digital transformation of the public sector.

Figure 5.1. The OECD Framework on the Governance of Digital Government



Source: OECD (2021^[3]), *The E-Leaders Handbook on the Governance of Digital Government*

This chapter analyses the governance of digital government in the Czech Republic. It focuses on two facets of the governance framework – Facet 2: Institutional models and Facet 3: Policy levers (see Figure 5.1). The first section assesses the formal and informal institutional arrangements that would enable the Czech government to provide the necessary leadership and secure co-ordination and collaboration to promote innovation, efficiency, effectiveness and trustworthiness across the public sector. The second section discusses policy levers, soft or hard policy instruments, that can help strengthen institutional capacities to better design and deliver inclusive, sustainable and quality services to its users. The last section explores policy recommendations for the Czech Republic on strengthening its governance for digital government to design and deliver better services for its users and promote public sector innovation.

Governance to lead the digital transformation and public sector innovation

Snapshot of digital government in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic has invested significant efforts in transforming the economy, society and public sector through the whole-of-government strategic programme, Digital Czech Republic Programme. Launched in 2018 and updated annually with the accompanying implementation plans, the programme contains three interconnected pillars: 1) Czech Republic in Digital Europe; 2) Information Strategy of the Czech Republic; and 3) Digital Economy and Society (European Commission, 2022^[4]). In line with the targets and objectives

for 2030 of the European Commission’s Digital Decade policy programme, the Czech Republic plans to broaden the scope of the programme, including the focused pillar on education and digital skills.

The first pillar, “Czech Republic in Digital Europe”, is led by the Office of the Government. It aims to promote a whole-of-government approach to the digital agenda at the European Union (EU) level and ensure compliance with EU regulations. The second pillar, “Information Strategy of the Czech Republic”, is led by the Office of Chief Architect of eGovernment of the Ministry of the Interior¹. It focuses on “e-government” of the Czech Republic. Based on Act No. 365/2000 Coll., the strategy sets out the national agenda for establishing and operating public administration information systems. The third pillar, “Digital Economy and Society”, strives to maximise societal and economic opportunities for digital transformation across the country while minimising possible negative impacts. This cross-cutting strategy is largely led and co-ordinated by the Ministry of Industry and Trade. All three pillars are co-led by the Government Council of Information Society (RVIS).

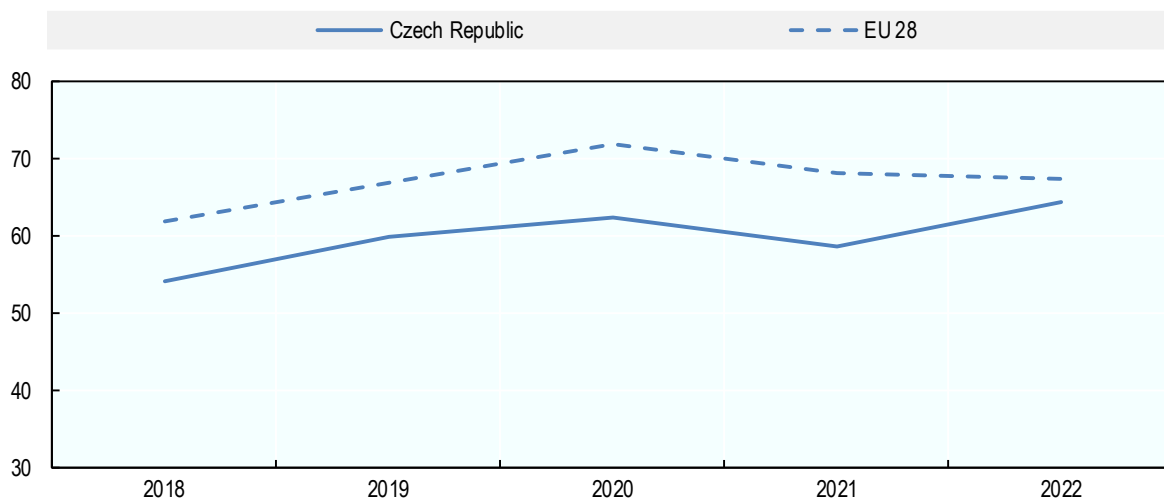
Despite the ambitious plan, progress has been slow over the past few years. The country still lags behind its European peers. In the European Commission’s Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), the Czech Republic has remained under the EU average for the past four years (Table 5.1). In the area of digital public services, the Czech Republic has gradually improved, narrowing the gap with the EU average. The results of 2022 DESI show that the percentage of e-government users grew 12% from 64% to 76% in one year. Nevertheless, there are still opportunities to improve public service design and delivery (Figure 5.2) (European Commission, 2022^[5]).

