

4.2. The critical role of whole of government to promote holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development

While social, economic and environmental challenges have significantly changed over the past decades and are becoming increasingly interdependent, government institutions and their functioning in many countries are still greatly shaped by early 20th century models of public administration whereby ministries work in “silos” and issues are tackled through a sectoral perspective. As outlined in the United Nations General Assembly resolution 66/288, it is critical to enhance integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, i.e. economic, social and environmental, in a holistic and cross-sectorial manner at all levels. Effective collaboration among agencies across government (national and sub-national) and with non-governmental actors is essential to good governance for a number of reasons.

First, present development challenges, such as poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, disaster prevention and crisis management, call for holistic responses and investments in cross-cutting areas. No single ministry or government department can effectively deal with issues, such as poverty eradication, that are multi-faceted and have multiple root causes. Collaboration is therefore required to effectively address issues that go beyond the capability of any single agency or level of government.

Second, an increase in citizens’ expectations for effective, equitable and citizen-centric services demands a shift from inward, disjointed and process oriented organizational structures to highly collaborative frameworks for seamless delivery of services and enhanced development impact. Governments can no longer provide services unilaterally and disregard citizens’ demands for a more efficient and accountable use of public funds, which can result from service integration. In fact, the need to find ways that more effectively create public value, in an environment of constant change, has become an ongoing endeavour of all governments around the world.

Third, increased citizen demands for meaningful participation in public affairs and decision-making processes call for innovative governance and collaborative mechanisms that allow people to actively take part in decisions that affect their lives. Citizens (and other non-governmental actors) can be involved in the co-creation of services, including their design and delivery, as well as in finding solutions to societal challenges (see Chapter 3).

Fourth, government systems, institutions and processes need to adapt to a rapidly evolving information age by promoting effective knowledge management at all levels and by leveraging the potential of ICT for development, which also calls for enhanced cross-sectoral cooperation and collaboration at all levels of government both national and local.

Fifth, a number of international issues, including globalization, global warming, as well as maintaining peace and security, require holistic responses and inter-governmental cooperation at the national and global levels because of their

complex and inter-dependent nature. Also, even where issues/challenges are not in essence cross-border, most countries have very similar problems and international learning is essential, not to replicate solutions from elsewhere but to adapt to local circumstances, become inspired and learn together.

Governments are faced with 3 main domestic challenges

- More inclusive and higher quality services with less resources and increased holistic government capacities
 - More open, transparent, accountable and effective public governance
 - Responsive to increased citizen demand for enhanced participation building greater trust in government
-

This kind of change requires a transformation of the government as a whole, which calls for a holistic vision of development, new government institutional arrangements, leadership and human resources' capacities and mechanisms for greater collaboration among government agencies and departments and with other governance actors through a whole-of-government approach and collaborative governance. A new vision and model of collaboration among governance actors, in turn, calls for a paradigm shift in the role of the public sector whereby governments:

- Become catalysts for change instead of mere service providers;
- Facilitate networked co-responsibility by empowering communities to take part in the solution of their own problems;
- Become entrepreneurial in generating revenues and promoting partnerships;
- Operate in an integrated and collaborative manner across departments and agencies;
- Become pro-active instead of reactive anticipating problems;
- Make full use of opportunities afforded by the application of ICT in Government in order to bridge the digital divide;
- Transform mind-sets and build a culture of collaboration, transparency and accountability.

4.3. Opportunities and challenges of designing and implementing a whole-of-government approach to service delivery

Several governments across the world are adopting whole-of-government and collaborative approaches through the promotion of horizontal and/or vertical initiatives, greatly aided by modern technologies, which provide useful tools to enable collaboration across agencies.

Whole-of-government and collaborative governance presents multiple opportunities, including:

- Increased effectiveness of government's responses—more effective and coordinated policy responses to complex issues;
- Enhanced efficiency by reducing duplications of processes and procedures in programme management and service delivery;
- Better service delivery by integrating services and thereby saving time and resources and increasing citizens' trust in government. Governments can also take a more positive stance towards citizens and trust that citizens can be valuable partners in co-creating public value, including service delivery;
- Increased public value by promoting collaboration and coordination with private sector and civil society in the delivery of services and wealth creation through social innovation.

Greater communication and coordination among policy areas and agencies at all levels, are helping governments deliver "as one" in pursuit of increased quality of and inclusive access to services to the benefit of its citizens. While the opportunities to develop and implement whole-of-government are many, so are the challenges as this kind of government transformation is usually associated with the most advanced stages of e-government development.

First, it is important to bear in mind that whole-of-government is not an end in itself but rather a means to achieve goals in a collaborative manner. In the case of service delivery, there are four main principles that can guide efforts in service delivery integration as follows:

- **High quality**—High quality service delivery may be manifested in—but is not limited to—the availability of government services at times and in ways that are more convenient to the public, speedy processing of applications or claims, reduction in the amount of paperwork and other activities citizens must perform in order to demonstrate compliance of clearly written government regulations
- **Easy Access**—such as the expansion of the coverage or enhancement of quality service delivery to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups is critical to inclusive social development
- **Cost-effective**—Utilizing the most economic models for delivering quality services to the citizens and ensuring effective delivery is essential, particularly in times of financial crisis
- **Citizen-centric**—Utilizing mechanisms that have proven to collect feed-back from citizens and that succeed in engaging them in the delivery of services.

