United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

E-Government Survey 2026

From Digital Government to Agentic Government

25th Anniversary Edition



Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNITED NATIONS E-GOVERNMENT SURVEY 2026

FROM DIGITAL GOVERNMENT TO AGENTIC GOVERNMENT

25th Anniversary Edition



UNITED NATIONS
New York, 2026
https://ekap.desa.un.org/

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is a vital interface between global policies in the economic, social and environmental spheres and national action. The Department works in three main interlinked areas: (i) it compiles, generates and analyses a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and information on which States Members of the United Nations draw to review common problems and to take stock of policy options; (ii) it facilitates the negotiations of Member States in many intergovernmental bodies on joint course of action to address ongoing or emerging global challenges; and (iii) it advises interested Governments on the ways and means of translating policy frameworks developed in United Nations conferences and summits into programmes at the country level and, through technical assistance, helps build national capacities.

Disclaimers

The terms 'country' and 'economy' as used in this Report refer, as appropriate, to territories or areas; the designations employed and the presentation of the material do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. In addition, the designations of country groups are intended solely for statistical or analytical convenience and do not express a judgement about the stage of development reached by a particular country or area in the development process. Reference to companies and their activities should not be construed as an endorsement by the United Nations of those companies or their activities.

Copyright © United Nations, 2026

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission.

ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/219
Sales no.: E.26.II.H.2
PRINT ISBN: 9789211552805
PDF ISBN: 9789211588736
EPUB ISBN: 9789211552812
Print ISSN: 2411-8257
Online ISSN (eISSN): 2411-829X

United Nations E-Government Surveys:

2026 From Digital Government to Agentic Government
2024 Accelerating Digital Transformation for Sustainable Development
2022 The Future of Digital Government
2020 Digital Government in the Decade of Action for Sustainable Development
2018 Gearing E-Government to support transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies
2016 E-Government for Sustainable Development
2014 E-Government for the Future We Want
2012 E-Government for the People
2010 Leveraging E-Government at a Time of Financial and Economic crisis
2008 From E-Government to connected Governance
2005 From E-Government to E-Inclusion
2004 Towards Access for Opportunity
2003 World Public Sector Report: E-Government at the crossroads
2001 Benchmarking E-Government: A Global Perspective

Website: https://ekap.desa.un.org/
Layout: INTERMID, intermid.net
Cover Design: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DPIDG), New York
Photo credit: shutterstock.com, studio4.net, OpenAI, AI-generated image: INTERMID
Printed at the United Nations, New York

Preface



The 2026 United Nations E-Government Survey marks twenty-five years of global assessment at a decisive moment for public administration. Digital identity, interoperable platforms, data-sharing systems and cloud infrastructure are becoming embedded in government operations, while in some cases, artificial intelligence is moving beyond experimentation into public service delivery, administrative decision support and the anticipation of people's needs. The question is no longer whether governments will use new technologies and AI, but how they can govern them in ways that strengthen public institutions, create public value and sustain trust.

The findings reveal a significant upward shift in global digital government development. In 2026, 151 of the 194 countries assessed are in the high or very high E-Government Development Index (EGDI) groups, and countries moving to a higher group outnumber those moving downward by four to one. Online services have been the principal driver of this progress, with digital delivery expanding across life events, economic and social sectors, and services for groups in vulnerable situations.

Yet wider availability does not necessarily translate into effective use or better outcomes. Most services assessed have not reached full end-to-end digitalization, and opportunities for meaningful public participation continue to lag behind. Progress in online services has also outpaced advances in connectivity and human capital, particularly in countries in special situations. This imbalance shows that digital transformation cannot be measured by the number of portals or services alone. Affordability, digital skills, institutional capacity, accessibility and public trust shape whether people can benefit from them.

The digital divide has therefore not disappeared; it is changing in character. Some 1.95 billion people—nearly one quarter of the world's population—live in countries with EGDI values below the global average. The divide increasingly lies between the presence of digital services and their practical usability; between national readiness and people's lived experience; and between access to technology and the institutional capacity to deploy and govern it effectively. Accelerating progress requires differentiated support that reflects the structural circumstances of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries affected by fragility and conflict.

The 2026 Local Online Service Index presents a similarly evolving picture. The main challenge is shifting from establishing digital interfaces to integrating services, completing transactions, improving accessibility and enabling meaningful engagement. Strong national frameworks remain essential, but they do not automatically produce strong local outcomes. Municipal leadership, institutional capacity, governance arrangements and the ability to translate national strategies into effective local services are increasingly decisive.

Artificial intelligence introduces a further transition. AI-enabled and potentially agentic forms of public administration could reduce administrative burdens, identify unmet needs and make public services more proactive and responsive. However, this is an institutional transformation, not merely a technological upgrade. Its contribution to sustainable development will depend on trusted data, resilient infrastructure, cybersecurity, digital and data sovereignty, inclusive design, auditable

safeguards, human oversight and clear accountability. Without these foundations, the existing digital divide risks evolving into a deeper AI divide characterized by unequal access to computing capacity, high-quality data, specialized skills and the ability to shape and govern emerging technologies.

The Survey reinforces the importance of connecting global evidence with practical implementation. Ultimately, progress should be judged not by rankings or the number of digital and AI applications deployed, but by whether public institutions become more capable, inclusive, accountable and resilient—and whether people can access services that are responsive to their needs and worthy of their trust. As the international community approaches 2030, the task is not simply to digitize more, but to ensure that digital and AI transformation strengthens public institutions, advances sustainable development and leaves no one behind. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs will continue to support Member States through assessment, policy research, capacity development, knowledge exchange and cooperation at both the national and local levels.



LI Junhua
Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations

Acknowledgements

The 2026 United Nations E-Government Survey was prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (UN DESA), through its Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG). The report was prepared under the leadership of Juwang Zhu, Director of DPIDG, by the Digital Government Branch (DGB) team led by Vincenzo Aquaro, Chief of DGB. The team members were Arpine Korekyan, Junho Lee, Madeleine Losch, Deniz Susar, and Monina Tran.

The lead authors of the chapters were: Arpine Korekyan (Chapter 1); Vincenzo Aquaro (Chapter 2); Deniz Susar (Chapter 3); and Junho Lee (Chapter 4). The Data Management Team included DGB team members as well as two contractors, Ayca Kocakusak and Angelica Zundel, and was overseen by Vincenzo Aquaro, who was also responsible for the report's overall quality assurance. The final review was led by the Director of DPIDG.

Support in the production of the maps used in this report was provided by the United Nations Geospatial Information Section (New York).

This report was subject to external peer review to ensure quality and objectivity. External peer reviewers were: Noella Edelmann and Nina Rizun (Chapter 1); Gianluca Misuraca (Chapter 2); Dimitrios Sarantis, Angelica Zundel and Ayman Alarabiyat (Chapter 3); Dragan Cisic and David Le Blanc (Chapter 4).

This report also benefited from insights shared by external experts at the Expert Group Meeting on the Methodological Review of the UN E-Government Survey 2026, held online on 22 July 2026. The experts included: Rolf Alter, Eduardo Araral, Xiaolan Fu, Julia Glidden, Cristina Kiomi Mori, Zheng Lei, Rony Medaglia, Mark Minevich, Gianluca Misuraca, Giorgio Natili, and Diana Parra.

Contributions

The Local Online Service Index (LOSI) and Chapter 3 benefited from the contributions of the United Nations University, Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV), particularly from Delfina Soares, Head of UNU-EGOV, and Dimitrios Sarantis, Postdoctoral Fellow. Additional support was provided by Angelica Zundel and Ayman Alarabiyat, Visiting Associate Professor at UNU-EGOV.

Chapter 4 benefited from the contributions of the Max Planck Institute for Security and Privacy, particularly from Meeyoung Cha, Scientific Director, and Bryan Nathanael Wijaya, Doctoral student. Additional support was provided by Carla Nobile, Yookyung Chin, and Taeyoon Kim. The development and evaluation of the Information Security Posture Index (ISPI) was supported by João Marco Silva from the University of Minho.

DPIDG interns and volunteer researchers provided general research support: Almira Akhmedzhanova, Yookyung Chin, Ibrahim Emara, Stefanie Gerber, Alison Keane, Taeyoon Kim, Asia Martello, Carla Nobile, Jurginija Simkunaite, Mindy Tran, Stefano Trevisi, and You Zhou.

Data management and statistical support were provided by Archie Kariuki, Ayca Kocakusak, Junho Lee, Deniz Susar, Arpine Korekyan, Monina Tran, and Angelica Zundel. Archie Kariuki developed the new EKAP E-Gov Knowledge base module for the 2026 UN E-Government Survey and future editions. Ayca Kocakusak and Angelica Zundel conducted data analysis and verification. The chapters of the publication were edited by Luisa LaFleur.

United Nations Volunteers provided research support for work related to the assessment of the Online Services Index and the Local Online Service Index.

Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
API	Application Programming Interface
CIO	Chief Information Officer
CP	Content Provision
CSS	Countries in Special Situations
DGTS	Digital Government Transformation Sandbox
DPI	Digital Public Infrastructure
EGDI	E-Government Development Index
EGL	E-Government Literacy
EGI	E-Government Infrastructure
EPI	E-Participation Index
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EYS	Expected years of schooling
GDC	Global Digital Compact
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GNI	Gross National Income
HCI	Human Capital Index
HPC	High-Performance Computing
HTTPS	Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IF	Institutional Framework
IoT	Internet of Things
IQR	Interquartile Range
IT	Information Technology
ITU	International Telecommunication Union

JLL	Jones Lang LaSalle Incorporated
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LGQ	Local Government Questionnaire
LLDCs	Landlocked Developing Countries
LLMs	Large Language Models
LOSI	Local Online Service Index
MSQ	Member States Questionnaire
MYS	Mean years of schooling
OECD	Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development
OGD	Open Government Data
OSI	Online Service Index
PE	Participation and Engagement
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SP	Services Provision
TII	Telecommunications Infrastructure Index
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UN ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WPP	World Population Prospects
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society

Contents

Preface		v
Acknowledgements		vii
Acronyms		viii
About the Survey		xv
Executive Summary		xvii
1.	**GLOBAL TRENDS IN E-GOVERNMENT**	**1**
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	EGDI methodology: what is new	3
1.3	E-government development at a glance	3
1.4	Movements between EGDI groups in 2024 to 2026	5
1.5	Global and regional improvements in EGDI and subindices (OSI, TII and HCI)	7
1.5.1	Progress in Countries in Special Situations (CSS)	8
1.5.2	Key implications	8
1.6	Countries leading e-government development	9
1.7	National income and e-government development	11
1.8	Online Services Index	13
1.8.1	Country groupings by Online Services Index (OSI) and EGDI levels	13
1.8.2	Online Services Index subindices	16
1.8.3	Online Services Index institutional framework subindex—Legislative Framework	17
1.8.4	Online Services Index content provision subindex	18
1.8.5	Online Services Index participation and engagement subindex	19
1.8.6	Online Services Index service provision subindex	22
1.8.7	Sector-specific online information and services: sharing via mobile technologies	28
1.8.8	Targeted services for people in vulnerable situations	29
1.8.9	Public procurement services	32
1.8.10	Technology subindex and digital infrastructure development	33
1.9	Summary of key findings and policy recommendations	37
Endnotes		41
2.	**Megatrends: Regional Country Groupings**	**43**
2.1	Introduction	43
2.2	Megatrends at the regional level	43
2.3	Regional country grouping analysis	48
2.3.1	Africa: Accelerating digital transformation through digital public infrastructure and adaptive transformation	48
2.3.2	Americas: Continued regional improvement with new upward movement across the Caribbean	52
2.3.3	Asia: Expanding digital government capacity beyond traditional regional front-runners	55
2.3.4	Europe: Sustained leadership and broader convergence in digital government	60
2.3.5	Oceania: Stronger digital momentum driven by Pacific SIDS transformation	65

Contents *(continued)*

2.4	Bridging the population-weighted digital divide: progress, challenges and disparities	67
	2.4.1 A proxy to measure the digital divide	67
	2.4.2 Africa: a broad and deep population-weighted digital divide	70
	2.4.3 Americas: a relatively limited but concentrated population-weighted digital divide	71
	2.4.4 Asia: strong aggregate performance alongside a differentiated population-weighted digital divide	73
	2.4.5 Europe: the narrowest population-weighted digital divide	74
	2.4.6 Oceania: strong progress alongside a persistent SIDS digital divide	75
2.5	Key takeaways	76
Endnotes		77

3.	**Local E-Government and Cities**	**81**
3.1	Introduction	81
	3.1.1 Cities, digital transformation and sustainable development	81
	3.1.2 Measuring local digital government: methodology and scope	83
	3.1.3 Limitations and caveats	84
	3.1.4 Local Government Questionnaire	84
3.2	Current status of local online services	85
	3.2.1 Small island developing States and other countries that are small in size and population	89
	3.2.2 The impact of population size	89
3.3	Implementation of LOSI indicators in city portals	90
	3.3.1 Institutional framework	91
	3.3.2 Content provision	92
	3.3.3 Service provision	95
	3.3.4 Participation and engagement	96
	3.3.5 E-government literacy	97
	3.3.6 E-government infrastructure	98
3.4	Smart cities for sustainable development	99
3.5	Key findings and recommendations	101
Endnotes		102

4.	**The Artificial Intelligence Evolution of Public Services: Exploring the Shift toward Agentic Government**	**103**
4.1	From digital transformation to AI-enabled public administration	103
4.2	Toward outcome-oriented and AI-enabled public administration	107
	4.2.1 Increased autonomy and reallocation of human judgment	108
	4.2.2 Embedded intelligence in government structure	108
	4.2.3 Faster, evidence-based policy adjustment	108
	4.2.4 Improving accessibility and equity: leaving no one behind in practice	108
	4.2.5 Robust data governance as institutional foundation	109
4.3	Digital and data sovereignty as foundations for Agentic Government	109

Contents *(continued)*

4.4	From AI readiness indices to measuring Agentic Government	111
	4.4.1 Government AI Readiness Index	111
	4.4.2 Stanford AI Index Report	112
	4.4.3 Global AI Index	112
	4.4.4 Towards an Agentic Government Index	112
4.5	From the digital divide to the AI divide: readiness, capacity and global governance	113
4.6	The United Nations response to the AI divide: governance, capacity and system-wide coordination	115
4.7	International, regional and national AI cooperation hubs: building shared capacity for responsible public-sector transformation	116
4.8	Towards a United Nations Platform for Digital Government Cooperation, Innovation and R&D	118
4.9	Conclusion and key recommendations	120
Endnotes		122

ANNEX		**124**
E-Government Development Index (EGDI) 2026 by countries		124

List of boxes

Box 2.1	United Nations Peace and Development Fund "Developing Institutional Capacities for Digital Data Management and Cooperation to Advance Progress Toward the Sustainable Development Goals"	52
Box 4.1	Definition of digital sovereignty.	110