Table 5.1. Digital Economy and Society Index 2019-2022: Czech Republic

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Average of European Union countries	52.5	52.6	50.7	52.3
Czech Republic	50.0	50.8	47.4	49.1

Source: European Commission (2022^[5]), *Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2022 - Czechia*

Figure 5.2. Digital Economy and Society Index Digital Public Service 2018-2022: Czech Republic



Source: European Commission (2022^[5]), *Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2022 - Czechia*

In January 2022, the new government of Petr Fiala approved the national programme, which includes the digitalisation of the public sector as one of its main priorities. The programme envisions a momentous change to the governance of digital government in the Czech Republic that can drive the digital transformation across all central government bodies. The newly appointed deputy prime minister for digitalisation announced a plan to establish the Digital Information Agency (DIA) to drive the digital transformation of central and local governments in close co-ordination with the Cabinet of Deputy Prime Minister for Digitalisation and the RVIS (Government of the Czech Republic, 2022^[6]).

Furthermore, under the Digital Czech Republic Programme, the government continues to prioritise and implement key digital initiatives to facilitate such a transformation (European Commission, 2022^[4]). For instance, the Czech Republic plans to complete the implementation of the Act on the Right to Digital Services, the “Digital Constitution” that will give all citizens the right to access public sector services digitally by 2025. The government created various digital services in an agile, yet unconventional, manner during the COVID-19 pandemic, and is currently trying to secure continuity for these services.

The Czech Republic’s Recovery and Resilience Plan also outlines support for the digital transition of society. It plans to improve connectivity across the country and enhance the digital skills of society. In addition, it aims to facilitate the digital transformation of the public sector, and to strengthen cybersecurity (European Commission, 2022^[7]).

Overall, the Czech Republic is well-positioned to strive towards greater digital government maturity with a whole-of-government strategy supported by the highest political leadership. In addition, the “Digital Constitution” provides a solid legal ground for the government to facilitate the ongoing efforts in digitalising the public sector and delivering services for the digital age. Nonetheless, to ensure the coherent and sustainable implementation of such an ambitious plan across the public sector to bring impact, it is critical for the Czech Republic to enact the foreseen changes to consolidate the governance of digital government and equip the public sector with key policy levers to design and deliver public services to all users.

Leading the Czech digital government to maturity

The complexity of digital transformation in the public sector requires an organisation-in-charge that can steer a national digital government agenda in a coherent and sustainable manner through internal and external changes. Taking into consideration the national context, the organisation-in-charge needs to be placed where it can incorporate the digital government strategy across the public sector comprehensively with the necessary political support.

Although approaches to the institutional structure vary from one country to the other, the OECD Digital Government Index 2019 revealed that all 33 participating countries have an organisation that leads and co-ordinates decisions on digital government at the central level of government (OECD, 2020^[1]). Some countries locate the organisation-in-charge within the centre of government (e.g. Chile, France, the Republic of Türkiye and the United Kingdom), while others place it in a line ministry (e.g. Estonia, Greece and Luxembourg) or under a co-ordinating ministry, such as the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Public Administration (e.g. Denmark, Korea, Portugal and Sweden) (OECD, 2021^[3]).

The organisation-in-charge also needs to have well-defined co-ordination, advisory and decision-making responsibilities (Box 5.1). It needs to be empowered to bring together and manage the relations of different stakeholders for digital government policies, provide advice, and take decisions that can bring the whole-of-government to digital government maturity (OECD, 2021^[3]).

Box 5.1. Roles and responsibilities of the organisation-in-charge

Co-ordination responsibilities include the horizontal and vertical co-ordination of the development of the national digital government strategy, with other public sector organisations on its implementation and with local governments to align the development of digital government projects with the objectives of the national digital government strategy.