Second, it is equally important to underscore that collaboration across government departments and agencies, as well as integration of services is not always the right solution. Collaboration can be time-consuming and can lead to counter-productive results if leaders are not able to appropriately direct collaborative efforts and ineffective mechanisms are in place. Moreover, integrating services may not always be the right solution in a specific area and for a specific target group. Therefore, it is always important to assess each situation and analyze whether collaboration is needed and integrated services provide enhanced benefits to citi-

zens. It is crucial to keep in mind the end result, viability, sustainability and impact of integrating services. Integration of services should be seen as a means and not as an end in itself. For example, according to the World Health Organization:¹

Integrated health service delivery is *“the organization and management of health services so that people get the care they need, when they need it, in ways that are user-friendly, achieve the desired results and provide value for money.”*

Integration may not always bring about quality of services and major factors need to be assessed before proceeding in this respect.

Third, it is well known that collaboration among agencies and government levels is not always a simple task. The greatest challenge to the adoption of whole-of-government, which fundamentally rests on increased collaboration, is resistance to change among government actors. Scepticism about integration of information and data privacy; lack of trust among agencies; non alignment of motivations among agencies or worst competition among ministries and agencies; different vision, priorities and goals among government agencies are all factors that can greatly inhibit the success of a whole-of-government strategy. While technology has increased the opportunities for connectivity and enabling new forms of teamwork, collaboration across departments and agencies can be very limited in scope without the right kind of leadership. As governments are steadily moving away from inter-organizational work modalities and moving towards intra-organizational processes, it is important to be aware of the difficulties that are intrinsic in this transition.

In sum, there are a number of political, organizational and technical challenges, which may hinder a more collaborative approach in government and with outside actors:

- Lack of a coherent vision and commitment to address sustainable development issues;
- Weak collaborative leadership and “silos” like mentality;
- Entrenched power structures;
- Vertical and horizontal organizational fragmentation;
- Inadequate accountability mechanisms for cross-agency collaboration and where appropriate, minimum or “appropriate” quality standards;
- Mistrust among ministries/agencies;
- Lack of confidence in the IT infrastructure, data privacy and security.

4.4. Transforming government through a whole-of-government approach: enabling factors

In order to deliver services in an integrated and seamless way and foster an innovative approach to complex problem solving, government agencies need to define clear shared outcomes, design agreed upon strategies, clearly define agency roles and responsibilities, compatible policies and procedures across agencies and ensure effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This, in

turn, requires that four major and inter-twined dimensions of the public sector be strengthened, namely (1) collaborative leadership and human resources capacities; (2) institutional frameworks for effective coordination, cooperation and accountability; (3) innovative integrated processes and mechanisms for service delivery and citizen engagement and empowerment; as well as (4) IT management strategies for enhanced collaboration.

4.4.1. Critical role of collaborative leadership and a shared organizational culture

Strengthening collaborative leadership capacities at both national and local levels is a prerequisite for creating an environment where collaboration thrives and government officials learn to work and think in collaborative ways. Improvements are made and innovation spurs when leaders are able to mobilize stakeholders towards a common shared goal. Collaborative leadership may be defined as the capacity of leaders to work across organizational boundaries to inspire, engage and motivate people and teams to work together in pursuit of common goals.

Collaborative leaders require strong skills in setting an example and modelling collaboration through their own behaviour; acting as mediators and connecting citizens' aspirations and vision with organizational structures and capacities to produce public value; attracting diverse talents and ensuring that accountability lines are clear and respected. Leaders must also work together to align services in a coherent manner.

In addition, it is important that government officials, particularly at the local level, have the appropriate attitudes, skills and expertise to harness ideas from diverse communities and to engage citizens through new collaborative channels and modalities. This is so because local governments are at the contact point between government and the people. This type of interaction between public officials and citizens requires new skills, attitudes and knowledge, as well as the capacity to utilize effectively social media, mobile and other ICT tools.

Shaping or re-shaping values, attitudes and behaviours in the public sector through mission statements and codes of conduct containing guiding principles can be an important step forward coupled with capacity-building activities that focus on collaborative governance. Public officials at different levels ought to take part in the redefinition of their mission statements and codes of conduct to enhance ownership as well as alignment of behaviours and values to a holistic view of government. In promoting human resources development in an innovative public sector, particular attention should be given to:

- Managing and working in increasingly hybrid organizations with overlapping teams;
- Building partnerships and negotiation skills;
- Designing IT strategies for collaboration and coordination.

Knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of staff at all levels need to be re-adjusted to match the functions, responsibilities and tasks as well as the new collaborative work methods. Continuous learning and adaptive leadership skills are also

required when governing under uncertainty and complexity. Greater empowerment of public officials and a more conscious and professional risk management are essential to foster innovative collaborative approaches (see *Innovations in Governance and Public Administration: Replicating What Works*, United Nations, 2006). While great attention is focused on changing the visible collective structures of governance institutions, attention ought also be given to how to re-align and leverage the internal/non visible side of governance institutions. Values, attitudes and mind-sets have a direct impact on behavior, relationships and partnerships, affecting institutions, organizations, policies and infrastructure.

Public managers can create value by strategically thinking about how to solve complex issues and by focusing on the impact of government's actions rather than focusing on internal processes. A new mind-set or organizational culture, which places emphasis on thinking beyond organizational boundaries rather than along departmental lines in tackling specific problems, is essential to improve service delivery. A culture of collaboration through knowledge management and sharing, increased transparency and accountability lies at the heart of promoting innovative and integrated services.

