Capacity Building Workshop on
Strengthening National Capacities for Spreading Digitalization at Local Levels
Co-organized by UNDESA, UNU-EGOV, UN ESCAP
Bangkok, 21-23 November 2023

Background

Cities play a vital role in delivering public services and meeting residents' needs making local governments crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The growing global attention on urbanization and digital transformation highlights the importance of providing online services at the local level. Well-functioning local government portals can enhance the liveability of cities and improve the responsiveness of local governments, leading to increased resident satisfaction. However, the focus on e-government development has primarily been at the national level, despite the increasing accessibility of digital technologies at the subnational level in urban areas.

Regular assessment and evaluation of government portals are key to enhancing e-government effectiveness. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) incorporated local e-government assessment into the E-Government Survey in 2018. Over the years, the number of assessed cities and employed online service indicators has steadily increased under the Local Online Services Index (LOSI) pilot study. The 2022 edition of the LOSI Survey includes 86 indicators and assesses the most populous city in each of the 193 United Nations Member States to ensure broad population coverage.

According to the 2022 Survey, 146 out of 193 cities have accessible and assessed e-government portals. However, 47 cities have not yet developed such portals, with 21% located in the Americas, 47% in Africa, and 11% in Asia. Almost half of the cities with e-government portals (49%) have obtained low to middle LOSI scores, indicating a need for significant improvement in adopting LOSI service features. Addressing the challenges related to SDG achievement, the use of emerging technologies like AI and blockchains, and comprehending the broader issues in e-government are essential to empower local digital services. Within these cities, 17% are in the Americas, 42% in Africa, and 27% in Asia. In terms of special country groupings, 17% are from Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and 34% are from Least Developed Countries (LDC).

The findings from the LOSI assessment reveal that many cities, particularly in Asia, the Americas, and Africa, require support in developing online services and utilizing innovative tools for citizen engagement. Limited budgets, restricted access to sustainable digital infrastructure, and a lack of knowledge contribute to the absence of these tools in delivering public services and meeting local needs.

At the request of several countries, UN DESA, in collaboration with UN ESCAP and UNU-EGOV is organizing an informative workshop in Bangkok, from 21—23 November 2023. The objective of this workshop is to provide knowledge and technical support to strengthen national capacities for spreading digitization at the local level, thereby advancing SDG 11.

During the workshop, training for using a newly developed Digitalization Toolkit for Local Governments will be given. The toolkit is a set of comprehensive materials on local e-government development and will serve as a practical resource, incorporating successful cases and strategies from around the world. The workshop will also include presentations from various countries on their experience in applying the LOSI methodology and best practices for inclusive local online services using ICTs and emerging technologies.

Objective

The workshop in November 2023 aims to:

i) Strengthen national capacities for spreading digitization at the local level, thereby advancing SDG 11, by providing knowledge and technical support;

ii) Increase knowledge of government officials both at national and local levels in utilizing information communication technologies (ICT) and emerging technologies to deliver inclusive public services online;

iii) Create further synergies between national and local digital government development initiatives through a whole-of-government approach and;

iv) Increase awareness and showcase the value of monitoring and evaluating local e-government initiatives.

Simultaneously, this workshop will act as a dynamic forum for knowledge sharing, best practices, and capacity building in local e-government development It will essentially help strengthen collaboration among government agencies, with the support of UN DESA, ESCAP, and UNU-EGOV, both at the national and local levels. Furthermore, it will play a pivotal role in promoting gender equality, disability inclusivity, and the protection of human rights within the digital era.

The Organization of the Workshop

Date and Time

The UNDESA, UN ESCAP, and UNU-EGOV will organize the workshop in a face-to-face setting in Bangkok on 21-23 November 2023. The workshop will comprise six sessions, each of which will be facilitated by competent resource persons and experts from relevant agencies. The proposed agenda and program of work for the workshop are enclosed below.

Target Audience

- High-level civil servants responsible for digital transformation and public service delivery at the national levels
- Local government officials responsible for digital government
- Representatives of Management Development Institutions (MDI), especially those involved in capacity building in the area of e-government
- Representatives of development partners involved in supporting digital transformation of the public sector and public administration capacity development

The target beneficiaries above will be selected based on their responsibilities for delivering public services within their respective governments/institutions. Gender balance will be addressed through all activities.

Expected Outcome

Participants are expected to actively contribute to the workshop and provide input to improve the Digitalization Toolkit for Local Governments and create a common understanding of the challenges faced by the Member States in their efforts to digitize at the local level and identify solutions and responses to those challenges.

The workshop aims to provide knowledge and technical support to strengthen national capacities for spreading digitization at the local level, thereby advancing SDG 11. It also aims to enhance innovation and digital government transformation for effective and inclusive public service delivery.

Language

The working language of the workshop will be English, and no interpretation services will be provided.

Background Reading

- Local Online Service Index Flyer: https://rebrand.ly/LOSI-Flyer
- Application of Local Online Service Index (LOSI) Methodology in Countries: https://rebrand.ly/Application-LOSI-in-countries
- Chapter 3 on Local E-Government Development from United Nations E-Government Survey 2022: https://rebrand.ly/Chapter-3-E-GOV-Survey-2022
- Effective National to Local Public Governance for SDG Implementation

Tentative Program

	Day 1 (21 November 2023)	
09:00-10:00	**Welcome and Opening Session** UN DESA, UN ESCAP, UNU-EGOV	

10:00-13:00	**Session 1 – LOCAL E-GOVERNMENT TOOLKIT**
	    Briefing of the United Nations E-Government Survey 2022 and Results on Local E-Government Development
	    Introduction to the Application of LOSI Methodology
	    Using tools from the Local E-Government Toolkit Course	

13:00-14:00	**Lunch**	
14:00-17:00	**Session 2 – LOSI PILOT RESULTS** These sessions (divided in two) will showcase the results from the following countries' application of the LOSI methodology in multiple cities to assess e-government, in partnership with UN DESA. It will showcase the pilot's results, challenges, and recommendations to improving a country's efforts to digitize at the local level. • Brazil, Jordan,The State of Palestine	
17:00-17:15	**Wrap up**	
	Day 2 (22 November 2023)	
9:00-9:15	**Welcome**	
09:15-13:00	**Session 3 –BEST PRACTICES – PROVISION OF CONTENT AND SERVICES** These sessions (divided in three) will provide some best practices and tools from countries and their respective cities to improve a range of features for effective and inclusive local online services. This session will highlight strategies to improve cities' provision of content and services.	
13:00-14:00	**Lunch**	
14:00-17:00	**Session 4 – CONTINUATION OF LOSI PILOT RESULTS** • India, Greece, Mozambique, Uzbekistan	
17:00-17:15	**Wrap up**	
	Day 3 (23 November 2023)	
9:00-9:15	**Welcome**	
9:15-13:00	**Session 5 – CONTNUATION OF BEST PRACTICES – INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK** This session will highlight strategies to improve cities' institutional framework.	
13:00-14:00	**Lunch**	
14:00-16:00	**Session 6 – CONTNUATION OF BEST PRACTICES IN TECHNOLOGY, PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT** This session will highlight strategies to improve cities' technology and participation and engagement features.	
16:00-17:00	**Closing and next steps**	