Advisory responsibilities include the provision of counsel and guidance on the development of the national digital government strategy; the monitoring of its implementation; the support of the development and implementation of digital government strategies at an organisational level; the development of technical guidelines for ICT/digital architecture; and horizontal co-ordination among public sector organisations.

Decision-making responsibilities include the powers and duties to take important decisions with considerable accountability across the government, including the prioritisation and approval of ICT/digital government project investments; *ex ante* revisions, evaluation and external reviews of ICT/digital government projects; the provision of financial support for developing and implementing ICT/digital government projects.

Source: OECD (2021^[3]), *The E-Leaders Handbook on the Governance of Digital Government*

Until recently, in the Czech Republic, the role and responsibilities of the organisation-in-charge of digital government were mainly shared between the Cabinet of Deputy Prime Minister for Digitalisation and the Ministry of the Interior. Inaugurated in January 2022, the Cabinet of Deputy Prime Minister for Digitalisation introduced a vision to transform the governance of digital government. It has started to align all ongoing initiatives on digital transformation. The Ministry of the Interior has been the central government authority governing the central information systems and shared services for the public sector, including the citizen portal, gov.cz, the Registry of Rights and Responsibilities (of public administrations) and electronic identification. The ministry was also in charge of developing and enforcing digital government-related legislation and policies, and translating legislation into government processes. Furthermore, each line ministry has led and held responsibility for implementing its sectoral digital strategy within the framework of the Digital Czech Republic Programme.

In efforts to reinforce the governance of digital government, the Czech Republic decided to establish a new organisation, the DIA, to drive the digital transformation of the public sector. On 1 January 2023, Amendment No. 471/2022 (§2a) to the Right to Digital Services Act No. 12/2022 of the Czech Republic (No. 2/1969) came into force, providing a legal foundation for the DIA. The agency will work closely with the Cabinet of Deputy Prime Minister for Digitalisation, which will continue to take strategic and political decisions. At the time of drafting this review, the Czech government announced that the agency would be fully operational within three months from the enacted date. The DIA will absorb most of the responsibilities for the digital transformation of the public sector from other central government bodies, including the Ministry of the Interior and the National Agency for Communication and Information Technologies.

Box 5.2. Country case: The Agency for Electronic Government and the Information and Knowledge Society of Uruguay

The Agency for Electronic Government and the Information and Knowledge Society (AGESIC) is an executing unit with technical autonomy dependent on the Presidency of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay. It was created in December 2005 as the “Agency for the Development of the Government of Electronic Management and the Information and Knowledge Society”. Along with the AGESIC, the government created an Honorary Board of Directors in charge of designing its general lines of action and evaluating its performance and the results obtained, which will be assisted by three other honorary boards: the Council for the Information Society, the Business Advisory Council and the Public Information Technology Advisory Council.

Through this work, AGESIC seeks to innovate and make the ways in which people relate to the public administration more efficient, incorporating digital technologies and better ways of working, focusing on people and based on its guiding principle: “transformation with equity”.

AGESIC’s general objectives are to improve services to citizens using the possibilities offered by ICT and to promote the development of the information and knowledge society in Uruguay. It places emphasis on the integration of the digital practice in society and strengthening society’s skills in the use of technologies.

Source: Government of Uruguay (2023^[8]), Agency for Electronic Government and the Information and Knowledge Society (AGESIC)

The recent changes regarding the organisation-in-charge could hinder the government’s progress towards digital government maturity at the whole-of-government level. As the Czech Republic goes through the process of redefining the institutional structure, it is imperative to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of the organisation-in-charge, its relations with different bodies, including the RVIS, and interpreting roles of responsibilities of different stakeholders. This process needs to be inclusive for DIA to gain legitimacy from all stakeholders across the public sector. Taking this opportunity to reinforce the governance for digital government would greatly contribute to achieving and sustaining the Czech Republic’s ambitious digital agenda with visible impact.