Transforming mind-sets and encouraging a collaborative organizational culture is, however, not simple per se and requires a coordinated strategy, buy-in from top leadership and time to change individual beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. Particular attention should therefore be placed on devising a set of incentives that can reward collaborative efforts and discourage working in silos. Besides ongoing learning and training in the above mentioned areas, stakeholders, within and outside of government, can be empowered and involved in defining the vision and overall benefits of specific collaborative efforts. An incentive system can include a number of elements, such as public recognition, rewards to teams rather than individuals for effectively meeting a common goal.

4.4.2. Institutional frameworks for effective coordination, cooperation and accountability

It is well known that collaboration and coordination among agencies cannot be developed in the absence of a supportive institutional infrastructure. Integrating services requires a re-organization of institutional frameworks, back office processes, accountability mechanisms and work modalities through whole-of-government approaches, which allow for integration. New organizational efforts ought to be aimed at developing processes and mechanisms that enable people to work together; define and build together a shared purpose; and promote a system of incentives and rewards that values collaboration.

While each agency continues to be accountable for its defined and focused role, cross-agency issues are addressed in a coordinated manner through new institutional and accountability frameworks and mechanisms. A coordinating authority in government that can facilitate and mobilize governance stakeholders towards designing and adopting whole-of-government approaches has emerged as an important catalyst for increased coordination.

The *United Nations E-Government Survey* has focused on Chief Information Officers (CIOs). The institutional level of CIOs as well as the office's functions, roles and responsibilities seems to have an important impact on the overall sustainability of whole-of-government approaches and collaborative governance. The importance of the CIO or its equivalent is to create a unified and centralized agency responsible for designing, implementing and disseminating e-government throughout the entire public administration in a seamless way.

CIOs that are integrated into the President's Office or Prime Minister's Office have a better opportunity to leverage knowledge, resources and above all commitment at all levels. It is also very important that CIOs do not work in isolation vis-a-vis other government institutions because e-government and whole of government is first and above all about transforming government and not solely about the application of technology. In some countries, there is a tendency to separate information management and issues related to the application of ICTs from the mainstream of public administration transformation, and this can only cause conflict and inefficiencies. It is therefore very important to devise organizational set ups that allow for collaboration among ministries and CIOs in their efforts to promote whole-of-government approaches.

The 2014 Survey questionnaire includes a set of questions to assess the level of whole-of-government in Member States. All sources of data used in this chapter come from this questionnaire, unless otherwise stated. According to this data, countries that scored more than 66.6 per cent in whole-of-government are mostly European, followed closely by Asia (see Table 4.1, Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2). This analysis also falls in line with the data analysis of countries with a CIO or equivalent; proving that a unified, consistent and identifiable authority managing e-government can have a positive impact on a country's performance and the quality of their e-service delivery.

Table 4.1. Countries with a score higher than 66.6 per cent in whole of government

Albania	Armenia	Australia	Austria	Bahrain	Belgium
Brunei Darussalam	Canada	Chile	Denmark	Egypt	Estonia
Ethiopia	Finland	France	Ireland	Israel	Italy
Japan	Jordan	Kazakhstan	Kuwait	Latvia	Liechtenstein
Lithuania	Malaysia	Morocco	Netherlands	New Zealand	Norway
Portugal	Republic of Korea	Saudi Arabia	Seychelles	Singapore	Spain
Sri Lanka	Sudan	Sweden	Switzerland	Syrian Arab Republic	Tunisia
	Turkey	United Arab Emirates	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	United States of America	

Figure 4.1. Countries with a score higher than 66.6 per cent in whole of government, by region

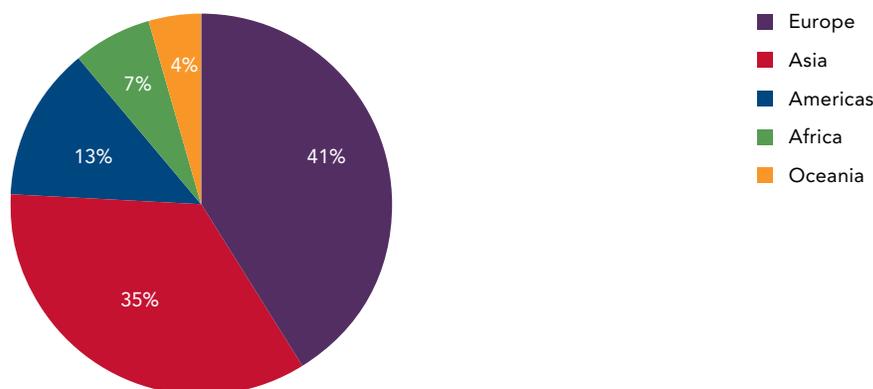
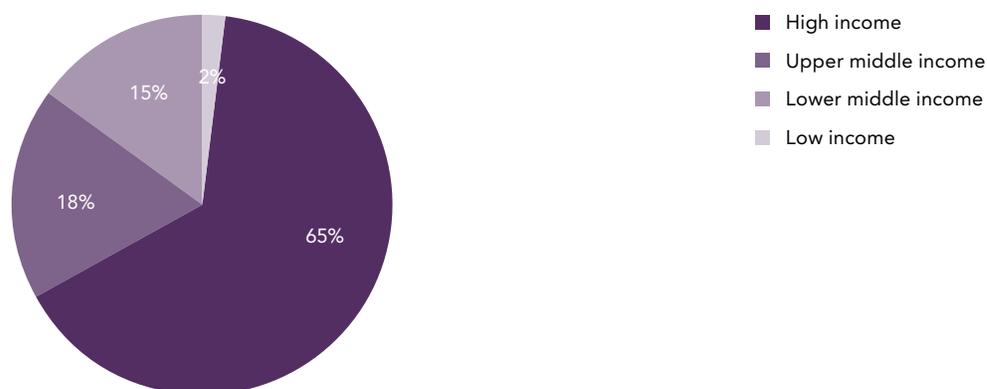