List of tables

Table 1.1	Countries leading e-government development, 2026 (Index values)	9
Table 2.1	Regional average, median and standard deviation breakdown for Africa	48
Table 2.2	Countries leading e-government development in Africa, 2026	50
Table 2.3	Regional average, median and standard deviation breakdown for the Americas	53
Table 2.4	Countries leading e-government development in the Americas, 2026	54
Table 2.5	Regional average, median and standard deviation breakdown for the Asia	55
Table 2.6	Countries leading e-government development in Asia, 2026	58
Table 2.7	Regional average, median and standard deviation breakdown for Europe, 2026	61
Table 2.8	Countries leading e-government development in Europe, 2026	62
Table 2.9	Regional average, median and standard deviation breakdown for Oceania	65
Table 2.10	Countries leading e-government development in Oceania, 2026	67
Table 2.11	Population-weighted EGDI digital divide proxy, 2024–2026	68
Table 2.12	Quartile classification of countries below the global average EGDI, 2026	69
Table 2.13	Africa: population-weighted EGDI divide, 2024–2026	70
Table 2.14	Africa: countries and population by digital divide quartile, 2026	71
Table 2.15	Americas: population-weighted EGDI divide, 2024–2026	72
Table 2.16	Americas: countries and population by digital divide quartile, 2026	72
Table 2.17	Asia: population-weighted EGDI divide, 2024–2026	73
Table 2.18	Asia: countries and population by digital divide quartile, 2026	73
Table 2.19	Europe: population-weighted EGDI divide, 2024–2026	74
Table 2.20	Europe: countries and population by digital divide quartile, 2026	74
Table 2.21	Oceania: population-weighted EGDI divide, 2024–2026	75
Table 2.22	Oceania: countries and population by digital divide quartile, 2026	75
Table 3.1	LOSI and OSI levels for 2026: convergence and divergence (Number of cities)	87
Table 3.2	City-level LOSI performance relative to national OSI performance	88

List of figures

Figure 1.1	Geographical distribution of the four EGDI groups, 2026	4
Figure 1.2	Share of United Nations Member States in each EGDI development level over time (2001–2026) (Each panel shows one level with its 25-year change in percentage points)	4
Figure 1.3	Movement of countries between EGDI groups during the 2024 to 2026 period, and the snapshot of upward and downward movements by region (Number of countries)	6
Figure 1.4	Global and regional EGDI averages, 2024 and 2026	7

List of figures *(continued)*

Figure 1.5	Percentage change in EGDI component values between 2024 and 2026, by country income group	12
Figure 1.6	Number of countries with EGDI values above and below the global average, by income group, 2026	12
Figure 1.7	Countries with diverging OSI and EGDI levels, 2026	14
Figure 1.8	Top 30 countries with the largest OSI-EGDI value gaps by country and region, 2026	15
Figure 1.9	Values for OSI subindices (IF, CP, SP, TEC and PE) at the regional and global levels, 2026	16
Figure 1.10	Digital government legislative and policy frameworks by region, 2026	17
Figure 1.11	Content provision on national portals, 2026 (Percentage of countries, by region and percentage change between 2024 and 2026)	18
Figure 1.12	Participation and engagement levels across the United Nations Member States by region, 2026	19
Figure 1.13	Mechanisms for participation and engagement among the United Nations Member States, 2026	20
Figure 1.14	Online consultations and decision-making evidence by thematic sector and vulnerable group, 2024 and 2026, per cent of countries	21
Figure 1.15	Service digitalization by region (2026), and distribution of transition in digitalization between 2024-2026	23
Figure 1.16	Digitalization of public services by life-events (including top five life-event clusters) at the global and regional levels, and among the countries in special situations (CSS), 2026	25
Figure 1.17	Percentage of countries offering sector-specific services by region and by CSS group, 2026	29
Figure 1.18	Percentage of countries offering dedicated services for people in vulnerable situations that can be completed partially or fully online, by region and by CSS group, 2026	31
Figure 1.19	Digital services for vulnerable population groups, 2024-2026	31
Figure 1.20	E-procurement platform and digital invoicing, global, regional and by CSS groups in 2024 and 2026	32
Figure 1.21	Technical and infrastructure-related features of national portals, 2024 and 2026 (Percentage of countries)	34
Figure 1.22	Mobile broadband affordability as a percentage of gross national income per capita, by region and CSS groups, 2026	35
Figure 1.23	Percentage change at the global and regional levels in Internet usage and in active mobile broadband and mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, 2024-2026	36
Figure 2.1	EGDI global and regional trends	47
Figure 2.2	Geographical distribution of the population-weighted digital divide	70
Figure 3.1	Comparison of LOSI levels for 2022, 2024 and 2026 (Number of cities per category)	86
Figure 3.2	LOSI and OSI levels for 2026: convergence and divergence	87
Figure 3.3	LOSI regional averages, 2022, 2024 and 2026	89
Figure 3.4	Average LOSI 2024 and 2026 values, by population size	90
Figure 3.5	Implementation of LOSI indicators in city e-government portals (Number of cities)	91
Figure 3.6	Implementation of institutional framework indicators in city portals	92
Figure 3.7	Implementation of content provision indicators in city portals: sectoral information	93
Figure 3.8	Implementation of content provision indicators in city portals: addressing everyday needs	94
Figure 3.9	Procurement information on city portals	94
Figure 3.10	Implementation of service provision indicators in city portals	96
Figure 3.11	Implementation of participation and engagement indicators in city portals	97
Figure 3.12	Implementation of e-government literacy indicators in city portals	98
Figure 3.13	Implementation of e-government infrastructure indicators in city portals	99

List of figures *(continued)*

Figure 3.14	LOSI indicators as a proxy for progress toward smart city development	100
Figure 4.1	Results by region on the survey question: Is there any legislation, law or regulation on the use of new/emerging technologies? (Artificial Intelligence)	104
Figure 4.2	Results by region on the survey question: Is there any legislation, law or regulation on the ethical/responsible use of AI in public administration?	104
Figure 4.3	Results by region on the survey question: Does the national e-government strategy make specific reference to, or implement specific actions related to the use of new/emerging technologies/practices	105
Figure 4.4	Results by region on the survey question: Is there a national AI strategy or equivalent that sets the national agenda for public service delivery and digital transformation?	105
Figure 4.5	Tentative structure of United Nations Centre for Digital Government (UNCDG)	119

About the Survey

The United Nations E-Government Survey is a biennial publication produced by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) since 2001. It assesses the state of digital government development across 194 countries, comprising 193 United Nations Member States and, from this edition, the State of Palestine. Over twenty-five years, the Survey has built a unique body of comparable data, analysis and policy evidence on how governments use digital technologies to strengthen public administration and public-service delivery. It supports implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the commitment to leave no one behind—or offline—in the digital age.

The EGDI and its scope

Digital government development at the national level is assessed through the E-Government Development Index (EGDI). The EGDI is the equally weighted average of three normalized indices: the Online Service Index (OSI), the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index (TII) and the Human Capital Index (HCI). The OSI is based on an independent online assessment conducted by UN DESA of national government portals and services, supported by contextual information from the Member State Questionnaire (MSQ). The TII combines connectivity and affordability data provided by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) with the new E-Government Infrastructure component (EGI) added in this edition. The HCI draws mainly on education data provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and continues to include E-Government Literacy (EGL).

The EGDI is a globally comparable, primarily supply-side measure of digital government development and readiness. It provides evidence on the availability, scope and sophistication of online services, the infrastructure that enables their delivery, and the human-capital conditions needed to access and use them. While the EGDI can serve as a useful proxy for assessing the overall level of digital government development and countries' capacity to deliver digital public services, it does not, by itself, provide a comprehensive measure of actual service uptake, citizen experience, satisfaction, trust, service quality, digital inclusion, equitable access, institutional outcomes, public value or development impact. Readiness is a necessary condition for effective digital government, but it is not sufficient to demonstrate adoption, performance, or impact. In addition, national-level assessments cannot fully capture disparities within countries, or the full range of services delivered by federal, provincial, regional, or municipal authorities.

National and local assessment

Since 2018, the Survey has also assessed selected city portals through the Local Online Service Index (LOSI), using a methodology aligned with the national assessment while reflecting the local service-delivery context. LOSI provides a complementary perspective on digital government at the city level, but it does not constitute comprehensive territorial coverage of all subnational authorities. Both EGDI and LOSI are comparative measures: they support comparisons across countries or selected cities and, with appropriate attention to methodological changes, across editions.

Policy relevance, data and audiences

The Survey serves as a global benchmarking, diagnostic and policy-development tool. It enables national and local governments to compare progress, identify strengths and gaps, learn from the experience of others, and inform digital-government strategies and investments. It also provides evidence for United Nations intergovernmental processes, including the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and for follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, including its twenty-year review by the General Assembly in 2025.

The Survey is intended for a broad range of audiences, including national and local policymakers and public officials, international and regional organizations, academia and research institutions, civil society, the private sector, and practitioners working on sustainable development, public administration, digital government and information and communications technologies for development.

The 2026 EGDI and LOSI methodology and datasets are presented in the publication, the Technical Appendix, and online through the UNDESA portal. They include results by country, region and countries in special situations, including least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and small island developing States (SIDS). Component and subcomponent data are provided where available, subject to applicable data quality, integrity and confidentiality safeguards.

Continuity and Methodological Enhancements in the 2026 Edition

The 2026 edition builds on the established EGDI methodology through targeted refinements designed to strengthen its analytical relevance, robustness and policy usefulness while preserving continuity, comparability and conceptual coherence with previous editions. These enhancements represent an evolution of the internal measurement framework rather than a methodological break. The three-pillar architecture of the EGDI and the equal weighting of the Online Service Index (OSI), Telecommunication Infrastructure Index (TII) and Human Capital Index (HCI) remain unchanged. The main updates are summarized below.

- Online Service Index (OSI). The OSI continues to assess five dimensions: Institutional Framework (10 per cent), Service Provision (45 per cent), Content Provision (10 per cent), Technology (10 per cent), and Participation and Engagement (25 per cent), formerly E-participation. These weights reflect the natural distribution of questions across the five dimensions, giving greater weight to areas with a larger number of assessed indicators. The 2026 questionnaire expands the assessment of digital public services, with greater emphasis on life-event services such as education, health, housing, social protection, justice, and residency. AI-related questions have also been introduced to reflect early government adoption of artificial intelligence.

- Telecommunication Infrastructure Index (TII). The TII now comprises five equally weighted components with the addition of the new E-Government Infrastructure (EGI). EGI measures the government digital infrastructure and technological enablers—such as digital identity, government portals, interoperability, open data and secure digital platforms—that support the delivery of online public services, complementing the traditional ITU connectivity indicators.

- Human Capital Index (HCI). The HCI continues to include the E-Government Literacy (EGL), introduced in the previous edition, recognizing that digital literacy is an important complement to traditional education indicators in assessing people's ability to access and use digital public services.

- Local Online Service Index (LOSI). The LOSI methodology has been further aligned with the Online Service Index (OSI), including through the introduction of an E-Government Infrastructure (EGI) sub-component, while continuing to assess E-Government Literacy as a distinct dimension. The assessment has also been expanded with additional indicators to capture emerging areas of local digital government and the evolving technologies used by cities in delivering public services.

Executive Summary

Marking twenty-five years of global assessment, the 2026 United Nations E-Government Survey examines digital government development across 193 Member States and the State of Palestine. This Executive Summary presents the principal findings on national and local performance, service delivery, regional and structural disparities, and the emerging role of artificial intelligence in public administration.

Global digital government performance and leadership

Digital government continued to advance globally in 2026, driven by the further expansion of digital public services, strengthened interoperability and data-sharing architectures, broader adoption of digital identity systems and life-event approaches, and increased investment in cloud computing, connectivity and data infrastructure. These developments are unfolding in a context where digital transformation is becoming both more sophisticated and more differentiated across countries and regions.

2026 Very High EGDI (VH) Rating Class

Expanded from 18 countries in 2024 to 21 in 2026

1	Republic of Korea	0.9794
2	Denmark	0.9777
3	Singapore	0.9722
4	Saudi Arabia	0.9721
5	United Arab Emirates	0.9711
6	Iceland	0.9557
7	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	0.9553
8	Estonia	0.9542
9	Finland	0.9534
10	Australia	0.9513
11	Spain	0.9497
12	Norway	0.9474
13	United States of America	0.9440 Returned
14	Bahrain	0.9420
15	Netherlands	0.9392
16	Kazakhstan	0.9363 Entered VH
17	Sweden	0.9306
18	Germany	0.9278
19	Ireland	0.9196 Entered VH
20	New Zealand	0.9181
21	Poland	0.9165 Entered VH

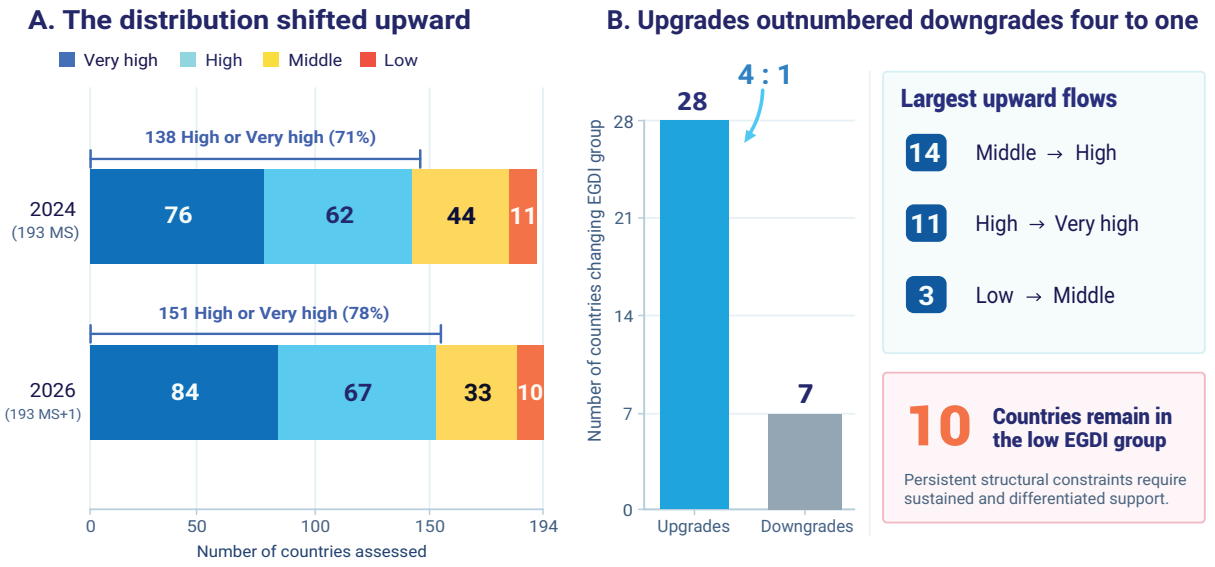
At the leading edge, the Republic of Korea ranks first globally in 2026, followed by Denmark, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iceland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Estonia, Finland and Australia. All ten were already among the 18 countries comprising the broader top-performing VH rating class in 2024, although their relative positions have evolved. The 2026 VH class has expanded to 21 countries and also includes Spain, Norway, the United States of America, Bahrain, the Netherlands, Kazakhstan, Sweden, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand and Poland. Ireland, Kazakhstan and Poland enter the VH rating class for the first time, while the United States of America returns to it. The expansion of the class, together with the presence of countries from East Asia, South-East Asia, Western Asia, Europe, Northern America and Oceania, points to a more geographically diverse and increasingly competitive landscape of global digital government leadership.