The creation of the Deputy Prime Minister for Digitalisation brings a sufficient level of political support and opportunities to cover the whole public sector comprehensively. Nonetheless, to ensure the effective leadership and decision-making power of the Cabinet of Deputy Prime Minister for Digitalisation, a formal arrangement firmly defining its mandate needs to be enforced and mutually agreed upon by all stakeholders. Furthermore, the soon-to-be operational DIA needs to be equipped with sufficient institutional capacities to provide shared services and tools, support ministries and public institutions with their digital transformation strategies, advise the government on the digital transformation of the public sector, and drive public sector innovation across the government to ensure coherent implementation of all sectoral digital strategies across the public sector in line with the more comprehensive vision. For instance, the French government established a similar organisation in 2019 to support the government’s digital transformation agenda (Box 5.3).

Box 5.3. Country case: La direction interministérielle du numérique (DINUM) of the French government

Created in October 2019, DINUM is the inter-ministerial digital directorate in charge of the digital transformation of the French public sector. It is placed under the authority of the minister of public sector transformation and the civil service under the Prime Minister's Office. The directorate supports the line ministries in their digital transformation and develops shared services and resources, such as the Inter-ministerial State Network (RIE), [FranceConnect](#) (digital identity service), [data.gouv.fr](#) and [api.gouv.fr](#). DINUM also leads the TECH.GOUV programme to accelerate the digital transformation of the public services in co-ordination with all line ministries.

Organisation

DINUM is composed of one programme directorate, three departments and a general secretariat:

- The **TECH.GOUV programme directorate** steers the inter-ministerial digital transformation programme for public services.
- The **Infrastructures and Operated Services (ISO) Department** designs and operates shared infrastructure and services among different institutions, including the RIE.
- The **Etalab Department** co-ordinates the design and implementation of the national data strategy, including its legal and societal components.
- The **Performance of Digital Services Department** designs inter-ministerial action plans for pooling resources, dematerialising services, project management and quality assurance of digital services, and supports its implementation.
- The **General Secretariat** supports all the DINUM's activities. It handles external and internal communication, the management of human and financial resources, and ensures the quality of the working conditions for its members.

Note: This information has been translated from French.

Source: Direction interministérielle du numérique (France) (2022^[9]), <https://www.numerique.gouv.fr/dinum/>

Strengthening co-ordination to deliver government services with an impact

Co-ordination and co-operation make the digital transformation of the public sector more coherent, consistent and effective. Effective institutional co-ordination enables governments to drive digital transformation holistically with a long-lasting impact on society and the economy. To best avoid a possible crippling impact on the digital transformation of the public sector, all key stakeholders must collaborate on mutually established and agreed-upon objectives and action plans. A co-operative and collaborative culture throughout the public sector can ensure cohesive policy formulation, planning, implementation and monitoring. Potential policy gaps can be avoided, and a diverse policy environment can be fostered. Creative methods can flourish in the public sector by sharing knowledge, experience and lessons learnt.

Inter-ministerial co-ordination is currently carried out by the RVIS, with the involvement of deputy ministers or equivalent from each line ministry and other stakeholders, including the private sector and local governments. Led by the deputy prime minister for digitalisation, the council discusses and agrees on the horizontal issues of the Digital Czech Republic Programme. At the council meetings, representatives can table issues that require inter-ministerial co-ordination.

The council is also supported by thematic working groups composed of experts from different institutions. The thematic discussions at the working level are reported back to the council, bringing the institutions'

needs to the high-level discussions. For instance, the Czech eMandate service was first proposed at the working group level and is now in the development stage through the co-ordinated effort of the council.

Nevertheless, the council serves as more of an advisory group than an effective co-ordination body that plays a strong decision-making and implementation role. The OECD Public Governance Review process revealed that the co-ordination mechanism was quite unstable and that the instability has caused difficulties in the execution of decisions taken at the whole-of-government level. For instance, during the pandemic, weak co-ordination efforts resulted in duplication and significant errors in consolidating data in a central database from social services providers working at the regional level. In addition, the limited sharing of such data created a great barrier for ministries in using the data for their service provision. At the time of drafting this review, the co-ordination mechanism was in transition, given more decision-making responsibilities. For instance, under the new governance of digital government, the RVIS is mandated to approve strategic documents proposed by government bodies.

