

OECD Workshop on Digital Government Indicators

Designing new digital government indicators: Assessing countries' efforts to leverage digital technologies for public sector productivity and inclusive governance

6 September 2016

Summary report

The OECD Workshop on Digital Government Indicators held by the Secretariat brought together government delegates and international organisations' representatives to discuss the OECD methodological approach to the development of new digital government indicators and explore possibilities for data collection to improve availability and quality of indicators. The main purpose of the development of new digital government indicators is to measure countries' progress in implementing the OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies. Adopted by the OECD Council in July 2014, the Recommendation supports governments in using digital technologies strategically, as a core enabler of public sector reforms and to foster more efficient, open, participatory and innovative governments. The development of new indicators will support the reporting by the Secretariat to the Council of the OECD in 2017 with regards to the progresses made by adhering Governments in the implementation of the Recommendation. The digital government indicators measuring the 12 principles of the Recommendation will be embedded in the third section of the Digital Government Toolkit that will progressively be expanded in its content to include a self-assessment maturity model and the indicators,

In line with the OECD approach, the framework to develop the new digital government indicators will be based on the Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies. Prior to the meeting, country delegates provided input regarding their data collection (priorities and practices), which was elaborated upon during the meeting to prioritise the choice on the principles of the Recommendation for indicators development. The decision to take a pragmatic approach, guided by the desirability and feasibility of data collection for each of the principles, was discussed and taken at the meeting.

Delegates agreed on the Secretariat's proposal to focus initial efforts on a selected number of principles (up to a maximum of three) for indicator development, as a first step towards a full set of digital government indicators covering the 12 principles embedded in the Recommendation. In the next 12 months the OECD will prioritise the development of key indicators drawing upon discussions held with delegates and the priorities of the Secretariat.

Session 1: The OECD work on digital government indicators in light of the Recommendation

The first session of the workshop provided the participants with the opportunity to familiarise with the OECD's previous work on digital government indicators – started in 2010 - and its evolution. The paradigm shift from e-government to digital government (as described in the OECD Recommendation) was explained, as well as its impact for measuring the progress made by governments in using digital technologies within public administrations.

Country priorities and needs in terms of measurement were discussed, in order to support the assessment of the desirability of indicators development in relation to the different principles. Three key aspects came out during the discussions:

(1) the need to assess how digital technologies transform the relation between government and its constituents (creating value for citizens through more convenient i) user-driven, ii) inclusive, iii) open and iv) digital by default public service design and delivery;

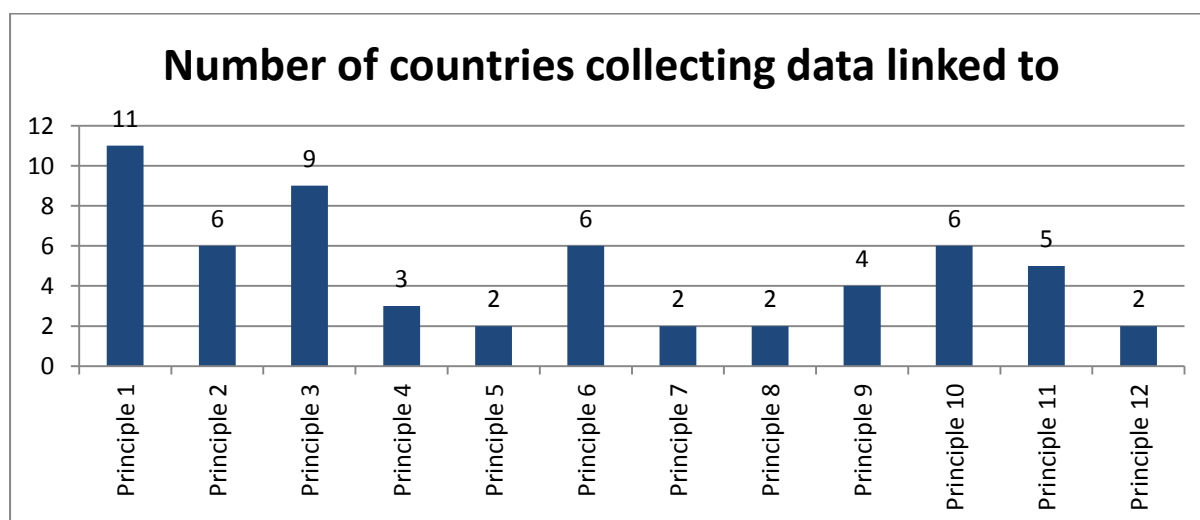
(2) the importance of looking at the effectiveness and continuity of high-level leadership and political commitment to ensure sustainable digital government strategies and initiatives; and,

(3) the relevance of creating a clearer and better measurable understanding of how digital technologies are enhancing public sector performance by making governments more efficient and effective in their daily activities.

It was highlighted that for indicators to be useful for member countries, they would need to be actionable and useful to support concrete decisions. Finally, country delegates underlined the need to harmonise or strengthen the complementarity of other international benchmarks and measurements with OECD indicators to facilitate data collection and provision at the national level.

Session 2: Assessing the landscape: highlighting issues, priorities and practices in OECD, accession and partner countries for measuring digital government

The OECD Secretariat mapped existing national indicators and data collection practices linked to the principles of the Recommendation based on the input received prior to the meeting. The session allowed countries to compare their current approaches to measurements, their areas of focus and the feasibility of collecting data for the development of specific indicators over the next year. In particular, during the second session, the sharing of information on existing country practices – on data collection and indicators - served to inform the discussion on the feasibility of the development of indicators linked to the different principles. There was a general agreement that the prioritisation should be based on: data availability, viability of data collection, relevance.