Figure 4.2. Countries with a score higher than 66.6 per cent in whole of government, by income group



Based on the data collected for the 2014 *Survey*, between the years 2008 and 2014, the number of countries publicizing information about a CIO has more than doubled. Hence, 42 per cent of United Nations Member States today provide information about their CIO for e-government (see Figure 4.3 and Table 4.2). This leadership role altogether is providing guidance and continuity for the development of e-services and for reaching a connected stage in online governance.

In terms of regional distribution, Europe is the leader with 56 per cent of European countries publicizing information about a CIO; followed closely by Asia with 51 per cent. 14 out of 35 United Nations Member States in the Americas have online information about an e-government CIO or equivalent, compared to 4 out of 14 Member States in Oceania. Africa lags behind the rest of the world in creating an entity responsible for its e-government strategy and designating a CIO, where only 16 out of 54 African countries have done so, or 30 per cent of the continent. The African region still faces many challenges in catching up with the rest of the world in online presence and connectivity, due to many socioeconomic and political factors.

Figure 4.3. Number of countries with online information about a CIO or equivalent

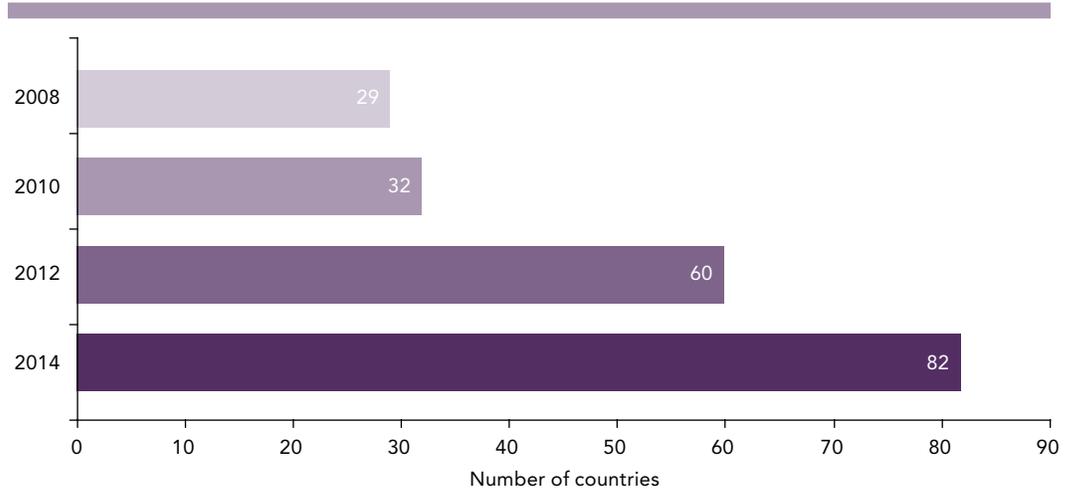


Table 4.2. Countries publicizing a CIO or equivalent by region, in 2014

	<i>Countries publicizing a CIO or equivalent</i>	<i>Number of countries in region</i>	<i>% of countries per region publicizing a CIO or equivalent</i>
Africa	16	54	30%
Americas	14	35	40%
Asia	24	47	51%
Europe	24	43	56%
Oceania	4	14	29%

4.4.3. Innovative coordination processes and mechanisms for service delivery and citizen engagement and empowerment

Process innovation focuses on the improvement of quality of public service delivery and entails new ways of designing processes by integrating services and ensuring that they are inclusive and accessible by all groups in society, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

The *United Nations E-Government Survey 2012* chapter on “Taking a whole-of-government approach” referred to the concept of “one-stop government” defining it as the movement from isolated silos in public administration to formal and informal networks to respond to growing complexity of problems through collaborative responses. It touched upon the concept of e-government harmonization in practice by briefly making reference to the role of national coordinating authorities, particularly CIOs. It highlighted “the need for public sector interoperability, i.e. that systems deployed throughout the government are able to communicate with one another through interoperable technologies in order to share and integrate information by using common standards” (*United Nations E-Government Survey 2012*). In addition, it drew attention to the importance of online service integration through portals that aggregate large amounts of infor-

mation and services into a single web-site and the need for overall commitment. In particular, it looked at challenges and opportunities of integrated e-service delivery and signaled out a number of challenges and opportunities, including (a) revisiting institutional arrangements; (b) promoting citizen-centric designs; (c) standards setting and systems integration; (d) privacy and security matters; and (e) issues in infrastructure development.