As the Czech Republic has a decentralised government structure, each regional and local government is in charge of implementing its own digital government, and designing and delivering its own services. At the time of writing, the Office of Chief Architect of eGovernment of the Ministry of the Interior held the mandate to approve all the regional and local governments' ICT/digital projects. Under the ongoing restructuring of the governance of digital government, the Czech government plans to move this function to the DIA as of 1 April 2023. However, to provide consistent quality and inclusive services across the country while ensuring interoperability and responsible use of public resources, the central government needs to make additional efforts to co-ordinate with the regional governments to disseminate the guidelines, standards and common enablers to ensure that users, regardless of where they reside, can access and enjoy the same quality of services.

Box 5.4. Country case: High-level co-ordination in the public sector in Luxembourg

The Inter-Ministerial Committee for Digitalisation

The Inter-Ministerial Committee for Digitalisation was established to co-ordinate ministries in the development and implementation of the strategy and initiatives for digital government and the digitalisation of public services until 2025. It also aims to strengthen the governance of digital government and improve the coherence and cohesion of the digital transformation in the public sector, in line with the Electronic Governance Strategy 2021-2025. Under the leadership and co-presidency of the Ministry for Digitalisation's first government advisor and the government chief information officer, it brings together representatives from all ministries on a high-level platform for horizontal co-ordination on digital government strategies and action plans, sharing best practices and creating synergies among the ministries and administrations in Luxembourg.

The High Committee for Digital Transformation

The High Committee for Digital Transformation under the Ministry for Digitalisation is not yet operational due to delays related to the COVID-19 crisis. It is envisioned to bring together the minister for digitalisation, minister delegate for digitalisation, other ministers relevant for the development of digital government on one side and the private sector, labour unions, non-governmental organisations and IT experts or public research representatives on the other to discuss the national digital transformation, which includes digital government, economy, skills and society, etc. The High Committee for Digital Transformation was launched on 28 September 2022. Making this committee fully operational in the short term will be beneficial for the right and timely implementation of the Electronic Governance Strategy 2021-2025, as several initiatives require strong partnerships and the involvement of external stakeholders.

Source: OECD (2022^[10]), Digital Government Review of Luxembourg: Towards More Digital, Innovative and Inclusive Public Services

Furthermore, a stronger co-ordination mechanism would also help identify opportunities that digital technologies and data can bring for public sector innovation, promoting a government-wide innovation effort, and disseminating good practices across all areas and levels of government. Currently, the Czech public sector is challenged by a lack of political and financial support, awareness of public officials, and legal framework on the public sector innovation agenda. The current legal framework, specifically Act No. 130/2002 on the Support of Research, Development and Innovation from Public Funds, falls short of providing the necessary environment for public sector innovation in the Czech Republic. Despite the existing Innovation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2019-2030, the strategy highly underestimates the necessity and importance of public sector innovation are highly underestimated in the strategy and narrowly scoped only around the digitalisation of public services. The Czech Republic must leverage digital tools and data to facilitate public sector innovation. Nonetheless, public sector innovation needs to be discussed in a broader scope, including fostering an innovative culture across the public sector.

Box 5.5. Country case: Public sector innovation – Impact Canada

“Let’s solve Canada’s biggest challenges: The Government of Canada wants innovative solutions to economic, environmental, and social problems.”

About Impact Canada

Announced in Budget 2017, Impact Canada is a Government of Canada-wide effort to help departments accelerate the adoption of innovative funding approaches to deliver meaningful results to Canadians. The Impact Canada initiative is led by a Centre of Expertise housed within the Impact and Innovation Unit of the Privy Council Office, which also manages this platform in partnership with government departments. A dedicated advisory committee brings together a distinguished group of senior leaders from the private, philanthropic, not-for-profit and academic sectors.

Impact Canada: Challenges

Impact Canada runs different types of “challenges”. Challenges are an open innovation approach. They are designed to crowd-in innovative solutions from a wide variety of actors and sources to expand the government’s problem-solving abilities. Challenges differ from other traditional government funding programmes, as they are designed as an “outcomes-based” approach where innovators are awarded based on the results achieved during the challenge.

Challenges are meant to attract new talent and ideas from a wide variety of actors, and accelerate progress towards solving problems and achieving stronger social, environmental and economic outcomes for citizens.

They provide incentives (both financial and non-financial) to encourage a broad range of innovators to tackle problems where solutions are not apparent or current responses are not achieving the desired results. Innovators are rewarded once they can measurably achieve results and improve on given outcomes.