Progress has also extended beyond the frontrunners. The global average EGDI increased by 4.6 per cent, from 0.6382 in 2024 to 0.6675 in 2026, while the global median rose from 0.6678 to 0.6880. The simultaneous rise of the average and median confirms that improvement is not confined to a small group of leading countries. At the same time, the median remaining above the average indicates that lower-performing countries continue to pull down the global mean.

Key message: *Digital government development is advancing across a broadening group of countries, while the leading tier is becoming more geographically diverse and competitive. Yet progress is not being shared evenly: a smaller group of countries continues to advance more slowly, limiting global convergence and increasing the risk that existing gaps will persist as the digital government frontier moves forward.*

Distribution and movement across EGDI groups

Movement between E-government Development Index (EGDI) groups confirms a decisive upward shift. In 2026, 151 of the 194 countries assessed are in the high or very high EGDI groups, up from 138 in 2024. Correspondingly, the combined number of countries in the middle and low groups fell from 56 to 43. Of the 35 countries that changed EGDI group between 2024 and 2026, 28 moved upward and only 7 moved downward—an upgrade-to-downgrade ratio of four to one.



Sources: United Nations E-Government Surveys 2024 and 2026. Note: Counts are based on 194 countries with comparable data in both editions; percentages are rounded.

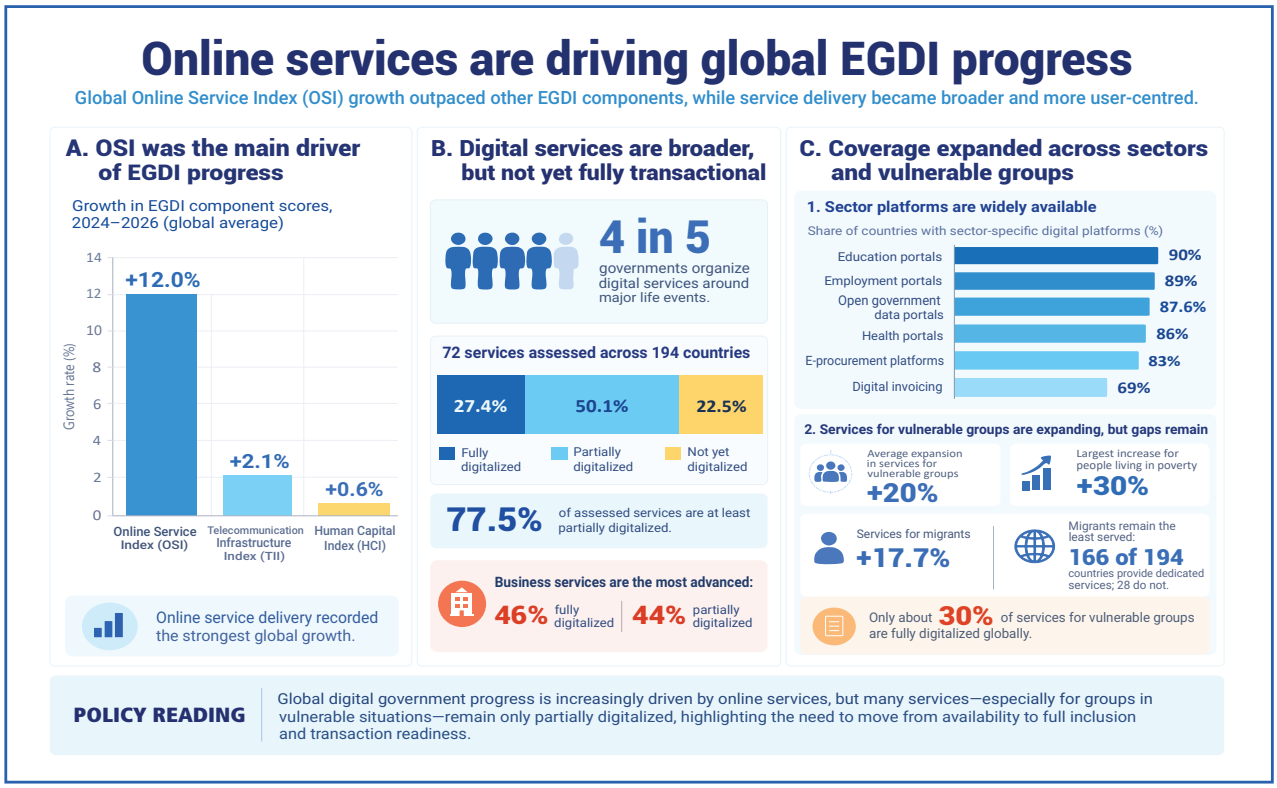
The largest movement involved 14 countries advancing from the middle to the high group. A further 11 countries moved from the high to the very high group, while 3 countries progressed from the low to the middle group. These movements show that improvement is occurring at different levels of global distribution and is not limited to countries already close to the digital government frontier.

Despite this strong upward mobility, 10 countries remain in the low EGDI group. Their continued presence at the bottom of the distribution reflects deeper structural constraints—including fragility, conflict, weak infrastructure, limited fiscal and institutional capacity, and difficult operating environments—that cannot be overcome through incremental digital reforms alone. The 2026 results therefore reveal both broader progress and persistent stratification: most countries are moving towards higher levels of digital government development, while a small group risks falling further behind as the global frontier continues to advance.

Key message: *The center of gravity of global digital government is moving upward: upgrades outnumber downgrades by four to one, and nearly four-fifths of assessed countries now have high or very high EGDI values. However, convergence remains incomplete, and the 10 countries in the low group require sustained and differentiated support.*

Online service delivery, transactional digitalization and public participation

Online service delivery has been the principal driver of global EGDI progress, and its scope is broadening across life events, economic and social sectors, and services for groups in vulnerable situations. The global average Online Service Index (OSI) increased by 12 per cent between 2024 and 2026, compared with growth of 2.1 per cent in the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index (TII) and only 0.6 per cent in the Human Capital Index (HCI).



Digital services are also becoming broader and more user-centred. Four in five governments now organize digital service delivery around major life events. Across the 72 online services assessed in 194 countries, 77.5 per cent are at least partially digitalized—50.1 per cent partially and 27.4 per cent fully. Consequently, while online availability is becoming widespread, most assessed services have not yet reached full transactional digitalization. Services associated with starting or running a

business are the most advanced, with 46 per cent fully digitalized and another 44 per cent partially digitalized.

Sector-specific platforms have also expanded. Portals are available in 90 per cent of assessed countries for education, 89 per cent for employment and 86 per cent for health. E-procurement platforms are available in 83 per cent of countries, digital invoicing in 69 per cent and open government data portals in 87.6 per cent.

Service provision targeting the six groups in vulnerable situations tracked by the Survey—people living in poverty, migrants, women, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities—has rebounded, expanding by an average of 20 per cent. The largest increase, 30 per cent, was recorded for people living in poverty, fully reversing the contraction observed between 2022 and 2024. Services for migrants also increased by 17.7 per cent, partially offsetting the earlier contraction. Nevertheless, migrants remain the least-served of the six groups assessed: 166 of the 194 assessed countries provide dedicated online services for them, leaving 28 countries with no such provision. More broadly, services for groups in vulnerable situations remain predominantly informational, with fully digitalized services accounting for only about 30 per cent globally and considerably less in several regions and country groupings.

Key message: *Wider service availability must now be translated into end-to-end delivery, meaningful participation and more consistent provision for underserved populations.*

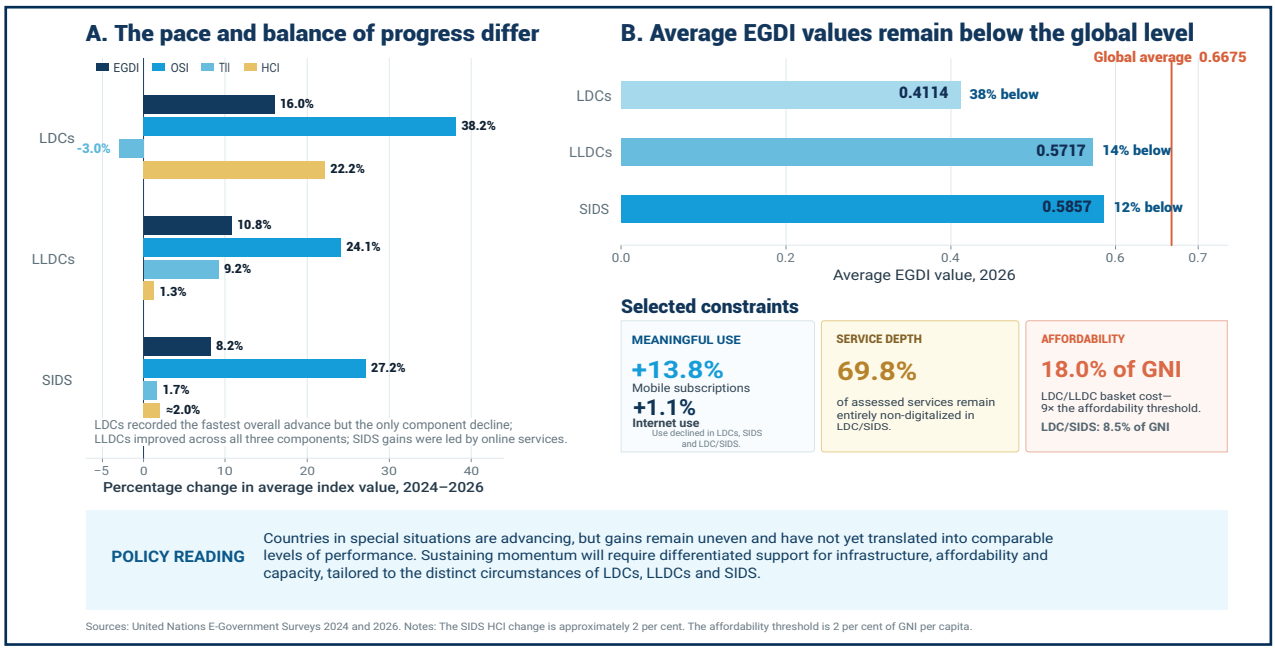
Digital government development in countries in special situations

Countries in special situations—least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS)—all recorded further progress in 2026. However, their development pathways, component-level performance, and structural constraints differ substantially.

LDCs achieved the largest relative gain, with their average EGDI increasing by 16 per cent. This progress was supported by a 36 per cent increase in the average OSI and a 20 per cent increase in the average TII. However, the average HCI declined by 4 per cent, indicating that improvements in service delivery and connectivity are not yet matched by sufficient expansion of human capital. revealing a growing imbalance between the expansion of online services and connectivity and declining human capital.

LLDCs recorded the most balanced progress: their average EGDI increased by 11.4 per cent, supported by OSI growth of 24.2 per cent, TII growth of 8.9 per cent, and HCI growth of 1.9 per cent. SIDS improved by 8.2 per cent overall, driven principally by a 27.2 per cent increase in the OSI, while the HCI and TII increased more modestly, by about 2 per cent and 1.7 per cent, respectively. The SIDS group nevertheless remains highly heterogeneous, with countries that are both LDCs and SIDS facing the deepest combined constraints.

Despite these gains, the average EGDI values for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS— 0.4035, 0.5725 and 0.5858, respectively—remain between 12 and 40 per cent below the global average of 0.6675. Countries that are both LDCs and SIDS face the most acute service-delivery constraints: 69.8 per cent of the services assessed in this group remain entirely non-digitalized.



The income gradient reinforces this pattern. Low-income countries recorded the strongest relative improvement among income groups, with their average EGDI increasing by 17.7 per cent. Their average OSI and TII values rose by 32.0 and 31.4 per cent, respectively, but their average HCI declined by 5.3 per cent, indicating another important imbalance in the composition of progress. Moreover, only 4 per cent of low-income countries have EGDI values above the global average, compared with 88 per cent of high-income countries. Rapid improvement from lower starting points has therefore not yet translated into comparable levels of absolute performance.

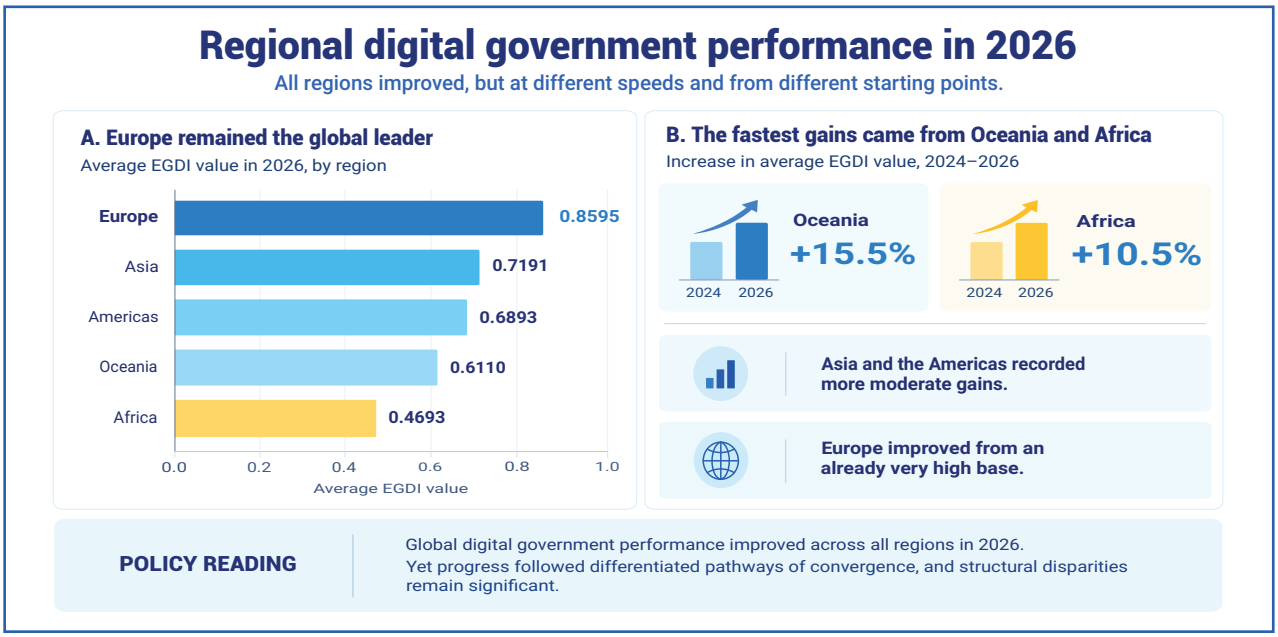
Connectivity, meaningful use and affordability remain critical constraints. Globally, mobile cellular subscriptions increased by 13.8 per cent, while Internet use grew by only 1.1 per cent and declined in Africa, Oceania, SIDS, LDCs and countries that are both LDCs and SIDS. Affordability improved by less than one percentage point of gross national income per capita at the global level and deteriorated in some of the most constrained settings. Among countries that are both LDCs and LLDCs, the mobile data and voice basket rose from 17.3 to 18.0 per cent of gross national income per capita—nine times the 2 per cent affordability threshold established by ITU and the Broadband Commission. Even among countries that are both LDCs and SIDS, where the basket recorded the largest improvement, its cost remained at 8.5 per cent of gross national income per capita, more than four times the affordability threshold.

These contrasting profiles call for differentiated forms of support: climate-resilient digital infrastructure and shared regional platforms for SIDS; infrastructure financing and sustained capacity development for LDCs; and continued investment in cross-border connectivity and interoperable services for LLDCs.