“With public sectors offering an increased number of services, the focus is shifting from *what* kinds of services are provided to *how* they are provided. In many countries, a host of services provided, are increasingly coordinated and customized to better fit the needs of the citizens. In many instances, service delivery operations are integrated early in the value chain or services are bundled in a single entry point for the citizens” (*United Nations E-Government Survey 2012*). There are many examples of national portal features that are indicative of back-end integration and transformation. At its most basic level, this could mean lists and links to local government websites or other agencies, such as is the case in Australia, or result in a combined central portal, such as in the United Kingdom that recently integrated its Directgov and Business Link portals into one.² More advanced versions—and obvious examples of whole of government—come with specially designed portals that offer joint services through a single sign-on. For example, the Swedish business registration portal where three government agencies—the Swedish Companies Registration Office, the Swedish Tax Agency and the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, have joined forces to enable entrepreneurs to logon and conduct services with all three agencies in one place.³ In Denmark, the citizen portal offers a personalized account of information and services through a single sign-on.⁴ Meanwhile, some, such as New Zealand, are moving ahead with an “all-of-government” approach that includes cloud computing, sometimes labelled the g-cloud (for government cloud).⁵ Such clouds can directly benefit, and build upon, whole-of-government initiatives, and may be the latest trend in this area, evident also in Singapore⁶ (*United Nations Expert Group Meeting Report 2013 on Collaborative Governance*).

In the Philippines, gender and development mainstreaming efforts led to the creation of the Davao Medical Center, which, in turn, set up the Women and Children Protection Unit (WCPU)—a one-stop family crisis intervention centre, which provides legal, psychiatric and medical services to its patients. In Brazil, the Bahia’s Citizen Assistance Service Centers (SAC) bring together over 500 federal, state, and municipal agencies in a single location, convenient to the public such as shopping malls and major public transportation hubs, to offer multiple government services. There are many other good practices of client-focused one-stop service delivery for social services and mobile service delivery for multi-service clients in remote areas. The Korea’s Integrated Financial Management Information System established by the Ministry of Strategy and Finance is another example of whole-of-government approach (see Box 4.1).

As the national portal is considered the citizens gateway to online government, it is important to provide such links in a way that allows users to access websites of different government agencies as easy a way as possible. Citizens seeking

specific services or information can rapidly access the respective website without having to memorize URLs or using search engines to access the ministries or departments' websites. This allows for broader usage and higher satisfaction with the services offered. Citizens often do not spend an excessive amount of time or effort looking for services online. "One-click" links are the most suitable way to maximize efficiency in service delivery and minimize tasks that could be time-consuming.



Box 4.1. DBAS: Korea's integrated financial management information system (Ministry of Strategy and Finance)

The Digital Budget and Accounting System (DBAS) is a good example to consider as it integrates all the existing financial systems and provides transparency in public finance. It is an innovative tool that manages the entire fiscal process, ranging from budget formulation to accounting and integrates fiscal information by linking fiscal information of all public entities. The system is also known as "dBrain," because of its function as the digital brain for fiscal management. The most distinctive feature of the DBAS is that it allows a holistic view of public finance. It consolidates fiscal processes of fifty-one central government agencies and links fifty-five external systems and local governments, public entities and subordinate organizations, fulfilling the requirements of the IMF's 2001 Government Finance Statistics (GFS) Manual. The system further reinforces risk managing capacity by enabling real-time information sharing in public finance, such as revenues, expenditures, national assets and public debts.

2013 United Nations
Public Service Award Winner

Source: <https://eng.digital-brain.go.kr/en/view/main/index.jsp>



Box 4.2. Emirates ID Authority Smart ID Cards

The deployment of the Emirates ID Authority's Biometric Enrolment by the Emirates ID Authority as part of the National ID Registration Program is recognized as one of the world's best biometric programs. Emirates ID Authority collects finger prints of all the citizens and legal residents above the age of 15 in the country. It is mandatory for everyone residing in the country to be registered in the National Population Register. Considering the unique demographic composition of the country where expatriates amount to nearly 90 per cent of the population, the biometric enrolment is part of the mandatory health certification for all expatriates, making it convenient for the residents.

The current database boasts of over a 105 million prints of rolled fingerprints, plan and hand side prints, in addition to over 15 million facial images. The best two finger prints are stored in a secure, encrypted container in the Smart Card that is issued as the National ID Card. The Smart Card is provided with a Match-On-Card Applet which allows for a biometric verification and authentication enabling assertion of an individual's identity on demand. The security on the ID Card is ensured by the encrypted containers which is enabled only through the National Validation Gateway. All the biometrics, data transmission and protocols are as per ANSI and/or ISO Standards.

Source: <http://www.id.gov.ae/en/id-card/id-card-benefits.aspx>

Box 4.3. National Environment Agency Singapore (NEA)

The National Environment Agency has partnered with the people, public and private communities to engage and promote greater environment ownership in Singapore. One effort is the use of smart technologies to share environmental data (e.g. air quality, public health and weather) with government agencies and the public. NEA contributed to the development of 86 environment datasets and 17 spatial datasets for the Singapore Government data hub, SG-Data/GeoSpace, for inter-agency sharing. These datasets include weather information such as air quality, weather forecast, heavy rain warning, climate change, location of recycling bins. It also contributed 75 datasets and 8 map layers to the Singapore Government's one-stop portal service, www.data.gov.sg, for public use. Using smart phone technologies, NEA has co-created several mobile applications with private sector partners through crowd sourcing ideas from the public to promote greater environment ownership and provide real time information on environmental conditions.



2013 United Nations
Public Service Award Winner

Source: <http://app2.nea.gov.sg/>

Based on the 2014 *Survey* data, it is clear from the Table 4.3 that the majority of the online portals of Member States provide links to the websites of various ministries or departments; with only 26 countries, or 13 per cent not having such links. 17 countries provided links to 1 to 5 ministries or departments, 12 countries provided links to 6 to 10 ministries or departments and the majority (138 countries), that is 72 per cent, provided links to more than 10 ministries or departments. This number is higher compared to the 2012 data where 123 countries (64 per cent of United Nations Member States) provided more than 10 links.