Source: Government of Canada (2023^[11]), *Impact Canada*

Equipping the public sector with the necessary digital skills and talents

With the accelerated digital transformation across society, governments around the world are pressured to ensure the competency to operate and provide services to their citizens in an increasingly digital world. Governments must equip their workforce with skills that are fit for the 21st century and resilient to economic and social unpredictability. The OECD Framework for Digital Talent and Skills in the Public Sector

highlights what governments need to attain a workforce that can drive their digital governments to maturity. The framework encourages governments to create a conducive environment to enable digital transformation; to develop skills to support digital government maturity; and to establish and maintain a digital workforce (OECD, 2021^[12]).

Under the second pillar of the Digital Czech Republic Programme, “Information Strategy of the Czech Republic”, the Czech government lays out its plan to strengthen the digital talent and skills of the public sector. The plan includes 57 action items to foster an environment to facilitate changes within the public sector, secure necessary digital talents in public institutions, and enhance the capacities and competencies of the existing workforce (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2020^[13]).

Nevertheless, the implementation efforts can be strengthened to maximise the potential impact by identifying the right authority to drive the digital talent and skills agenda. Many of the action items are assigned to less than a handful of central ministries, with some items lacking a responsible institution. Moreover, during the review process, it was observed that the Czech public sector still faces a challenge in attracting and retaining suitable digital talents across the government.

In November 2022, the government of the Czech Republic decided to create a dedicated pillar within the Digital Czech Republic Programme to better address these challenges and streamline ongoing efforts to enhance digital skills and competencies across the public sector. At the time of drafting, the government was defining the structure and objectives of the pillar.

Box 5.6. Digital talent and skills initiative in the United Kingdom

Digital, Data and Technology Profession Team

In the United Kingdom, the Digital, Data and Technology Profession Team in the Central Digital and Data Office focuses on helping the government attract, develop and retain the people and skills needed to support the digital government transformation. Its strategy aims to ensure a co-ordinated and holistic approach across all departments by maximising, sharing and building on best practices. Priorities cover workforce planning through analytics; job role consistency through a common capability framework; pay and reward consistency; training and development for digital, data and technology professions; and a diverse and inclusive culture.

Source: Welby and Tan (2022^[14]), “Designing and delivering public services in the digital age”, Going Digital Toolkit Note, No. 22

Engaging users for a more inclusive digital transformation of the public sector

The 2017 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (OECD, 2022^[15])² acknowledges that citizens’ participation can increase civic capacity, strengthen evidence-informed policymaking, lower implementation costs, and tap into wider networks and ecosystems for innovation in policymaking and service delivery. It can also increase citizen empowerment and their influence on policy decisions. User engagement includes the processes of educating, consulting and involving stakeholders in the design and delivery of policies and services. Collaboration further facilitates shared ownership, roles and responsibilities between the public sector and users in the creation and implementation of policies and services (Welby and Tan, 2022^[14]).

The Czech government engages users in service design and delivery at a very limited capacity. The government takes into account user feedback through surveys and UX testing. This practice helps the government ensure the clarity and user-friendliness of the services provided. The Ministry of the Interior also monitors web traffic and user data to improve user accessibility. Nevertheless, little evidence was

found during the review process on engaging users throughout the service design and delivery cycle. A lack of formal requirements and practices to engage users in the cycle in a meaningful way limits opportunities for the government to be user-driven. This can also be affecting the uptake of digital services among users in the Czech Republic. For instance, it would be beneficial for the government to engage users in prioritising public services to be digitally transformed and provided through the citizens' portal, gov.cz, as it continues developing the portal.

Policy levers to strengthen institutional capacity for digital transformation

Policy levers enable governments to design and implement digital government strategies and the delivery of services to users with a sustainable impact, serving the needs of citizens and businesses. The *E-Leaders Handbook on the Governance of Digital Government* defines the third facet of the OECD Framework on the Governance of Digital Government – policy levers – as tools to underpin the implementation of governments' digital transformation strategy. It focuses on strategy and plan, project management tools, financial management mechanisms, and regulations and standards (see Figure 5.1). For the purpose of this chapter, this section focuses on key policy levers to improve the design and delivery of inclusive, sustainable and quality services to users in the Czech context.

