Digital technologies are transforming the way citizens live, work and interact. The disruption brought about by technologies such as social media, mobile and smart phones, artificial intelligence, blockchain and advanced data analytics is also raising citizen's expectations of public service efficiency, quality, responsiveness and convenience. Governments must quickly adapt to this new and challenging environment, rethinking internal procedures, upgrading service delivery approaches, reframing ways of interacting with citizens and adjusting governance frameworks. Digital economies and societies require digital governments.

Digital government strategies are important for helping governments align institutional objectives, define strategic initiatives and identify the necessary capacities and resources for coherent implementation across sectors and government levels. Most citizen services are delivered at the sub-national and local levels. As service digitalisation becomes more important, a co-ordinated digital government approach provides seamlessness and cross-service synergies, as well as helping less well-resourced sub-national bodies. Clear institutional frameworks are also essential for co-ordination among digital government public stakeholders.

In SEA countries, all governments have developed a national strategy for digital government at the central level. Digital government strategies also apply at the sub-national level in six SEA countries (Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam), and at the local level in seven (Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam). These proportions are similar to the situation in the OECD in 2014 – all countries have a national strategy; 48% a sub-national strategy and 41% a local strategy. All SEA countries except Myanmar reported using performance indicators to monitor progress on digital government policies. The Australian Digital Transformation Agency provides a good example of leadership and co-ordinated efforts across different sectors of government.

Regarding institutional frameworks, the vast majority of SEA countries have a mutual co-ordination process or mechanism formally in place between units responsible for public sector information and communication technology (ICT) projects. The only exception is Thailand, demonstrating room for improvement in the country's capacity to involve different sectors and levels of government for coherent digital government implementation. All other SEA countries co-ordinate across central government at a minimum. Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Viet Nam also co-ordinate across all levels of government. Malaysia is the only country that also co-ordinates across local levels of government, such as municipalities, reflecting the fact that Malaysia is the only federal country in the region.

In all SEA countries, digital strategies cover general public services (e.g. permits, licences, certificates) to their citizens and businesses. In most countries in the region, notably Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Malaysia,

the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, digital strategies have a wider scope that extends to other policy areas, such as education, economy, health, recreation, culture and religion, and social protection. Indonesia, Lao PDR and Myanmar currently have the least comprehensive digital government strategies, though it can be expected that their strategies will be extended as digital technologies are progressively included across more policy areas. The four OECD countries in the region have digital strategies that cover all of these policy areas (with the exception of Australia which does not cover health policy, though this is likely due to the federated responsibilities for this topic).

Financial resources are critical for effectively and sustainably implementing digital government strategies. In eight of the SEA countries, some of the main funding sources are the same ministries and authorities that are covered by the strategy. Of those eight, only Brunei Darussalam does not receive additional funding from the ministry charged with co-ordinating the strategy. This reflects shared responsibilities in the implementation and funding of digital government activities. Additional funding from the co-ordinating body can also be used as an incentive to collaborate, as a way of helping lagging bodies to catch up, and as a way to get ministries to voluntarily adopt shared standards and solutions.

Methodology and definitions

Data were collected through the OECD Digital Government Performance Survey and refer to 2014 for OECD countries and 2018 for SEA countries. Respondents were predominantly chief information officers (CIOs) or their equivalent at central government. The survey was completed in ten SEA countries and 25 OECD countries.

Further reading

OECD (forthcoming), *The Digital Transformation of the Public Sector: Helping Governments Respond to the Needs of Networked Societies*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2016), *Digital Government in Chile: Strengthening the Institutional and Governance Framework*, OECD Digital Government Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2014), "Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies", OECD Publishing, Paris.

Figure note

6.1: Brunei Darussalam and Singapore have a single layer of government (i.e. the central government).

6.1. Existence of a mutual co-ordination process or mechanism formally in place between units responsible for public sector ICT projects, 2018

	Across central government (e.g. sector CIO co-ordination)	Across all levels of government (e.g. central-local co-ordination)	Across local levels of government (e.g. co-ordination between municipalities)
Brunei Darussalam	●	○	○
Cambodia	●	○	○
Indonesia	●	●	○
Lao PDR	●	○	○
Malaysia	●	●	●
Myanmar	●	●	○
Philippines	●	○	○
Singapore	●	○	○
Thailand	○	○	○
Viet Nam	●	●	○
SEA Total	9	4	1
Australia	●	○	○
Japan	●	●	○
Korea	●	●	●
New Zealand	●	○	○
OECD Total	21	7	7

Key:

Yes = ●

No = ○

Sources: For SEA countries, OECD (2018) Digital Government Performance Survey. For OECD countries, OECD (2014) Digital Government Performance Survey.

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6.2. Main features of digital government strategies, 2018

	Level			Most Common Policy Areas						Main Funding Sources			
	Central	Regional	Local	General public services	Education	Economic	Health	Recreation, culture and religion	Social protection	Ministry charged with co-ordinating the strategy	The ministries and authorities covered by the strategy	Separate earmarked central government fund	Varying sources depending on the specific ICT projects in the strategy
Brunei Darussalam	●	○	○	●	●	○	●	●	●	○	●	●	○
Cambodia	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
Indonesia	●	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	●
Lao PDR	●	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	●
Malaysia	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
Myanmar	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	○	●	●	●	○
Philippines	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
Singapore	●	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●
Thailand	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Viet Nam	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
SEA Total	10	6	7	10	8	7	7	7	7	7	8	5	3
Australia	●	○	○	●	●	●	○	●	●	○	●	○	○
Japan	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	○
Korea	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	○	○
New Zealand	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●
OECD Total	25	12	10	25	16	15	13	9	14	14	19	4	8

Key:

Yes = ●

No = ○

Sources: For SEA countries, OECD (2018) Digital Government Performance Survey. For OECD countries, OECD (2014) Digital Government Performance Survey.

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