Table 4.3. Countries with online portals with links to ministries

	<i>Countries with no links to ministries</i>	<i>Countries with 1–5 Links</i>	<i>Countries with 6–10 Links</i>	<i>Countries with more than 10 inks</i>
Africa	14	9	4	27
Asia	2	3	3	39
Europe	2	0	3	38
Americas	2	2	2	29
Oceania	6	3	0	5

In the 2012 *United Nations E-Government Survey*, 135 countries offered a “One-Stop-Shop” portal. The definition of such a portal was broader in 2012 and did allow for more leeway in what could be accounted for as a “One-Stop-Shop” portal. This number represented 70 per cent of Member States.

In 2014, the definition of “One-Stop-Shop” has been revised and made more restrictive and narrow. Hence the number of countries that still classified as offering such portals was reduced to 71 countries, or 37 per cent of Member States. However, even with a more restricting definition, the global trend has been a shift away from “One-Stop-Shop” portals into various specialized portals.



Box 4.4. France: Access to numerous government entities through a single national page

In addition to the national portal, the Government has also developed an official website for the French civil service, www.service-public.fr, available to private citizens, businesses and professionals. All administrative information is presented clearly and simply in three sections: First, citizen's rights and procedures. There are about 200 folders, 2,500 data sheets and answers to FAQs and several thousand links to useful resources, including forms, online procedures, reference texts, public websites, etc. Second, practical services to help with administrative procedures, such as online services, calculation modules, downloadable forms, standard letters, call and contact centres and a message service; third, a civil service directory including 11,000 national services, 70,000 local civil services and accesses to the main portals of the States in the European Union, European institutions and international organisations. The official civil service website facilitates and simplifies access to administrative information by selecting the various resources available on the public network and organizing them to meet citizens' needs. For each topic, [service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr) collects all the relevant information and makes it instantly available.

Source: <http://www.service-public.fr/>

4.4.4. Collaborative mechanisms to engage citizens in service delivery and decision-making processes: the critical role of decentralized governance

Given the opportunity to actively participate in service delivery, citizens can contribute distinctive resources (time, effort, ideas and expertise) and can keep public officials accountable. Moreover, citizens who depend on public services have strong motivation to contribute to their design and implementation; however, appropriate mechanisms are needed to adequately channel citizens' views, opinions and to involve them in the design and delivery of services and in solving the most pressing challenges of our times.

In other words, there is a strong paradigm shift in the role that civil society and the private sector can play in contributing to good governance. Whereas in the past citizens were seen as passive receivers of services and governments were the main providers of "solutions", today in all corners of the globe we witness a shift in how services are being conceptualized, managed and delivered. Where citizens are involved in public decision-making processes and in public service delivery, there is an increased sense of ownership and greater sustainability of public initiatives, as well as more creative ideas on how to do "more with less" and with greater equity.

Countries which have given priority to the involvement of civil society in identifying the social needs of local communities and citizens and in the implementation of social programmes and services, including education, health and sanitation, have made important strides. It is crucial to recognize that leadership is not confined to the government level. In fact, there are many examples of public leaders who operate within civil society and the private sector and work with governments to find suitable solutions to their problems. Experience has shown that

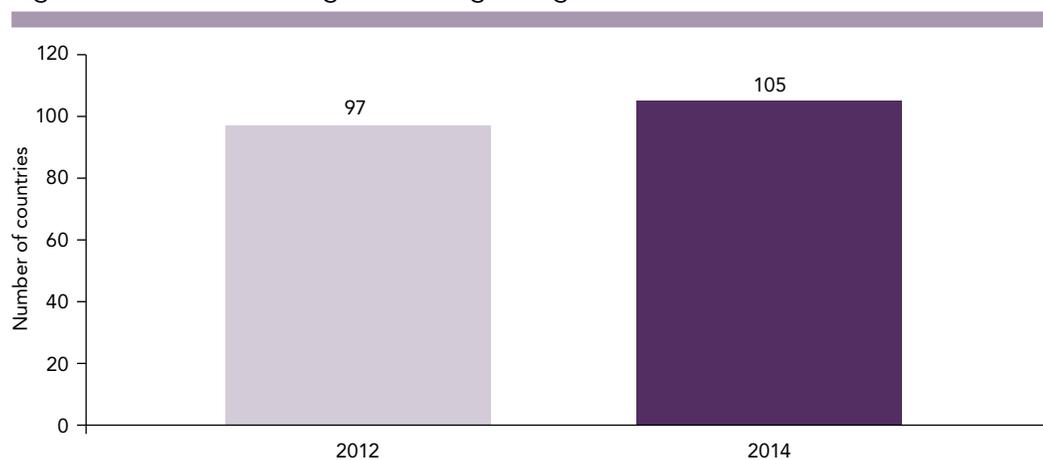
governments that have made progress in providing equitable and effective service delivery have developed innovative ideas and practices, making use, whenever possible, of information and communication technology, including social media and relying on strategic partnerships. Participatory leadership and innovation in addressing problems of public concern are increasingly emerging as the key factors in creating a better life for all.