Key message: *Countries in special situations are progressing, but gains remain uneven and have not yet translated into comparable levels of performance. Sustaining momentum will require differentiated support for infrastructure, affordability and capacity, tailored to the distinct circumstances of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.*

Regional trends in digital government development

Digital government performance improved across all regions in 2026, but at different speeds and from markedly different starting points. Europe remained the global leader, with an average EGDI of 0.8595, followed by Asia (0.7191), the Americas (0.6893), Oceania (0.6110) and Africa (0.4693). The strongest relative gains were recorded in Oceania (+15.5 per cent) and Africa (+10.5 per cent), while progress was more moderate in Asia and the Americas and comparatively limited in Europe, where performance is already concentrated at very high levels. The regional picture therefore points to continued global advancement, but also to differentiated pathways of convergence and persistent structural disparities.



Europe remained both the most advanced and the most convergent region. Its already low cross-country dispersion narrowed further, and the number of countries in the very high EGDI group increased from 36 to 41, with Monaco, Andorra, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Belarus moving upward and no country falling to a lower group. The strongest momentum increasingly comes from Southern and Eastern Europe and parts of the Western Balkans rather than from already mature Northern and Western European leaders. As differences between countries narrow, Europe's remaining digital divide is increasingly a within-country challenge, particularly across rural, remote and disadvantaged communities.

Asia remained the second-highest-performing region and one of the strongest centres of global digital-government leadership, with the Republic of Korea ranking first worldwide. The number of countries in the very high group increased from 24 to 26, with India and Kyrgyzstan joining this group, while Turkmenistan and Afghanistan also moved upward. Progress, however, is increasingly differentiated: mature digital governments are shifting towards integration and optimization, while other countries continue to advance through DPI, mobile-first services and institutional strengthening. Modest convergence at the regional level therefore coexists with a persistent lower-performing group affected by structural, institutional and, in some cases, fragility-related constraints.

The Americas recorded continued but more moderate improvement, accompanied by modest overall convergence. Northern America remained a strong anchor, while the most visible upward movement came from the Caribbean, where Trinidad and Tobago, the Dominican Republic and Saint Kitts and Nevis entered the very high EGDI group and Cuba and Belize moved into the high group.

At the same time, Mexico and Venezuela moved to lower groups. The region therefore combines broadening digital-government leadership with persistent disparities concentrated mainly in Latin America and the Caribbean; convergence is particularly visible in online services, while differences in human capital have widened.

Africa recorded the second-strongest relative improvement globally, with progress extending beyond its traditional frontrunners. Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Uganda moved from the middle to the high group, while Burundi and Niger advanced from the low to the middle group. Overall EGDI dispersion narrowed only modestly, however, and the component picture remains uneven: infrastructure differences declined, while disparities in online services and human capital widened. Africa's trajectory is therefore one of accelerating but differentiated transformation, with continued constraints in infrastructure, affordability, skills and institutional capacity.

Oceania recorded the strongest relative improvement of any region. Although Australia and New Zealand remain the regional digital leaders, most of the acceleration came from Pacific Island States: Fiji entered the very high group, while Samoa, Tuvalu, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea and Nauru moved into the high group. Overall regional dispersion declined, indicating meaningful convergence between the traditional leaders and Pacific SIDS. At the same time, dispersion within the SIDS group itself increased, showing that island States are progressing at different speeds. The region's next challenge is therefore to convert rapid gains in connectivity and digital services into resilient and sustainable transformation despite the structural constraints of remoteness, scale, technical capacity and climate vulnerability.

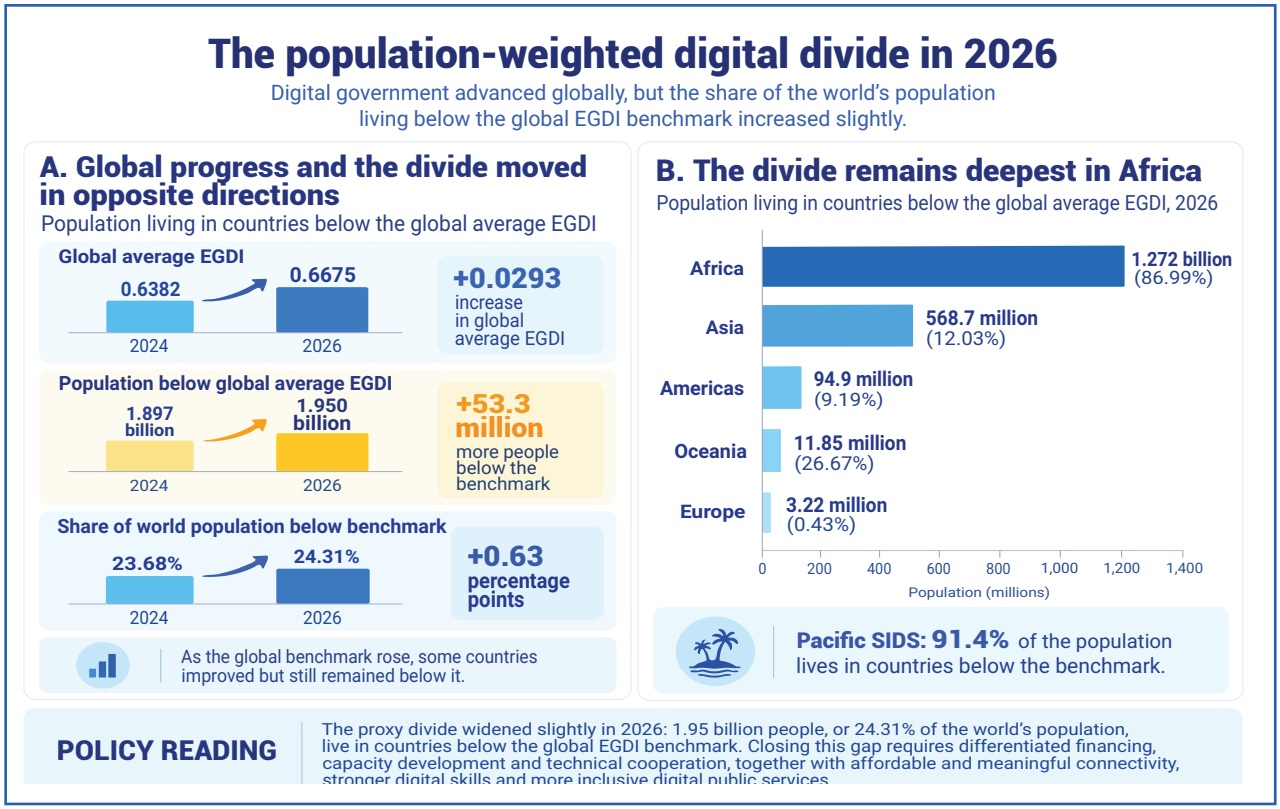
Region	2026 pattern of progress	Main policy implication
Africa	EGDI performance continued to improve, including notable movement in several countries, confirming sustained momentum in digital government development.	Priority should be given to meaningful connectivity, institutional capacity, digital skills, financing and targeted technical support, supported by stronger international, South-South and triangular cooperation.
Americas	Overall performance remained strong and above the world average, with continued advancement across much of the region.	The priority is to sustain regional momentum while targeting lagging countries through more tailored support, greater interoperability and stronger subregional cooperation.
Asia	Asia maintained a high overall level of performance, with a strong leading group and continued dynamism in several subregions.	A dual-track approach is needed: sustaining frontier innovation in advanced contexts while providing more targeted support to countries facing structural and geopolitical constraints.
Europe	Europe remained the most advanced and statistically balanced region, with consistently high performance across most countries.	Future efforts should focus on deepening integration, resilience, trust, inclusive uptake and the quality of digital public services.
Oceania	Oceania showed the strongest relative improvement since 2024, reflecting important progress across the Pacific context.	The current momentum should be consolidated through stronger technical cooperation, international support and investment in resilient connectivity and service delivery capacity.

The population-weighted digital divide

The Survey uses the global average EGDI as a reference threshold to provide a population-weighted proxy for disparities in digital-government development. It measures the population living in countries below the global benchmark, while recognizing that it does not directly identify digitally excluded

individuals or capture inequalities within countries. In 2026, the analysis is strengthened through a new quartile framework that distinguishes countries with low, middle, high and very high digital-divide gaps, according to their relative distance from the global average.

Despite continued global progress, the population-weighted divide widened slightly. The global average EGDI increased from 0.6382 in 2024 to 0.6675 in 2026, yet the population living in countries below this benchmark rose from 1.897 billion to 1.950 billion, an increase of 53.3 million people. Their share of the world population increased from 23.68 to 24.31 per cent, or 0.63 percentage points. This apparent divergence reflects the relative nature of the measure: countries can improve in absolute terms while still remaining below, or falling below, a rising global benchmark. The key finding is therefore not an absence of progress, but that progress has not been sufficiently even to reduce population-weighted disparities.



Africa is by far the most affected, with approximately 1.272 billion people, or 86.99 per cent of its regional population, living in countries below the global average; about 671.5 million of them are in countries classified in the high or very high digital-divide groups.

In **Asia**, approximately 568.7 million people, or 12.03 per cent, live below the benchmark, although more than two thirds of this population is in countries classified in the low or middle digital-divide groups.

The Americas have a more concentrated divide, affecting about 94.9 million people, or 9.19 per cent of the regional population, while Europe has the narrowest country-level divide, with only 3.22 million people, or 0.43 per cent, living in countries below the benchmark.

Oceania combines strong recent progress with a persistent SIDS challenge: approximately 11.85 million people, or 26.67 per cent of the regional population, remain below the global average, while 91.4 per cent of the Pacific SIDS population lives in countries below the benchmark.

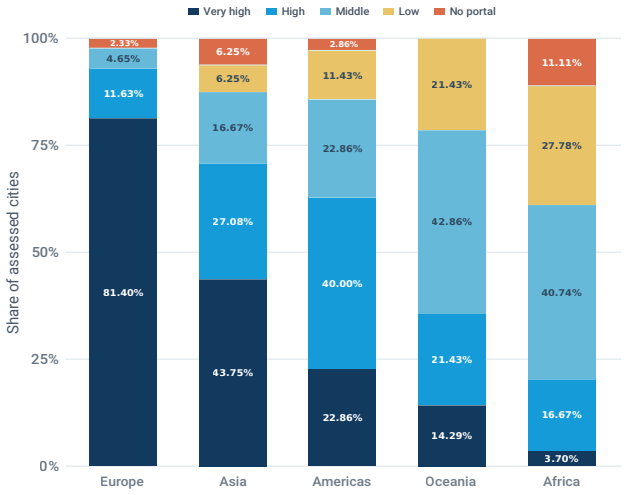
These EGDI-based findings should be read alongside evidence on meaningful connectivity and actual use. In 2025, approximately 6 billion people—74 per cent of the world's population—were online, while 2.2 billion remained offline. Internet use reached 94 per cent in high-income countries but only 23 per cent in low-income countries, while 5G population coverage stood at 84 and 4 per cent, respectively. This reinforces the need to look beyond national averages to affordability, connectivity quality, digital skills, accessibility and actual uptake of digital public services.

Key message: *Digital government continues to advance globally, but progress remains uneven. Approximately 1.95 billion people—24.31 per cent of the world population—live in countries below the global EGDI average, and this share has increased slightly since 2024. Closing the divide therefore requires differentiated financing, capacity development and technical cooperation, with greater attention to meaningful connectivity, digital skills, institutional capacity and the inclusive and effective use of digital public services.*

Local digital government and the Local Online Service Index

As cities concentrate population, economic activity and demand for public services, local government is increasingly where people experience the practical effects of digital transformation. The 2026 Local Online Service Index (LOSI) indicates a more mature and widespread phase of local digital government development. The number of cities in the very high LOSI group rose from 42 in 2024 to 68 in 2026, while the number without an evaluated online portal fell from 42 to 11. Differences in assessment coverage and methodological refinements should be considered when interpreting these changes over time. Six cities—Dubai, Madrid, Manama, Riyadh, São Paulo and Vienna—recorded the highest LOSI assessment results, illustrating the increasingly diverse geography of local digital government leadership. These results reflect continued progress. The 2026 methodology also more fully recognizes relevant services delivered through integrated national platforms, including in small States and highly centralized administrative systems where residents may access local services without using a standalone municipal portal.

A. Europe leads, but regional distributions remain uneven



B. Six cities share the highest LOSI position

VERY HIGH LOSI	NO EVALUATED PORTAL
68 cities (42 in 2024)	11 cities (42 in 2024)

- **Dubai** — United Arab Emirates — Asia • LOSI 1.0000
- **Madrid** — Spain — Europe • LOSI 1.0000
- **Manama** — Bahrain — Asia • LOSI 1.0000
- **Riyadh** — Saudi Arabia — Asia • LOSI 1.0000
- **São Paulo** — Brazil — Americas • LOSI 1.0000
- **Vienna** — Austria — Europe • LOSI 1.0000

POLICY READING

Local government is where digital transformation becomes tangible in people's daily lives. The expansion of the very high LOSI group and sharp decline in cities without an evaluated portal signal broader maturity, but regional disparities and uneven end-to-end delivery call for stronger local capacity, interoperability, accessibility and inclusive multi-channel services.

Source: United Nations E-Government Survey 2026, chapter 3. Notes: Regional percentages may not total exactly 100 per cent owing to rounding; LOSI 2026 assesses 194 cities.

Europe maintains the highest and most consistent overall level of local digital government performance. Asia recorded the strongest regional improvement, with particularly notable advances in Western Asia, while progress is also evident in parts of Latin America and Africa. Nevertheless, substantial disparities persist across and within regions, especially among smaller municipalities, cities with limited institutional and financial resources, and cities in several African countries and small island developing States.

Strong national digital government frameworks remain an important foundation for local progress, but they do not automatically produce equivalent results at the city level. While most cities perform broadly in line with or below their national digital service environment, 23 cities achieved LOSI results above the level suggested by their corresponding national online service environment, highlighting the potential importance of municipal leadership, institutional capacity, administrative autonomy and targeted investment. Larger and more populous cities generally benefit from greater resources and stronger implementation capacity, but the performance of several smaller cities confirms that strategic planning and sustained investment can help overcome some disadvantages of scale. In small States and highly centralized systems, effective local service delivery may depend less on maintaining a standalone municipal portal than on ensuring that residents can navigate integrated national and local services through a coherent user experience.

Across the six LOSI dimensions, institutional frameworks record the strongest overall performance, followed by e-government literacy and infrastructure. This may reflect wider adoption of digital strategies and governance arrangements, as well as improvements in portal accessibility, usability and support for users. Service provision is also expanding: online tax declaration was available in 65 per cent of assessed cities in 2026, procurement platforms in 61 per cent and business licensing in 60 per cent. However, seamless end-to-end delivery remains uneven, particularly for complex services involving several institutions or shared national and municipal responsibilities. Accessibility standards, multilingual provision and advanced transactional functions also require further attention, especially to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, older persons and people with limited digital skills.

Participation and engagement mechanisms continue to expand, particularly through feedback channels, complaint systems and access to municipal information. Yet most remain consultative, while structured consultation, participatory decision-making and e-voting are still limited. The next stage of local digital government development must therefore strengthen not only the availability of participation tools, but also their capacity to give residents a meaningful role in shaping public policies and services.