Strategy with key performance indicators to measure progress and ensure continuity

A digital government strategy needs to include a strategic vision, objectives and priorities, as well as key stakeholders and specific action plans for execution and oversight. In addition to reflecting sectoral needs and priorities, it should align with a broader national agenda or policy priorities (e.g. administrative reform, sustainable development, climate change and the environment, education, research, and technology, etc.) (OECD, 2021^[3]).

In the Czech Republic, the cross-sector digitalisation of the public administration has been carried out under the umbrella strategy, the Digital Czech Republic Programme. Under the shared objective of creating an environment for the long-term prosperity of the Czech Republic, the programme specifies targets and a time frame for implementation. Based on the programme, an annual implementation plan is set up through the RVIS. From the catalogue of project proposals, priority projects are determined and financed in line with the national budgetary process.

The cross-sectoral programme lays out the blueprint for the Czech Republic to become a digitally mature country. Nevertheless, it can further strengthen monitoring and assessment mechanisms for the implementation of digital government initiatives to measure implementation progress and identify gaps. For example, a clear set of key performance indicators (KPIs) could help the government measure the public sector institutions' performance towards meeting the shared objective and key actions under the programme. By publishing its progress publicly, the government can also improve its transparency and build trust in government.

In Singapore, the government has included KPIs in the Digital Government Blueprint (Table 5.2). The government regularly reviewed and updated the KPIs with a new indicator when needed, reflecting the fast-changing speed of digital transformation and unpredictable geopolitical events. The KPIs have helped the Singaporean government assess its performance and identify where it is lagging behind (Smart Nation and Digital Government Office of Singapore, 2020^[16]).

Table 5.2. Singapore’s 15 key performance indicators to measure the government’s digitalisation progress

S/N	Key performance indicator	By 2023
Stakeholder satisfaction		
1	Citizen Satisfaction with Digital Services (via survey)	75-80% to rate very satisfied
2	Business Satisfaction with Digital Services (via survey)	75-80% to rate very satisfied
End-to-end digital options		
3	Services that offer e-payment options (inbound and outbound)	100%
4	Services that are pre-filled with government-verified data	100%
5	Services that offer digital options for wet ink signatures	100%
End-to-end digital transactions		
6	Percentage of transactions completed digitally from end-to-end	90-95%
7	Percentage of payments (inbound and outbound) completed via e-payments	100%
Digital capabilities		
8	Number of public officers trained in data analytics and data science	20 000
9	Number of public officers with basic digital literacy	All public officers
Transformative digital projects		
10	Number of transformative digital projects	30-50 projects
Artificial intelligence, data and data analytics		
11	Percentage of ministry families that use artificial intelligence for service delivery or policymaking	All ministry families to have at least one artificial intelligence project
12	Number of high-impact data analytics projects	10 cross-agency projects per year and 2 projects per ministry family per year
13	Core data fields in machine readable format, and transmittable by application programming interfaces	90-100%
14	Time required to share data for cross-agency projects	No more than 7 working days to share data for cross-agency projects
Commercial cloud migration		
15	Percentage of eligible government systems on commercial cloud	70%

Source: Smart Nation and Digital Government Office of Singapore (2020^[16]), Digital Government Blueprint

Need to further enforce the use of standardised tools and services

Through the adoption of standardised tools and services throughout the public sector, governments may maximise efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts and expenditures. Clear business cases, agile project management and strategic acquisition of digital technology are essential components of Pillar 3 of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies (OECD, 2014^[2]). These policy levers support the sustainability of digital initiatives and the implementation of policies that are aligned with the digital government strategy.

The Czech Republic has put in place a set of standardised methodologies for all central government institutions, from presenting business cases to managing data, digital and information technology projects. Developed and enforced by the Office of Chief Architect of eGovernment of the Ministry of the Interior, the Information Strategy of the Czech Republic clearly sets out the goals and directions at the whole-of-government level (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2022^[17]). Composed of several chapters and annexes, this comprehensive document provides general principles, from planning, procurement and creation to operation in detail (Box 5.7). It is accompanied by the forms each central institution needs to complete to present their business case for ICT projects for approval by the Office of Chief Architect of eGovernment. The National eGovernment Architecture Knowledge Base provides essential information and best practices to support public sector stakeholders to properly design, procure, implement and manage information services.