One of the most effective institutional arrangements to allow citizens to effectively take part in decision-making processes as well as in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of service delivery is through decentralized governance. Devolution and decentralization allows local communities to formulate solutions tailored to their particular needs: citizens know best what their needs are. Through decentralized governance structures, communities can play an active role in democracy and setting development agendas that are responsive to their needs. They can shape service provision through participating and influencing decisions on the type, quality and mix of services they desire and can afford. As a result, closer alignment is needed between national-level priorities and local action for sustainable development. In this regard, the capacity of local governments is crucial.

Overall, weak decentralized governance hinders quality and access to basic services. The increasing power of ICTs has opened up a vast window of opportunities for new channels and modalities of participation in government service delivery. Some examples include the 311 service from the city of New York, to Boston CitizenConnect and many others. The use of social media, crowdsourcing and mobile technology, are providing powerful channels, if appropriately utilized, for citizen participation and empowered collaboration. Open data is also enabling more effective collaborative governance as access to information about what governments are doing better equips citizens to partake in public decision-making processes.

A greater focus on whole-of-government approaches and collaborative governance is also clear in the 2014 *Survey* data showing national portals providing links to local or regional government websites. From 97 countries in 2012 to 105 in 2014, this increase proves that a growing number of countries are adopting a strategy aimed at bringing government agencies closer to the people (see Figure 4.4). By linking the national portal to local or regional government websites, states encourage their citizens to use services provided both at the national and local levels.

Figure 4.4. Portals linking to local/regional government websites



4.4.5. IT management strategies for enhanced collaboration

The global spread of the Internet and the application of ICTs in government, as well as greater investments in telecommunication infrastructure coupled with capacity-building in human capital can provide opportunities to transform public administration into an instrument of development at the service of its citizens.

A comprehensive IT strategy for collaboration in government and with appropriate outside actors is required in order to seize these opportunities. The strategy needs to be closely aligned with overall vision and mission of the government so that it can best respond to the needs of enhanced collaboration. An IT strategy that is disjointed from the overall organizational missions will not deliver the expected results. In order to effectively design and implement an IT management strategy for collaboration the following steps need to be taken:

- Engage main stakeholders (within and outside government) in defining an overall mission to be aligned with the overall vision of the public sector
- Assess the internal capacities to utilize the available technology
- Design a comprehensive strategy, including capacity building programmes
- Implement the IT strategy for collaboration
- Monitor and evaluate the strategy

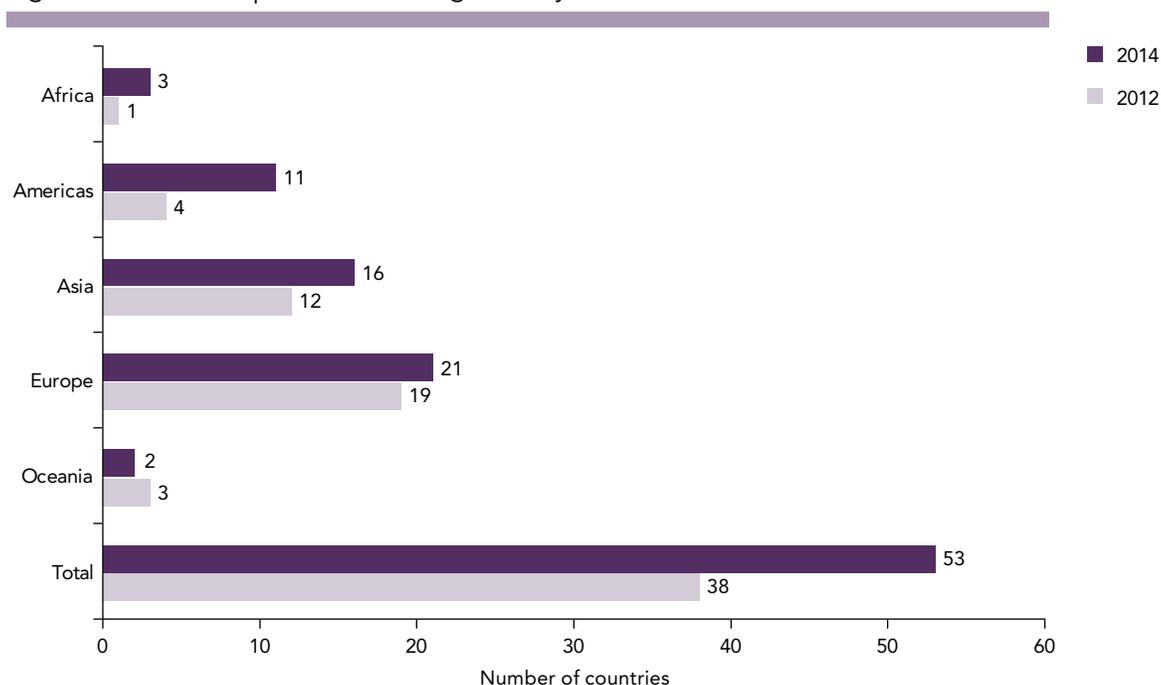
A key component of whole of government is “the ability of multiple government and non-government organizations to share and integrate information across their traditional organizational boundaries”.⁷ One of the greatest challenges to promoting effective collaborative governance is that too much emphasis has been placed on interoperability as being merely a technical issue. While technology certainly plays an important role, there are other important factors instrumental to effective collaboration and service integration.

