

The OECD describes co-ordinating and implementing open government strategies and initiatives as “a culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth” (OECD, 2016). Like other cross-cutting and ambitious reform processes, this poses a range of challenges. If the strategy and initiatives are not adequately implemented, countries cannot fully benefit or achieve better public governance outcomes. One way to ensure proper implementation is for countries to demonstrate their political will to overcome the challenges they face.

Of the top three challenges to co-ordinating open government initiatives, the most commonly reported by the SEA countries (by five of the seven) was the lack of, or insufficient mandate for, the co-ordinating institution. For both Cambodia and Viet Nam, this was the main challenge. Three of the SEA countries (37.5%) cited the lack of or insufficient incentives among government institutions to co-ordinate as one of their top three challenges, compared to 57% of OECD countries (their most common challenge). Furthermore, the lack of or insufficient incentives was noted as one of the top three challenges in Japan and as the main challenge in Korea. This seems to indicate that formal institutional co-ordination mechanisms are a necessary but insufficient step in ensuring a coherent approach to open government; ultimately, countries will need to address the values and incentives that underlie greater openness.

When it comes to implementation challenges, one of the most pressing is insufficient financial resources, identified in five of the seven SEA countries. For Malaysia and Singapore, this is the main challenge. Four of the SEA countries listed general resistance to change in the public sector; lack of or inappropriate implementation mechanisms; lack of or insufficient human resources; and lack of or insufficient awareness of the benefits to open government among public officials as challenges to implementation. However, only Indonesia listed one of these – general resistance to change in the public sector – as the top challenge. In contrast, 63% of OECD countries referred to the lack of awareness of open government reform benefits among public officials as one of the key challenges to implementing the open government strategy and initiatives, including Australia and Japan, which ranked this as the main challenge.

Implementing open government principles requires new skills and attitudes from public servants. Human

resources management (HRM) practices therefore need to be adjusted to promote open government and help ensure that staff are able to incorporate the relevant skills into their daily activities. Indonesia and Singapore, however, indicate that no concrete actions have been taken to promote open government initiatives through HRM practices. Cambodia, the Philippines and Viet Nam note that they promote the implementation of open government initiatives in a number of ways: by including open government principles and practices in public officials’ performance agreements, evaluations or accountability frameworks; by requiring officials to regularly report publicly on progress made in implementing them; and by requiring officials to regularly report internally on progress made in implementing them.

Methodology and definitions

The SEA data were collected through the OECD Open Government and Open Data Survey, conducted in 2018 in Southeast Asia. The survey questions regarding challenges were answered by seven countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. Respondents were predominantly senior government officials in charge of open government reforms.

The data for OECD countries were collected in 2015 through the Open Government Co-ordination and Citizen Participation in the Policy Cycle Survey. Respondents were predominantly senior government officials in charge of open government reforms.