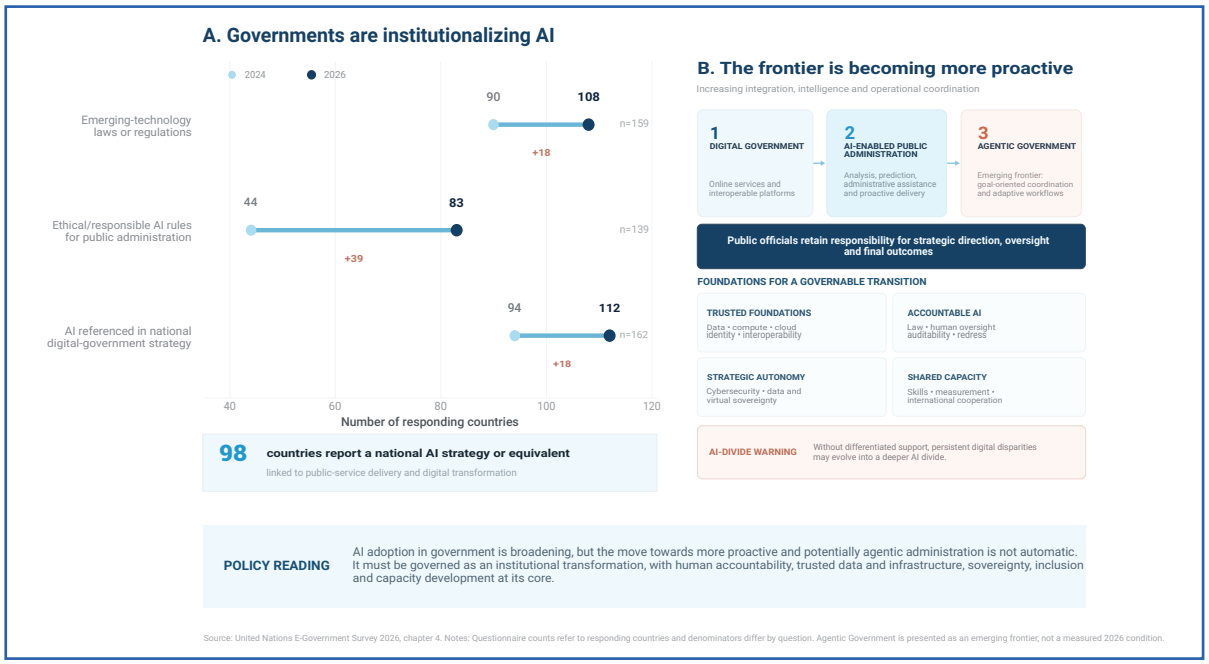
Cities are also making greater use of artificial intelligence, data analytics, digital twins, integrated mobility platforms, open data and mobile-first services to improve urban management and advance SDG 11. Seoul, Dubai, Tallinn and Madrid illustrate how integrated data and AI-enabled systems can support more responsive governance; Jakarta demonstrates the potential of combining public services and environmental information in a single mobile platform; and Bogotá shows how digital platforms can connect urban services with circular-economy objectives. These experiences indicate that successful innovation depends not on technology alone, but on its integration across institutions and alignment with clearly defined public needs.

Future efforts should focus on connecting services across institutions, strengthening municipal leadership, financing and technical capacity, and systematically using data and user feedback to improve delivery. Greater attention to accessibility, multilingual services and flexible multi-channel models—including mobile, offline and intermediary-supported access—will be essential to ensure that local digital transformation reaches people with different needs and capabilities.

Key message: *Local government is where digital transformation becomes tangible in people's daily lives. The quality of local digital services increasingly determines whether residents experience government as accessible, responsive and inclusive, and whether digitalization supports sustainable urban development. Realizing this potential requires strong national frameworks combined with local leadership, capacity and financing, as well as interoperable, accessible, multilingual and participatory services.*

AI-enabled public administration and the emerging concept of Agentic Government

The 2026 Survey points to a broader transition in public-sector transformation. In the most advanced contexts, digital government is moving beyond the expansion of online services and the integration of platforms towards more AI-enabled, predictive and proactive forms of public administration. This transition is supported by stronger data ecosystems, cloud infrastructure, interoperable platforms, secure digital identities, and expanding AI capabilities. AI is increasingly being used not only to automate individual tasks, but also to analyze complex information, assist in administrative decision-making, coordinate operations, and anticipate service needs.



Evidence from the Member State Questionnaires collected through the Survey indicates that governments are beginning to institutionalize AI within their legal and strategic frameworks. Across the accumulated results from the 2022, 2024 and 2026 Survey cycles, the number of countries with legislation or regulation addressing new and emerging technologies—including AI, robotics, blockchain, 5G and the Internet of Things—increased from 90 in 2024 to 108 in 2026 among the 159 countries that responded to the relevant question. More significantly, the number reporting legislation or regulation specifically addressing the ethical and responsible use of AI in public administration rose from 44 to 83 among 139 respondents. References to AI in national digital government strategies increased from 94 to 112 among 162 respondents, while 98 countries reported having a national AI strategy or equivalent framework linked to public service delivery and digital transformation. These findings do not measure the full maturity of national AI ecosystems, but they demonstrate that AI is

increasingly treated as a public-sector governance matter, institutional readiness and accountability, rather than technological experimentation alone.

This progress does not mean that Agentic Government is already widespread. Rather, it identifies an emerging frontier in which AI-agent systems may operate within human-defined mandates, legal safeguards, public-interest objectives and auditable governance arrangements to plan, coordinate, execute and adapt workflows across government functions. The defining change is not simply the use of AI, but the possibility of moving from procedure-based administration towards more outcome-oriented government. In such a model, AI systems could support continuous coordination and operational responsiveness, while public officials retain responsibility for strategic direction, legal interpretation, ethical judgment, oversight, redress, and final outcomes. The broader concept of the Agentic State extends this perspective beyond individual applications to the possible transformation of public administration as a whole.

If responsibly governed, this transition could help reduce administrative burdens, improve service quality, identify unmet needs, and make government more responsive to changing conditions. It could also support more proactive delivery by identifying people who may be eligible for services but remain unenrolled, providing timely and personalized information, and reducing the need for residents to navigate fragmented administrative structures. However, these benefits are not automatic. Poorly designed systems could reproduce bias, obscure responsibility, expand surveillance, expose sensitive data, weaken opportunities for appeal and undermine public trust. The objective should therefore be to relocate human judgment towards the strategic, ethical, discretionary and relational dimensions of public administration—not to automate governance beyond accountability.

Trusted data and infrastructure are fundamental to this transition. AI-enabled and agentic systems depend on accurate and interoperable data, resilient cloud and computing environments, cybersecurity, secure digital identity and clear rules governing access, use and accountability. As these systems become increasingly distributed across providers and jurisdictions, digital and data sovereignty acquire greater strategic importance. The emerging concept of virtual sovereignty offers a complementary approach under which governments retain authority over the rules governing data access, processing, sharing, and auditing even when infrastructure is geographically distributed. This shifts the focus from physical localization alone towards governable digital architectures that preserve institutional autonomy, rights, and public accountability.

The uneven distribution of these capabilities creates a risk that persistent digital divide may evolve into a more complex AI divide. This divide concerns not only access to connectivity, but also access to computing capacity, trusted cloud infrastructure, high-quality and representative data, cybersecurity, specialized skills, procurement capacity and the ability to shape and govern AI systems. Countries that are still strengthening foundational digital infrastructure may face a dual disadvantage: they may be slower to capture the benefits of AI while remaining exposed to its economic, institutional and security implications. The transition towards AI-enabled government therefore reinforces, rather than replaces, the urgency of addressing foundational disparities and strengthening countries' capacity to exercise strategic autonomy.

International cooperation will be essential to prevent AI-enabled transformation from reinforcing existing asymmetries. The Global Digital Compact, the Global Dialogue on AI Governance, the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, the United Nations Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies and the WSIS+20 outcomes provide complementary foundations for inclusive governance, scientific assessment and capacity development.

Within this wider architecture, UN DESA is working to establish an innovative platform for cooperation on digital government through the creation of a new United Nations Centre for Digital Government. Based on a Hub-and-Spoke model, the Centre is intended to connect existing institutions, innovation

hubs, research centres, governments and development partners within a trusted United Nations framework. It would support policy research, capacity development, knowledge exchange and responsible experimentation, while helping tested approaches and lessons learned to be adapted and shared across countries and regions, with particular attention to developing countries, including least developed countries, small island developing States and countries in special situations.

The immediate policy priority is therefore not simply to accelerate AI adoption, but to strengthen the institutional capacity to determine where and how AI should be used, who remains accountable, what mechanisms for oversight and redress are required, and how public value, rights and inclusion will be protected throughout the transition.

Key message: *The transition from digital government to AI-enabled and potentially agentic public administration is an institutional transformation, not merely a technological upgrade. Its contribution to public value will depend on human accountability, trusted data and infrastructure, inclusive design, auditable safeguards and effective international cooperation. Without sustained capacity development and differentiated support, existing digital disparities may evolve into a deeper and more consequential AI divide.*

Looking ahead

Taken together, the 2026 findings provide an evidence base for Member States and development partners to guide the next phase of digital government development. Sustained investment, differentiated support and international cooperation will be essential to strengthen public institutions and ensure that digital and AI-enabled transformation contributes to inclusive, accountable and sustainable development.

1. Global Trends in E-Government

1.1 Introduction

Digital government in 2026 is evolving within a technological environment that is advancing faster and more profoundly than at any previous stage of public-sector digital transformation. Recent progress in cloud computing, data infrastructure, broadband connectivity, digital public infrastructure, data governance and artificial intelligence (AI) has accelerated governments' ability to design, deliver and manage services. The rapid diffusion of generative AI, large language models and emerging agentic systems is further expanding the potential for more proactive, predictive, adaptive and people-centred public administration.

Within this context, the 2026 United Nations E-Government Survey assesses e-government development through the E-Government Development Index (EGDI), while situating results within a broader policy and institutional perspective. The EGDI and its three components—the Online Services Index (OSI), the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index (TII) and the Human Capital Index (HCI)—remain central to understanding countries' progress in service provision, infrastructure and human capacity. Overall performance continues to improve, with more countries reaching higher levels of digital maturity. At the same time, progress remains uneven across countries and populations, and the persistence of structural disparities underscores that digital advancement does not automatically translate into more balanced development.

The 2026 E-Government Survey is both a measurement instrument and a policy tool, helping Member States identify progress, gaps and priorities for the next phase of digital government. As countries move toward more intelligent and potentially agentic public administration, the key question is not only how fast they advance, but whether progress is inclusive, trusted, resilient and development oriented. This chapter provides a global overview of e-government development in 2026. It first sets out what has changed in the E-Government Development Index methodology, then presents the 2026 key findings at a glance, the movement of countries between EGDI groups since 2024, global and regional improvements, the countries leading e-government development and the relationship between national income and e-government performance. It then examines the Online Services Index and its subindices in detail and closes with the key findings and policy recommendations emerging from the 2026 data.

The current phase of digital government raises questions beyond service availability and connectivity. Digital maturity is increasingly linked to governance readiness, data capacity, institutional coordination, responsible AI adoption, cybersecurity, public trust and the ability to generate measurable public value. These dynamics vary across regions and country groupings, as explored in Chapter 2.



AI-generated image: INTERMID

In this chapter:

1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 EGDI methodology: what is new 3
1.3 E-government development at a glance 3
1.4 Movements between EGDI groups in 2024 to 2026 5
1.5 Global and regional improvements in EGDI and subindices (OSI, TII and HCI) 7
1.5.1 Progress in Countries in Special Situations (CSS) 8
1.5.2 Key implications 8
1.6 Countries leading e-government development 9
1.7 National income and e-government development 11
1.8 Online Services Index 13
1.8.1 Country groupings by Online Services Index (OSI) and EGDI levels 13
1.8.2 Online Services Index subindices 16
1.8.3 Online Services Index institutional framework subindex—Legislative Framework 17
1.8.4 Online Services Index content provision subindex 18
1.8.5 Online Services Index participation and engagement subindex 19
1.8.6 Online Services Index service provision subindex 22
1.8.7 Sector-specific online information and services: sharing via mobile technologies 28
1.8.8 Targeted services for people in vulnerable situations 29
1.8.9 Public procurement services 32
1.8.10 Technology subindex and digital infrastructure development 33
1.9 Summary of key findings and policy recommendations 37
Endnotes 41

This evolution goes beyond digitizing analogue processes or integrating online portals. Governments are increasingly organizing services around life events—such as birth, education, employment, business creation and retirement—requiring interoperability, data exchange, digital identity systems and institutional collaboration. This shift from service availability to service intelligence, with anticipatory and data-driven services organized around user needs, is a defining trend. Chapter 3 further examines how these developments are reflected at the local level, particularly in major cities.

AI is accelerating this shift in how services are designed and delivered. When used responsibly, AI can help anticipate needs, reduce administrative burdens, support decision-making, detect service gaps, personalize interactions and improve efficiency. Generative AI and large language models are already influencing communication, information processing and service design, while emerging agentic systems point to more dynamic, coordinated and adaptive administrative processes. These developments are examined in Chapter 4.

In this context, the Survey introduces the concept of Agentic Government as an emerging analytical frontier rather than a prescriptive model. It highlights both the direction of change and the risks of premature adoption. Advancing toward agentic systems requires not only technological capacity but also strong governance foundations, including clear mandates, accountable data governance, cybersecurity, legal frameworks, procurement capacity, digital skills, ethical safeguards, auditability, human oversight and public trust.

At the same time, technological acceleration risks deepening existing divides. Countries with advanced infrastructure, strong human capital and mature institutions are better positioned to adopt next-generation technologies, while others may struggle to keep pace. The emerging divide increasingly reflects differences not only in service availability but also in infrastructure, skills, data systems and governance capacity. As discussed in Chapter 2, this challenge is particularly relevant where progress coexists with persistent structural gaps.

These divides are also institutional, economic and geopolitical. The concentration of advanced AI capabilities, computing power and data resources in a limited number of countries and firms may create new dependencies and asymmetries. Governments may face constraints related to data sovereignty, bargaining power, accountability and ethical risks, including algorithmic bias—systematic and unfair differences in how automated systems treat particular groups, often stemming from unrepresentative data or design choices. Without appropriate safeguards, the AI-enabled transformation of government processes and services could reinforce inequality and erode trust.

The response is not to slow innovation but to govern it more effectively. Digital sovereignty should be understood as a governance framework guiding strategic choices on infrastructure, data jurisdiction, procurement, interoperability, open standards, cybersecurity and AI. The objective is to ensure that digital transformation strengthens public institutions, protects rights and delivers public value.

The chapter approaches digital government as both a technological and a governance transformation. While the EGDI offers an empirical basis for assessing progress, the broader analysis examines distributional patterns, local dynamics and the implications of emerging technologies.

Taken together, these findings show that a government's digital transformation must be assessed not only by its pace but also by its inclusiveness, trustworthiness, resilience and contribution to sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda calls for institutions that are effective, accountable and inclusive. Digital government can make a major contribution to this objective, but only if digital progress expands rights and opportunities rather than deepening disparities. This requires placing people at the centre of digital transformation, strengthening institutional capacity, investing in meaningful connectivity and skills, and ensuring that the next generation of public-sector technologies is governed in ways that are transparent, accountable and aligned with public value.