It is also important to bear in mind that while the use of ICT has greatly improved service delivery and reduced the time needed for any government transaction to be processed, it is not without risks. As governments require personal and sometimes sensitive data to be shared electronically, such as social security numbers, bank accounts information for payment of fees and medical history profiles, the protection of such data is crucial in building trust in, and increasing the usage of, online services.

A key point of the back-end work is to create a seamless front-end experience for users. People do not have to know the agency, department or level of government providing the services but rather just be able to find it and use it in an effective manner.

Since 2012, there has been an increase in the number of online portals indicating a security feature. Europe is the leader in ICT security and protection with 21 countries providing a security feature, as opposed to 19 in 2012. Asia is second with 16 countries providing a security feature, followed by the Americas with 11 countries, Africa with three countries and Oceania with two countries. Globally, the total number of portals with a security feature jumped from 38 in 2012, to 53 in 2014 (see Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5. Online portals indicating security features



The electronic identity management feature in national portals is an important way governments can regulate, monitor and standardize access to its online services. Citizens wishing to use e-services can access a vast range of online services through unique credentials that allow the system to recognize the user, tailor the services to his or her needs and allow easy and fast tracking of the status of transactions. Hence, users no longer have to memorize many credentials and usernames in order to access e-services. This feature is also beneficial to the government in that it allows all agencies, providing different services, to have coherent and cohesive and similar information about users. This reduces bureaucratic procedures, minimizes redundancies and replication within the agencies and maximizes the output to citizens. The number of countries offering such a feature has increased from 52 in 2012 to 69 in 2014, or an increase of 9 percentage points in 2 years (see Table 4.4). Figure 4.6 describes the number of government agencies using this feature at national level.

Table 4.4. Use of electronic identity management feature

	<i>Electronic Identity Management</i>	
	2012	2014
Number of countries	52	69
Global per centage	27%	36%

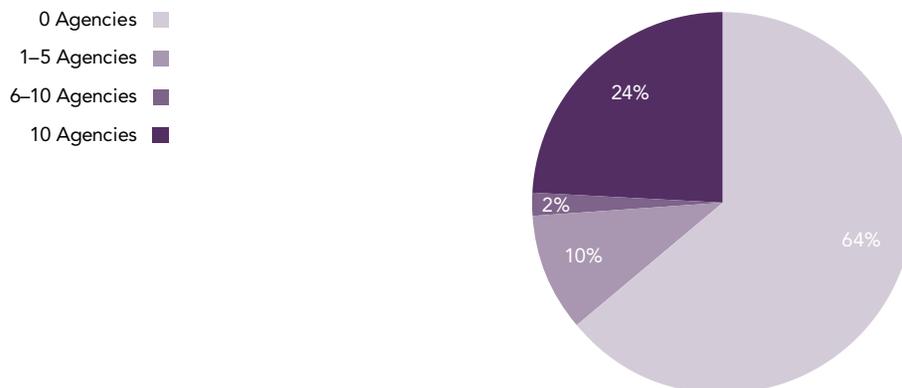
More than half of the United Nations Member States are providing links to e-procurement platforms or announcements for bidding processes on their national portals. 63 countries provide such features, with 55 Member States providing information about the results of procurement/bidding processes, 33 countries provide information about monitoring and evaluating existing contracts, and 54 countries provide an online tracking system for transactions and applications.

The high number of portals providing e-procurement platforms is an indicator that governments are moving away from a one-sided interaction between the public and the private sectors, where governments are the sole providers of services and information to citizens and businesses and are moving closer towards a 2-way interaction, where governments are also requesting services from the private sector through their online portal (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Countries providing procurement announcements, evaluations and results

	<i>Number of Countries</i>	<i>% of total countries</i>
National portal(s) providing an e-procurement platform or a link to e-procurement announcements for bidding processes	63	33%
National portal(s) providing information about results of procurement/bidding processes	55	28%
National portal(s) providing any information about monitoring and evaluation of existing procurement contracts	33	17%
National portal(s) indicating an online tracking system for transactions such as applying for grants, permits etc.	54	28%

Figure 4.6. Number of government agencies using the same identity management feature at the national level



4.5. Conclusion

We are living in times characterized by high levels of inter-dependence, complexity and uncertainty with great challenges ahead but also many new opportunities offered by the rapid advancements in technological innovations and growing awareness of the potential of empowered societies and collaborative governance for sustainable development. To overcome the many multi-faceted challenges our societies face, including poverty eradication, climate change, social injustice, human rights violations, unemployment, among others, Governments are increasingly addressing economic, social and environmental issues in an integrated manner through a holistic transformation of government and by delivering services through integrated and citizen-centric whole-of-government approaches.

Governments in many parts of the world are becoming more collaborative, open and transparent, innovative and inclusive by engaging citizens, communities, NGOs and the private sector in devising and implementing together solutions to society's challenges. Collaborative governance, which can provide a sustainable framework for addressing the challenges of sustainable development, is not easy to implement, but the lessons learned from this Chapter can be summarized as follows:

- Develop a shared and holistic vision of sustainable development at the national level;
- Ensure political commitment;
- Put in place collaborative leadership and capacity development;
- Cultivate a collaborative organizational culture coupled with strong incentive systems;
- Establish new coordination institutional arrangements and processes with clearly defined roles and responsibilities and well-defined accountability mechanisms;
- Set up integrated IT management strategies;
- Work towards achieving a balance between openness and privacy;
- Mobilize resources.

A holistic government transformation enabled by greater levels of collaboration can present significant opportunities for more prosperous and empowered societies and for development that is sustainable for generations to come.