Furthermore, with support from the National Agency for Communication and Information Technologies, the Ministry of the Interior provides shared infrastructure and services to public sector institutions, including data centres and cybersecurity. During the approval process of ICT projects, the ministry encourages other institutions to use available common infrastructure and services. In addition, the Ministry of the Interior provides support for public sector institutions to develop and provide digital services through its service called PMA³. It can assist a requesting institution in conducting desk research, possibility analysis, or user testing and evaluation (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2020_[18]).

Box 5.7. Information Strategy of the Czech Republic

Contents of the main document

- The goal and mission of e-government in the Czech Republic.
- The main objectives of the Information Concept of the Czech Republic.
- The general principles for fulfilling the objectives of the Information Concept of the Czech Republic.
- The general principles of acquiring, creating, managing and operating public administration information systems.
- A list of digital representatives of individual departments.

Accompanying documents to the Information Concept of the Czech Republic

- Implementation plans of the main objectives.
- ICT management methods of the Czech public administration.
- Glossary of e-government terms.
- National architectural framework and plan.

Source: Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic (2022_[17]), Information Concept of the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic has developed relatively well-structured standardised project management tools along with principles and guidelines at the central level of the government. The OECD Digital Government Policy Framework highlights the importance for a government to act as a platform that provides clear and transparent guidelines, tools, data and software to meet the needs of teams to design and deliver user-driven, consistent, seamless, proactive and cross-sectoral service (OECD, 2020_[19]). The Czech Republic can further advance towards taking a Government as a Platform approach.

Nevertheless, the government can benefit from having in place a formal mechanism to monitor and assess the use of such standardised methodologies, guidelines and shared services across the public sector. During the review process, it was shared that many members of the public sector lack understanding of the principles of ICT projects, which in part led to reliance on big vendors for ICT solutions and services. This has created a vicious circle of relying on external expertise rather than building necessary skills within the public sector. Another example is the use of data standards. Although it is mandatory and the Office of the Chief Architect is responsible for monitoring its implementation, there is no formal mechanism for ensuring the proper application of the standards and its continuity in practice.

Recommendations

Continue defining clear roles and responsibilities of the key actors driving the digital government agenda

- Continue developing and institutionalising the roles and responsibilities of the organisation-in-charge and each key actor (especially the Cabinet of Deputy Prime Minister for Digitalisation, the Digital Information Agency and the Ministry of the Interior) through a transparent and inclusive process to gain legitimacy and ensure sustainability.
- Identify the needs of public institutions to provide the necessary support for their digital transformation strategies and make necessary shared services and tools available.
- Equip the relevant organisations with sufficient institutional capabilities and competencies.

Strengthen the co-ordination mechanism between the central government, local governments, the private sector and service users to ensure the co-ordination body can carry out proper decision-making, implementation and monitoring responsibilities

- Building upon the statute of the RVIS, formalise the council's decision-making responsibilities to use the co-ordination body's full potential and to deliver the digital transformation efforts across the public sector with impact.
- Expand the involvement of the thematic working groups to the Government Council of Information Society to increase engagement and alignment with institutional needs and facilitate a bottom-up collaborative culture.
- Organise a regular meeting at the chief information officers (or equivalent) level with regional representatives organised by the Digital Information Agency.

Further enforce the use of centralised guidelines and standards, common tools and services across the government with an appropriate incentive mechanism

- Raise awareness on the centralised guidelines and standards, common policy tools and services to gain support and adoption across the public sector through inter-ministerial co-ordination, communication campaigns and regular training exercises.
- Create communities of practice to share good practices, exchange knowledge and identify common challenges that can be resolved with assistance from the Digital information Agency.
- Create a clear set of KPIs to assess and monitor implementation progress to ensure a sustainable transformation across the government.
- Consider empowering the organisation-in-charge to fund cross-sectoral projects to ensure the coherent and efficient implementation of such projects.

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Notes

¹ The Office of Chief Architect of eGovernment of the Ministry of the Interior (MoI) will be moved to the Digital Information Agency (DIA) on the 1st of April 2023.

² The Czech Republic is adherent to the recommendation. See: <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438#adherents>.



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