1.2 EGDI methodology: what is new

The E-Government Development Index remains the central analytical framework of the Survey and provides a composite measure of national e-government development across three dimensions: the Online Services Index (OSI), the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index (TII) and the Human Capital Index (HCI). As in previous editions, the methodology has been refined to reflect lessons learned from implementation, expert review, feedback from Member States and the rapidly evolving nature of digital government itself.

In 2026, the indicators underlying the three indices were updated to capture developments that matter most to policymakers today; the structure of the EGDI itself is unchanged. The Online Services Index incorporates a broader set of life-event-based service indicators, enabling a shift from assessing service availability to evaluating how well services reflect users' administrative journeys. The Online Services Index also gives greater attention to automation and selected AI-enabled tools in service delivery.

The Telecommunication Infrastructure Index is expanded through the introduction of a new subcomponent -- the E-Government Infrastructure subindex, which captures infrastructure conditions specific to the scalability and resilience of digital government systems. This subindex complements existing connectivity indicators and aligns with the E-Government Literacy subindex, introduced in 2024, which reflects human capacity and readiness to use digital services. Together, the E-Government Infrastructure subindex and the E-Government Literacy subindex provide a more integrated view of infrastructure, institutional readiness and user capability.

These refinements do not alter the structure of the EGDI but enhance its ability to reflect contemporary patterns of digital transformation, particularly the shift toward integrated, data-driven and intelligent systems. They should, however, be considered when interpreting changes over time, as part of the observed progress reflects improved measurement.

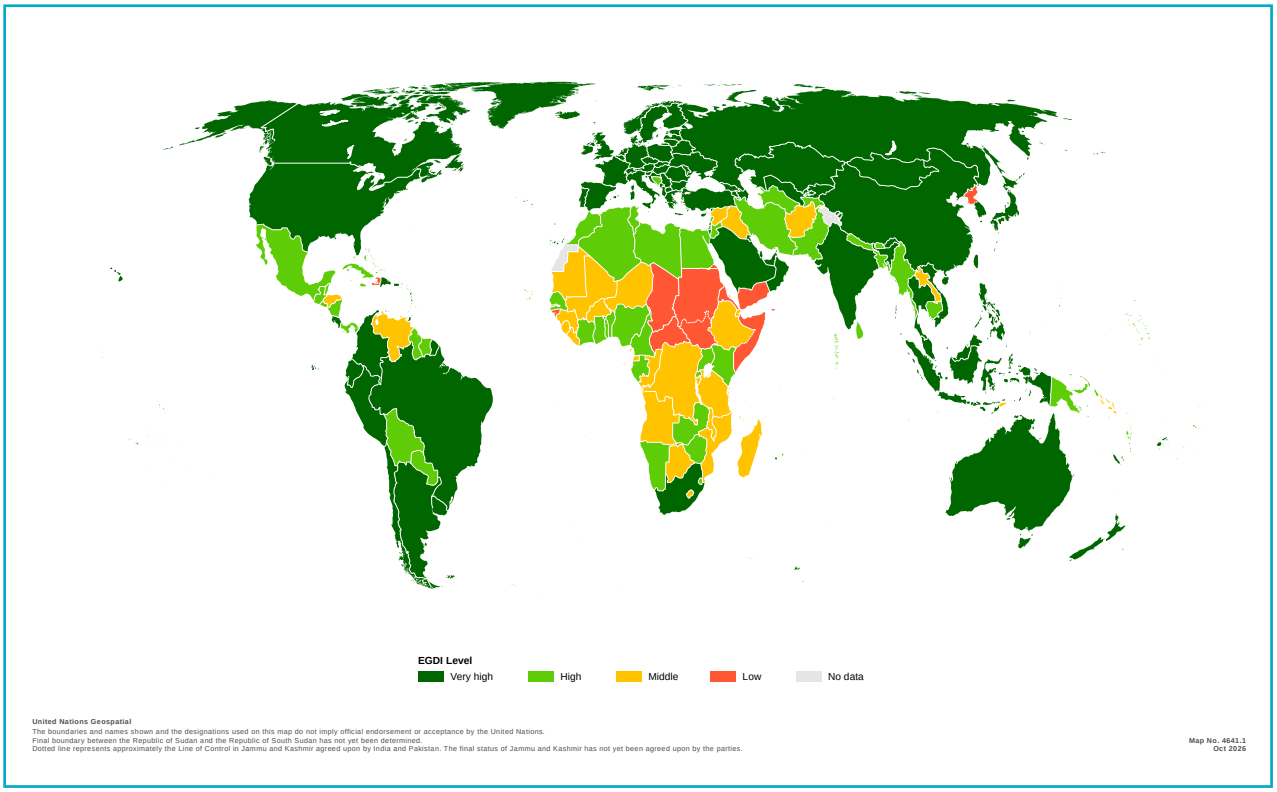
Overall, the 2026 methodological updates reinforce the Survey's dual role as both a benchmarking instrument and a policy tool, supporting more informed decision-making in a rapidly evolving technological context.

1.3 E-government development at a glance

The EGDI is expressed on a scale from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating more advanced e-government development. The global average EGDI rose from 0.6382 in 2024 to 0.6675 in 2026, an increase of about 4.6 per cent. The median EGDI also increased, from 0.6678 to 0.6880. The simultaneous rise of the mean and the median indicate that the upward shift is not driven by gains among a small group of top performers; the centre of the global distribution has itself moved up. In policy terms, a broader set of countries is strengthening the core foundations of digital government, including online services, infrastructure, and human capital, even as the pace and depth of progress remain uneven.

Figure 1.1 maps the global distribution of countries across the four EGDI groups in 2026. Countries with very high and high EGDI values are grouped in most of the Americas, Europe, large parts of Asia, and Oceania, while countries with middle and low EGDI values are concentrated across Central Africa and parts of Western Asia. Digital government has become the global norm rather than the exception, yet the remaining gap in advancement is increasingly confined to a smaller set of structurally constrained and fragile countries.

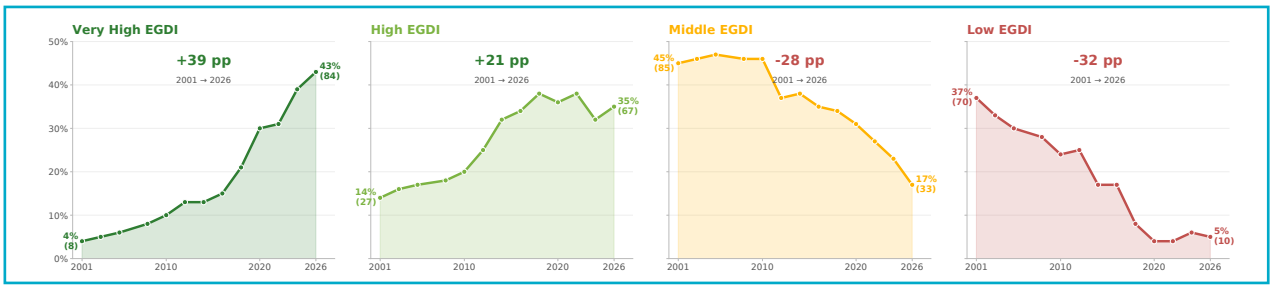
Figure 1.1 Geographical distribution of the four EGDI groups, 2026



Source: 2026 United Nations E-Government Survey.

Nearly four-fifths of all United Nations Member States (151 countries) are in the high or very high EGDI group in 2026, up from 138 in 2024, while the number of countries in the middle and low EGDI groups together fell from 55 to 43 over the same period. The expansion at the top is driven by the stability of the strongest performers in Europe, North America and East Asia, and the upward movement of middle-tier countries whose service provision, infrastructure and human capital improved from 2024 to 2026. The persistence of a small low-EGDI group, now reduced to ten countries, indicates that the remaining gap is defined increasingly by structural barriers rather than by simple gradations along the development spectrum.

Figure 1.2 Share of United Nations Member States in each EGDI development level over time (2001–2026) (Each panel shows one level with its 25-year change in percentage points)



Source: 2001-2026 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

Note: Number of countries assessed in 25 years varies from 190 (2001) to 194 (2026) United Nations Member States.

Figure 1.2 places the 2024–2026 progress within the 25-year arc since the Survey's inception in 2001 and confirms that this progress is part of a long-running structural transformation. The very high EGDI group has expanded from 4 per cent of Member States in 2001 (8 countries) to 43 per cent in 2026 (84 countries)—a 39 per cent increase that has accelerated since the mid-2010s. The high EGDI group has risen from 14 per cent to 35 per cent over the same period, with rapid expansion through most of the 2010s. The middle EGDI group has been steadily hollowed out, falling from 43 per cent in 2001 to 17 per cent in 2026, and is becoming the source of most of the upgrades that were observed in 2026. The low EGDI group has contracted most sharply in relative terms, from 37 per cent (70 countries) to 5 per cent (10 countries), though its decline has flattened in recent years. The remaining low and middle group countries face structural constraints, including economic and political fragility, conflict, weak fiscal space, and low connectivity baselines, and will require differentiated policy approaches to close the gap.

1.4 Movements between EGDI groups in 2024 to 2026

The aggregate shift toward higher EGDI levels reflects a wave of countries crossing classification thresholds, not just incremental improvement within existing groups. Figure 1.3 visualizes these transitions for the 193 United Nations Member States in 2024 and 194 countries with the State of Palestine added during the assessment in 2026.

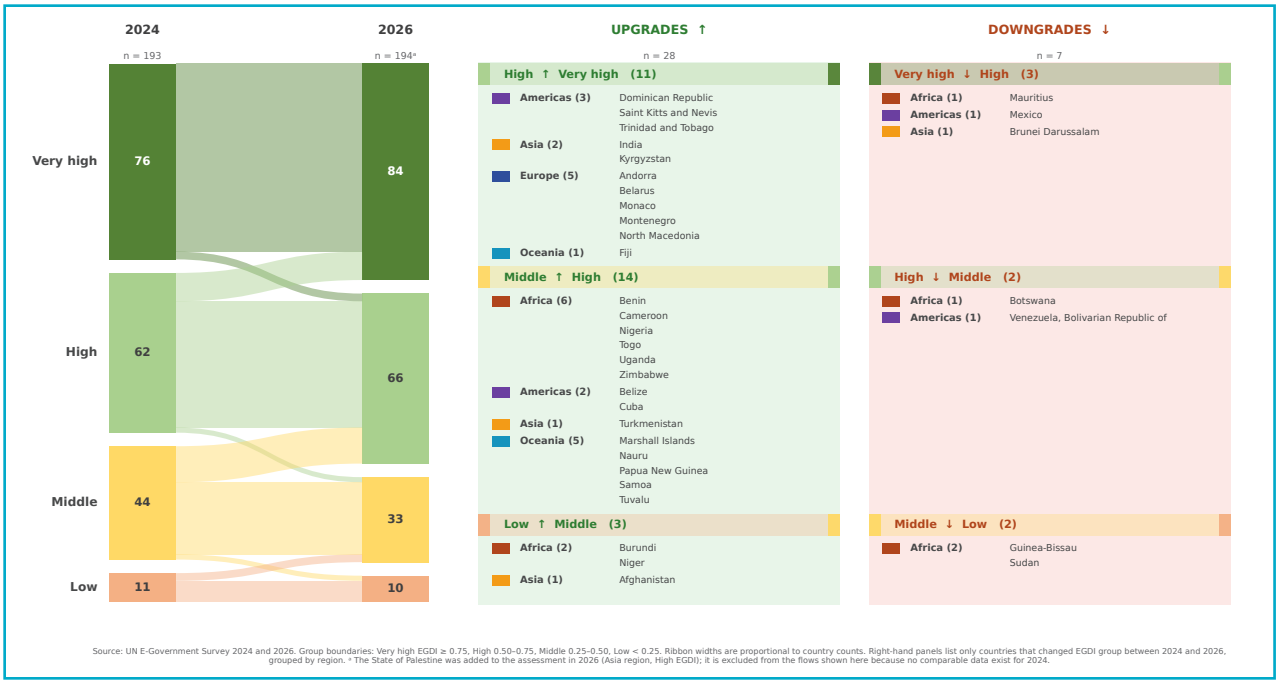
In 2026 nearly one in five countries (18.1 per cent) changed EGDI group, with an upgrade-to-downgrade ratio of four to one. More specifically, out of 35 countries that changed their EGDI group, 28 have moved up and 7 have moved down—a net upward movement of 21 countries. This distributional shift points to a broad process of upward convergence. Countries are not only improving scores incrementally, but a significant number are also crossing performance thresholds into higher categories.

The single largest flow of 14 countries from middle to high EGDI level accounted for half of all upgrades, the threshold at which digital government begins to function as a coherent ecosystem of services rather than a collection of digitized transactions. These countries are translating earlier investments in digital infrastructure, service delivery, and institutional modernization into measurable advances across the EGDI components. Africa contributed the largest share in the flow with Benin, Cameroon, Nigeria, Togo, Uganda and Zimbabwe entering the high EGDI group. The continent's progress in 2026 has been concentrated in strengthening mid-level capacity rather than pushing into the top tier.

Oceania recorded the most coherent regional surge, with five Pacific small island developing States—Marshall Islands, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tuvalu—moving up together. The coordinated advance reflects the cumulative impact of recent connectivity and digital public service investments across the Pacific region. Additional upward movement came from the Americas, with Belize and Cuba, and from Asia through Turkmenistan, reinforcing the broad geographic spread of middle-tier advancement.

The second-largest movement of countries is from the high EGDI group to the very high EGDI group. Eleven countries entered the global leading tier of digital government. Europe accounted for nearly half of these transitions (Andorra, Belarus, Monaco, Montenegro and North Macedonia), continuing the region's consolidation at the top of the index. Three Caribbean states in the Americas (Dominican Republic, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago), two in Asia (India and Kyrgyzstan) and one in Oceania (Fiji) joined the very high EGDI group for the first time in 2026. These transitions show that the very high EGDI group is continuing to widen geographically, becoming less concentrated among long-established digital leaders.

Figure 1.3 Movement of countries between EGDI groups during the 2024 to 2026 period, and the snapshot of upward and downward movements by region
(*Number of countries*)



Source: 2024 and 2026 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

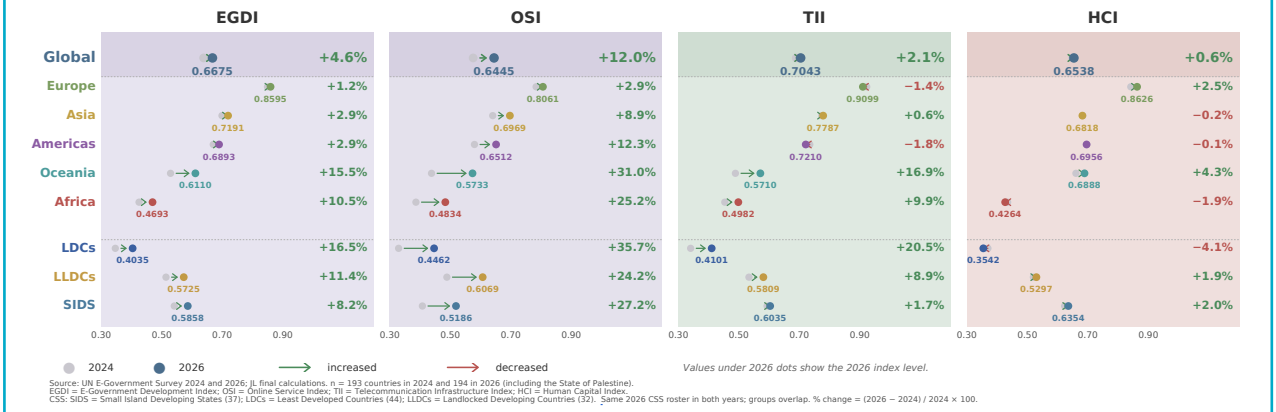
The low to middle EGDI group flow involved three countries—Afghanistan in Asia, and Burundi and Niger in Africa—and is important from a developmental perspective. Each of these countries has exited the lowest EGDI category to begin the upward journey to digital transformation.