Further reading

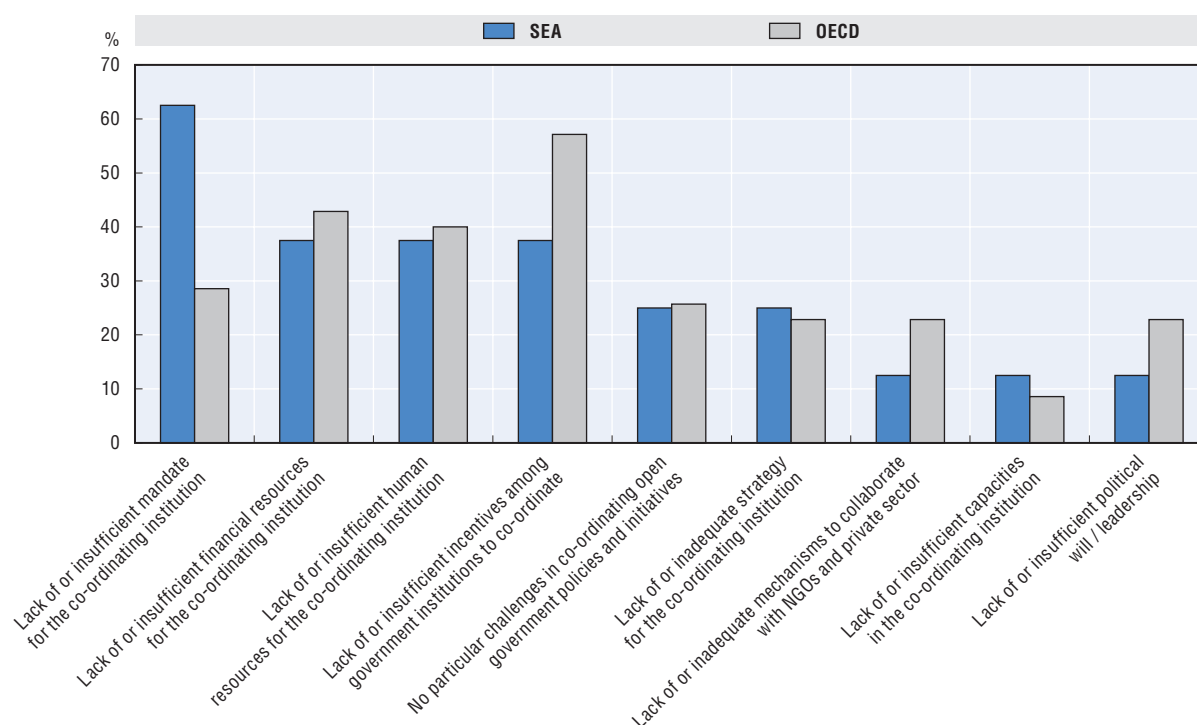
OECD (2016), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en>.

Figure notes

6.17. and 6.18: Data for the SEA average were calculated based on the responses from the seven countries which responded to these questions.

6.18: Countries provided data for the 5 main challenges in implementing open government initiatives.

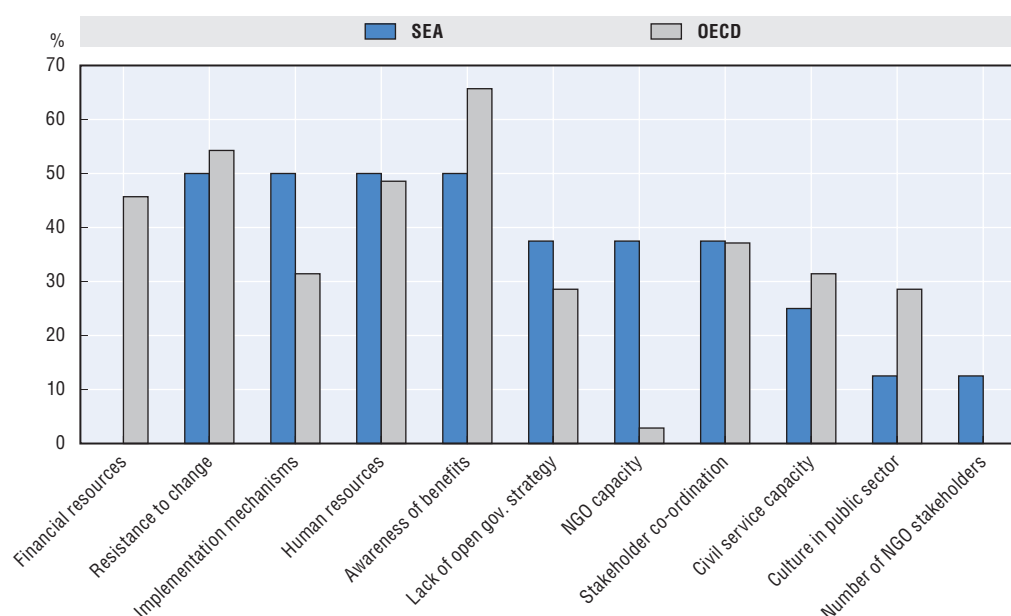
6.17. Main challenges in co-ordinating open government policies and initiatives, 2018



Sources: For SEA countries, OECD (2018) Open Government and Open Data Survey. For OECD countries, OECD (2015) Open Government and Open Data Survey.

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888933841520>

6.18. Main challenges in implementing open government initiatives, 2018



Sources: For SEA countries, OECD (2018) Open Government and Open Data Survey. For OECD countries, OECD (2015) Open Government and Open Data Survey.

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888933841539>



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