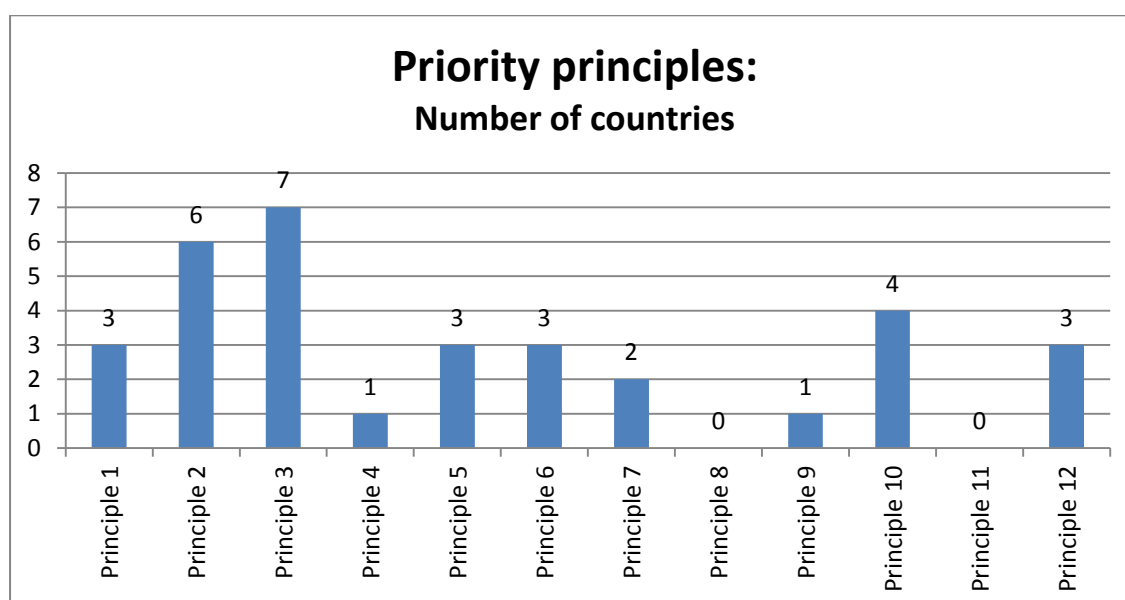


Source: OECD elaboration based on call for input for the digital government indicators meeting.

Session 3: Next steps: determining an agenda for Digital Government Indicators

The third session allowed country delegates to share their views on priorities for indicators' development, decide on the next steps to be taken and on the principles to focus on, in the first stage of indicators development. The OECD Secretariat provided a presentation on the methodology and on the timeline for the elaboration of the survey and for the data collection. The Secretariat and the Countries agreed on the importance of being ambitious, but also highlighted the need to be realistic and pragmatic. On this basis, the decision was to start the data collection in the fall of 2016 and realistically expect to have a first set of indicators by the end of 2017. Efforts will be coordinated with the on-going and future measurement work done by the UN and the European Commission.

The preferences expressed by the delegates in terms of principles prioritisation for the development of digital government indicators are as follows:



Source: OECD elaboration based on call for input for the digital government indicators meeting.

During the third session of the meeting, countries stressed once more the need to assess maturity in digital public service delivery and digital government performance, which ultimately should have concrete impact on citizen and business lives, on their interaction with their government, and on public sector efficiency. For example, indicators on the regulatory framework, the political commitment and leadership can all be linked to the measurement of efforts made to improve data driven public sector that can result in better digital service delivery. Delegates also reiterated the importance of articulating clearly the purpose of the measurement (*measuring for what?*).

In brief, the main directions to guide the prioritisation of the principles to develop digital government indicators can be summed up and grouped as follows:

1. Transparency and interaction with the users (engagement). Aspects specific to this dimension could include/cover:

- Service users' satisfaction (citizens, business and civil servants)
- Better use of data / including Open Government Data

2. Organisational and governance element. Aspects specific to this dimension could include/cover:

- Contribution of the individual ministries/agencies to the achievement of the nation digital government plan and or/agenda's goals
- Alignment of local level and agencies with the overarching strategy and plan
- Distributed responsibilities
- Stability of political commitment and leadership across time

3. Internal changes and usage of the building blocks

- Penetration of ICT systems : degree of reuse, sharing, interoperability (of systems, data, etc)
- Usage/uptake across the administration of generic key enablers (technical, legal, e-ID etc) part of the digital infrastructure (building blocks and platforms that the whole administration can subscribe to)
- Use of standards
- Consolidation efforts
- Existence and use of national databases/registries (e.g. catalogues being completed across the public administration and quality of management of those databases)
- Financial aspects and standardisation of expenditures
- Skillsets (existing pockets within the administration)

Based on country inputs prior to, during and following the meeting and the discussion between participants, the OECD will propose a final selection of principles for indicator development and form a working group of selected countries who will be closely involved in the elaboration of the indicators. The outcome of the discussion will be reported to the Working Party of Senior Digital Government Indicators that will meet on Tallinn on September 22 and 23, 2016 and the official decision reported to the group of experts that participated in the meeting and that will be engaged with the Secretariat in development of new indicators.