Downward movements remain limited in 2026, with only seven countries moving to a lower EGDI group. This minimal movement confirms that the overall trend continues to be one of progress and upward mobility. At the same time, these movements provide useful context for the more detailed regional analysis presented in Chapter 2, which shows that digital government development remains uneven across countries and that changes in EGDI groupings should be read alongside broader regional dynamics, structural conditions and component-level performance.

The distribution of countries across EGDI groups provides useful evidence on the dynamics of global e-government mobility in 2026. The middle EGDI group appears to be a key source of upward movement, suggesting that earlier investments in digital infrastructure, online services and human-capital foundations are beginning to translate into measurable gains for a growing number of countries. At the same time, the very high EGDI group continues to expand, indicating broader diffusion of advanced digital government capabilities, while also becoming more competitive as countries must sustain strong performance across all EGDI dimensions to remain in the top tier. Movements between groups also show that progress is not limited to countries already close to the highest levels of performance: several countries advanced from lower starting points, indicating the continued relevance of foundational investments and targeted reforms. Overall, the 2026 group distribution offers evidence of a more dynamic global landscape, in which upward mobility is visible across different levels of development, even as performance gaps between groups remain significant.

1.5 Global and regional improvements in EGDI and subindices (OSI, TII and HCI)

Figure 1.4 Global and regional EGDI averages, 2024 and 2026



Source: 2024 and 2026 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

E-government development continued to advance globally in 2026, with online service delivery emerging as the main driver of overall progress. The global average EGDI value increased by 4.6 per cent between 2024 and 2026 from 0.6382 to 0.6675. Among the three EGDI subindices, the strongest contribution came from the Online Services Index, which increased by 12.0 per cent (from 0.5754 to 0.6445). By comparison, the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index increased by 2.1 per cent (from 0.6896 to 0.7043), while the Human Capital Index recorded only marginal growth of 0.6 per cent (from 0.6496 to 0.6538).

This pattern suggests that many countries are expanding and improving digital public services faster than the underlying infrastructure and human-capital dimensions are progressing. The data therefore point to a widening policy challenge: service availability is improving, but the capacity to support, access and use those services effectively remains uneven. In this context, infrastructure quality, meaningful connectivity, digital skills, institutional capacity and inclusive service design remain essential to ensuring that advances in online service delivery translate into broader digital transformation.

Figure 1.4 presents the changes in global and regional EGDI averages between 2024 and 2026. The data show that all regions improved their average EGDI performance, though at different speeds and from different starting points. The strongest percentage gains were recorded in Oceania (+15.5 per cent) and Africa (+10.5 per cent) —regions that had more room for upward movement—while more mature digital government ecosystems in Europe (+1.2 per cent), Asia (+2.9 per cent) and the Americas (+2.9 per cent) showed more modest aggregate increases. This reflects a broader pattern in the 2026 results: global progress is continuing, but the drivers, pace and development implications of that progress differ significantly across regions.

At the subindex level, Online Services Index growth is the most consistent sign of global improvement, confirming the continued expansion of online public services and digital service platforms. Telecommunication Infrastructure Index growth is more moderate, indicating that connectivity and infrastructure remain important constraints in many contexts. Human Capital Index growth is the slowest, underscoring that human capital, digital skills and institutional capacity remain critical factors for the next phase of digital government development.

A more detailed interpretation of regional trends, including the specific dynamics in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania, is provided in Chapter 2. That chapter examines how regional averages, subindex patterns, country movements and digital divide indicators interact with broader development conditions, including structural constraints, regional cooperation, connectivity investments and the challenges faced by least developed countries and small island developing States.

1.5.1 Progress in Countries in Special Situations (CSS)

The average EGDI and its subindex values continue to be below the global average EGDI value of 0.6675. Nonetheless, all CSS groups recorded significant gains in 2026 in terms of percentage changes in EGDI and its subindex values.

Least developed countries (LDCs) recorded the largest average EGDI value increase of 16.5 per cent among the countries in special situations, driven by exceptional gains in the Online Services Index (35.7 per cent) and the Telecommunications Infrastructure Index (20.5 per cent). However, the Human Capital Index declined by 4.1 per cent, indicating that improvements in service delivery and connectivity are not yet matched by sufficient expansion of human capital.

Landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) have the most balanced progress across all three dimensions of e-government development. Their average EGDI increased by 11.4 per cent, supported by strong Online Services Index growth (24.2 per cent), a significant improvement of Telecommunication Infrastructure Index average values (8.9 per cent), and positive Human Capital Index growth (1.9 per cent). This contributes to more integrated progress across the digital government ecosystem.

Small island developing States (SIDS) recorded EGDI growth of 8.2 per cent, driven mainly by strong Online Services Index gains (27.2 per cent). Human Capital Index and Telecommunication Infrastructure Index values improved modestly by about 2 per cent and 1.7 per cent, respectively, indicating persistent structural connectivity constraints associated with geographic dispersion.

Several broader patterns emerge from the 2026 data. First, the Online Services Index remains the universal driver of progress. Every region and every CSS group recorded notable gains in digital service provision, reflecting sustained global efforts to expand online public services. Second, telecommunications infrastructure development remains uneven. Many countries in Africa, and LLDCs as a group recorded strong gains in the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index, while others in the Americas, or LDCs, experienced stagnation or decline. Third, human capital development trends are the most divergent. Strong gains in Oceania and among LDCs coexist with declines in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. This suggests that human capital development is becoming an increasingly differentiated determinant of the overall digital government progress.

The mixed performance of the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index and the Human Capital Index highlights important structural risks. Where infrastructure growth slows or human capital weakens, rapid service digitalization may prove difficult to sustain. The decline in human capital development in Africa, Asia and the Americas deserves particular attention, as it may signal emerging gaps between technological expansion and the human capabilities required to fully realize digital transformation.

1.5.2 Key implications

Overall, the 2026 picture is one of continued advancement, but also of growing complexity. More countries are reaching higher levels of digital government development, and the overall global distribution is improving. Yet the persistence of weaker performance in a smaller group of countries, combined with the rapid advancement of leading digital governments, indicates that the next challenge will not simply be to sustain progress, but to ensure that progress becomes more balanced

and inclusive. At the same time, the 2026 findings make clear that global progress should not be interpreted as a proportional reduction in digital inequality. Improvements in national averages and upward movement across EGDI groups do not necessarily imply that the benefits of digital transformation are distributed evenly across countries and populations. The issue of the digital divide therefore remains central to the global e-government landscape and is examined in greater detail in Chapter 2 through regional analysis and a population-based assessment of countries below the world average EGDI value.

1.6 Countries leading e-government development

Table 1.1 lists the top leaders in e-government development in 2026, representing the highest-performing countries in the very high EGDI rating class. This group has expanded from 18 countries in 2024 to 21 countries in 2026, indicating that more countries are now reaching the most advanced tier of digital government performance. The Republic of Korea is the world leader in 2026, taking the first position globally, followed by Denmark and Singapore, and confirming the sustained strength of the top-performing countries across the core dimensions of e-government development. Compared with 2024, the composition of this group became somewhat broader, with Ireland, Kazakhstan and Poland joining the highest tier and the United States of America returning to it, while Japan was no longer part of this most advanced group in 2026. The 2026 configuration therefore reflects a wider, though still highly selective, distribution of top performers across countries and regions.

Table 1.1 Countries leading e-government development, 2026 *(Index values)*

Country name	Rating class	Region	OSI	HCI	TII	EGDI (2026)	EGDI (2024)
Republic of Korea	VH	Asia	0.9966	0.9465	0.9953	0.9794	0.9679
Denmark	VH	Europe	0.9725	0.9611	0.9995	0.9777	0.9847
Singapore	VH	Asia	1.0000	0.9291	0.9874	0.9722	0.9691
Saudi Arabia	VH	Asia	1.0000	0.9163	1.0000	0.9721	0.9602
United Arab Emirates	VH	Asia	0.9977	0.9155	1.0000	0.9711	0.9533
Iceland	VH	Europe	0.9355	0.9568	0.9748	0.9557	0.9671
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	VH	Europe	0.9459	0.9507	0.9691	0.9553	0.9577
Estonia	VH	Europe	0.9624	0.9281	0.9720	0.9542	0.9727
Finland	VH	Europe	0.9099	0.9854	0.9651	0.9534	0.9575
Australia	VH	Oceania	0.9109	1.0000	0.9429	0.9513	0.9577
Spain	VH	Europe	0.9801	0.8959	0.9731	0.9497	0.9206
Norway	VH	Europe	0.9147	0.9691	0.9584	0.9474	0.9315
United States of America	VH	Americas	0.9293	0.9316	0.9712	0.9440	0.9194
Bahrain	VH	Asia	0.9552	0.8727	0.9980	0.9420	0.9196
Netherlands	VH	Europe	0.9082	0.9368	0.9725	0.9392	0.9538
Kazakhstan	VH	Asia	0.9444	0.8924	0.9720	0.9363	0.9009
Sweden	VH	Europe	0.8924	0.9404	0.9591	0.9306	0.9326
Germany	VH	Europe	0.9038	0.9652	0.9144	0.9278	0.9382
Ireland	VH	Europe	0.8922	0.9517	0.9147	0.9196	0.9138
New Zealand	VH	Oceania	0.9019	0.9177	0.9348	0.9181	0.9265
Poland	VH	Europe	0.8824	0.9032	0.9639	0.9165	0.8648

Source: 2024 and 2026 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

The internal ranking of this group also became more dynamic between 2024 and 2026. The most significant upward movements were recorded by Poland, which rose from thirty-seventh place to twenty-first, Kazakhstan, which advanced from twenty-fourth place to sixteenth, the United Arab Emirates, which moved from eleventh place to fifth, and Spain, which rose from seventeenth to eleventh. Saudi Arabia also strengthened its position markedly, moving from sixth place to fourth place, while the United States of America returned to the leading group after not being part of the very high (VH) rating class in 2024. These movements point to an increasingly competitive top tier, in which leadership is being reinforced not only by long-established frontrunners but also by countries that have accelerated progress through sustained digital investment, institutional reform and service transformation.

From a regional perspective, the leading group of countries in 2026 remains concentrated in Europe and Asia but is slightly more diverse than in 2024. In 2024, the highest VH rating class comprised ten European countries, six Asian countries and two Oceanian countries, with no country from the Americas included in that most advanced group. In 2026, the distribution shifted to 12 countries in Europe, 6 in Asia, 2 in Oceania and 1 in the Americas. Europe therefore strengthened its presence further, while the return of the United States of America brought the Americas back into this highest leading tier. This is particularly notable given the scale, complexity and global influence of the United States' digital ecosystem, and because it remains the only country from the region represented in this top group.

At the subregional level, Northern Europe remains the main centre of concentration, increasing from seven countries in 2024 to eight in 2026: Denmark, Iceland, the United Kingdom, Estonia, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Ireland. Western Europe remained stable with the Netherlands and Germany, while Southern Europe continued to be represented by Spain. Eastern Europe, which was not represented in the 2024 highest VH rating class, entered the leading group in 2026 through Poland. Europe's leadership base is therefore no longer confined as strongly as before to its traditional northern core and now shows a somewhat broader subregional spread.

In Asia, the number of leading countries remained unchanged at six, but the subregional composition evolved. In 2024, the highest VH rating class included three countries from Western Asia, two from Eastern Asia and one from South-Eastern Asia. In 2026, Western Asia maintained its strong position through Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain; the Republic of Korea remained the sole representative from Eastern Asia; and Singapore remained the representative from South-Eastern Asia. At the same time, Central Asia entered the leading group for the first time through Kazakhstan, while Japan no longer remained within this highest tier. Asia's leadership thus remains strong, but its internal geography is becoming more diversified, with momentum extending beyond the traditional East Asian centre of excellence.

The pattern remained stable in Oceania, where Australia and New Zealand continued to belong to the leading group in both 2024 and 2026. Table 1.1 presents the complete composition and index values of the 2026 leading group.

Overall, the 2026 results confirm that the leading edge of e-government development remains concentrated in a relatively small number of countries and regions, while becoming gradually more diverse in its regional and subregional composition. Europe and Asia continue to dominate this highest tier, yet the stronger positioning of countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kazakhstan, Poland, Ireland and the United States of America shows that the map of leadership is evolving in substantive ways. The top end of the EGDI distribution is increasingly being shaped by countries that are able to combine digital innovation, institutional capability, infrastructure investment and policy ambition into sustained advances in public sector transformation.

The most advanced digital governments have overall maintained their position while continuing to deepen their digital maturity. These results reflect a broader transition in digital government. In many countries, public-sector digitalization is moving beyond the digitization of individual services toward more integrated and user-oriented systems, supported by stronger connectivity, cloud computing, secure data-sharing architecture, interoperable platforms and digital public infrastructure. Governments are also placing greater emphasis on life-event approaches to service delivery, while beginning to incorporate automation and selected AI-enabled tools into administrative processes and service provision. In the most advanced countries, some elements of Agentic Government are already beginning to emerge, with AI-enabled systems supporting more anticipatory, coordinated and adaptive forms of public administration and pointing, in some cases, toward the longer-term direction of an Agentic State. As a result, digital government is becoming more connected, proactive and data-driven, while also demanding greater institutional readiness, governance capacity and public trust. These developments are examined further in Chapter 4.

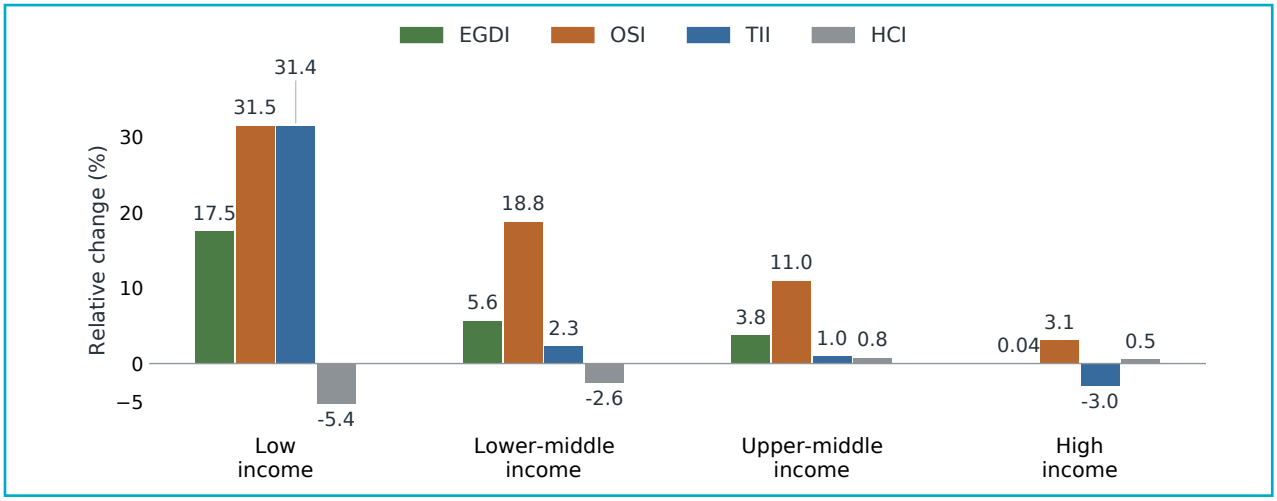
1.7 National income and e-government development

The 2026 data show that income levels remain strongly associated with e-government development, but they also reveal important signs of movement among countries starting from lower baselines. The largest relative gains between 2024 and 2026 were recorded among low-income countries, suggesting that improvements in online services and telecommunications infrastructure are beginning to translate into measurable progress. At the same time, these gains should be interpreted carefully: despite faster percentage growth, low-income and lower-middle-income countries continue to lag significantly behind higher-income countries in absolute EGDI values.

Between 2024 and 2026, low-income countries registered the largest relative improvements in EGDI and its components. Their average EGDI increased by 17 per cent, while the Online Services Index rose by 32 per cent and the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index by 31 per cent (figure 1.5). However, the Human Capital Index declined by 5 per cent indicating that progress in service provision and infrastructure was not matched by comparable gains in human capital development. Lower-middle-income countries also recorded notable progress, with EGDI rising by 5.6 per cent, the Online Services Index by 19 per cent and the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index by 2.3 per cent, alongside a 2.6 per cent decline in the Human Capital Index. Upper-middle-income countries posted more moderate but balanced gains across all four indicators, with EGDI increasing by 3.8 per cent, the Online Services Index by 11 per cent, the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index by 1 per cent and the Human Capital Index by 0.8 per cent. By contrast, high-income countries remained broadly stable over the same period: the EGDI decreased slightly by 0.04 per cent, the Online Services Index increased by 3.1 per cent, the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index declined by 3 per cent and the Human Capital Index rose marginally by 0.5 per cent. This pattern reflects the different starting points across income groups. Countries with lower baseline values often have greater room for rapid relative improvement, while high-income countries, already close to the upper range of performance, tend to show more incremental changes.

Across income groups, the Online Services Index recorded the strongest gains, particularly among low-income and lower-middle-income countries. This indicates that improvements in online service delivery outpaced changes in the broader EGDI composite index. The substantial increase in the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index among low-income countries also points to continued infrastructure expansion from a comparatively low base. By contrast, the decline in the Human Capital Index among low-income and lower-middle-income countries suggests that recent digital government progress has been driven more by service availability and infrastructure improvements than by human capital gains.

Figure 1.5 Percentage change in EGDI component values between 2024 and 2026, by country income group

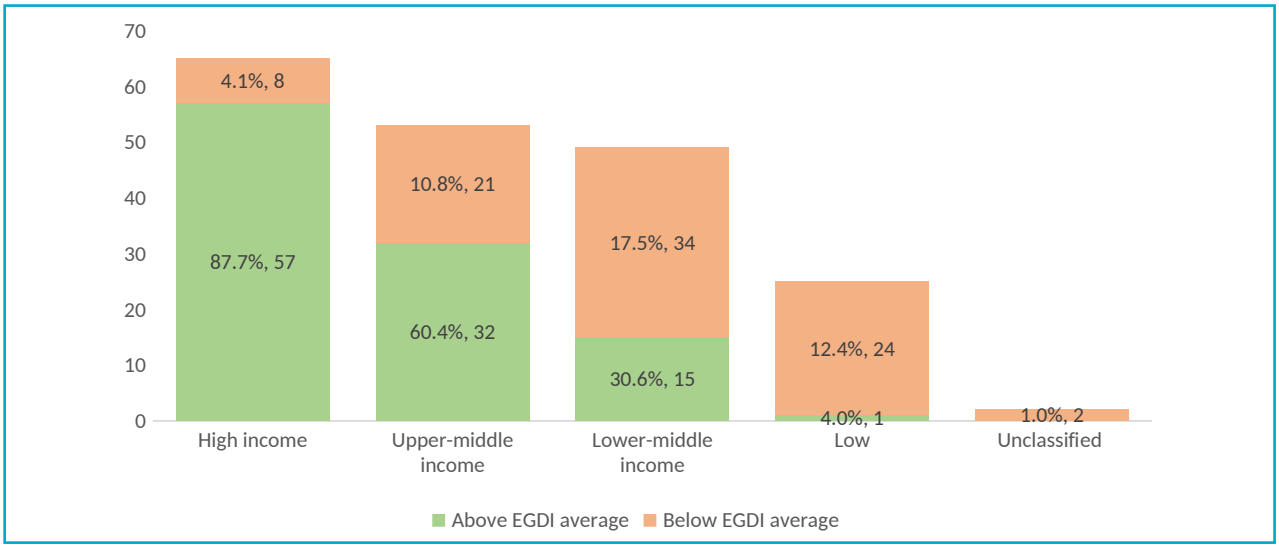


Source: 2024 and 2026 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

Despite these relative improvements, the absolute gap between income groups remains large. Low-income and lower-middle-income countries continue to record EGDI, Online Services Index and Telecommunication Infrastructure Index values that are well below global averages. This confirms that rapid percentage gains do not necessarily imply convergence in overall performance. In practical terms, many countries are moving in the right direction, but from starting points that remain far below those of upper-middle- and high-income countries.

Differences also persist within income groups. For a given income category, regional averages can vary substantially, showing that income level alone does not fully explain e-government performance. For example, upper-middle-income economies in Europe and Asia record notably higher EGDI averages, at 0.7913 and 0.7724, respectively, than upper-middle-income economies in the Americas (0.6970), Africa (0.7077) and Oceania (0.6334). This suggests that institutional capacity, infrastructure quality, policy continuity, digital skills, regional cooperation and implementation capability also play important roles in shaping outcomes.

Figure 1.6 Number of countries with EGDI values above and below the global average, by income group, 2026



Source: 2026 United Nations E-Government Survey.

The relationship between income and e-government development is also visible in the distribution of countries above and below the global EGDI average. In high-income countries, nearly nine in ten, or about 88 per cent, score above the global EGDI average. By contrast, most countries in the lower-middle- and low-income groups remain below the global benchmark: only about 31 per cent of lower-middle-income countries, or 15 out of 49, are above it, while just 1 low-income country out of 25, or 4 per cent, exceeds the global average. This reinforces the central finding of the section: lower-income countries are showing the strongest relative momentum, but the income-related gap in e-government development remains substantial.

1.8 Online Services Index

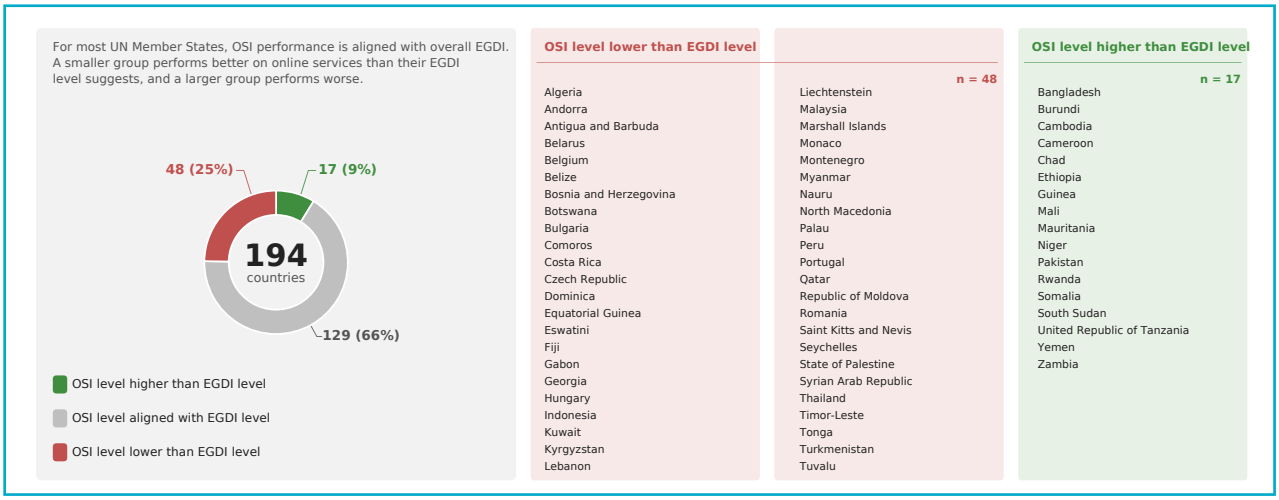
Online Services Index values are based on the results of a comprehensive survey covering multiple aspects of the online presence of all 193 Member States and the State of Palestine. The five subindices include service provision, the institutional framework supporting e-government development, content provision, technological aspects of the portals, and participation and engagement. The composite Online Services Index value is calculated based on the normalized values for each of these subindices (see the technical appendix for details on the methodology used). The results are tabulated and presented as a set of standardized index values on a scale of 0 to 1, with 1 corresponding to the highest-rated online service provision and 0 to the lowest.

Online Services Index values, like EGDI values, are not intended as absolute measurements; rather, they capture the online performance of countries relative to each other at a particular point in time. Because the Online Services Index is a composite tool, a high value is an indication of current best practices rather than perfection. Similarly, a lower value, or a value that has not changed since the last edition of the Survey, does not mean there has been no progress in e-government development. Survey results relating to the Online Services Index and its five subindices are presented below.

1.8.1 Country groupings by Online Services Index (OSI) and EGDI levels

In most United Nations Member States, higher Online Services Index values align with higher EGDI values. The two are not always the same, however, because telecommunications infrastructure and human capital also influence the composite index. It is therefore important to identify cases where the Online Services Index level is significantly higher or lower than the EGDI level so that targeted policies can either strengthen infrastructure and skills in "service first" countries or accelerate online service deployment where the enabling environment is already strong. As presented in figure 1.7, for 66 per cent of the countries Online Services Index and EGDI levels are the same, for 25 per cent of countries the Online Services Index levels are lower, and for 9 per cent of countries the Online Services Index is higher than their EGDI levels. The number of countries where the Online Services Index level is higher than the EGDI level has increased since 2024, 17 in 2026 compared to 11 in 2024, suggesting that countries invest in improving online service provision even when other aspects of digital development lag behind.

Figure 1.7 Countries with diverging OSI and EGDI levels, 2026



Source: 2026 United Nations E-Government Survey.

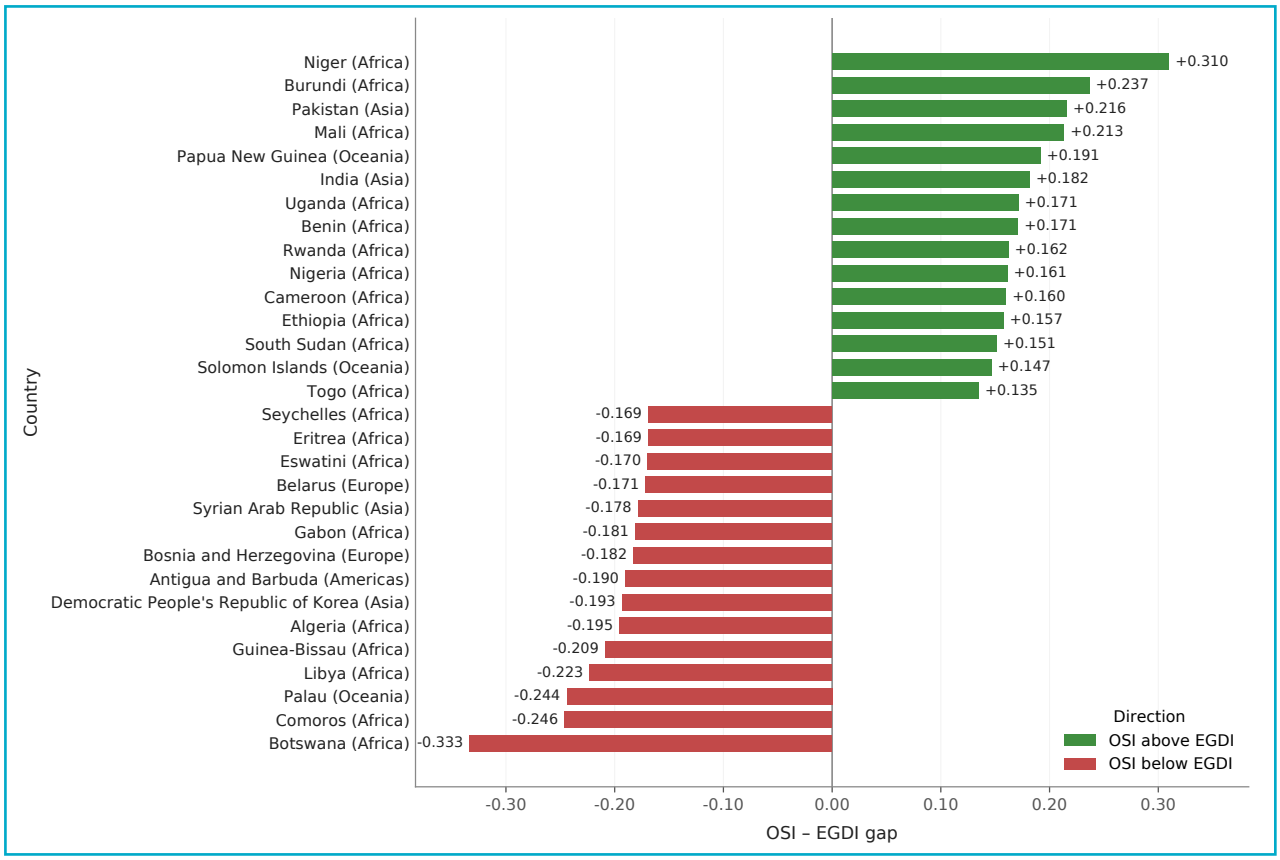
Notes: Countries are listed alphabetically; red = OSI level is below EGDI, green = OSI level is above EGDI.

The analysis of the gap between the Online Services Index and EGDI (figure 1.8) highlights countries where online services performance is noticeably out of line with their overall e government development level. Countries with a positive Online Services Index–EGDI delta indicate faster progress in service delivery than in infrastructure or human capital, whereas countries with a negative delta show the opposite pattern, where broader development conditions are stronger than the maturity of online public service provision.

While a country's online services development is often a solid predictor of overall e-government development, the two are not always aligned, as the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index and the Human Capital Index components are also factored into the EGDI value. It is important to identify cases in which the Online Services Index level is higher or lower than the overall EGDI level so that targeted policies can be adopted and sufficient resources allocated for the improvement of online service provision.

Countries where Online Services Index values most strongly outrun EGDI in 2026 include Niger (+0.310), Burundi (+0.237), Pakistan (+0.216), Mali (+0.213), Papua New Guinea (+0.191), India (+0.182), Uganda (+0.171), Benin (+0.171), Rwanda (+0.162) and Nigeria (+0.161). The majority of these are low or lower middle income countries in Africa and Asia, which have invested heavily in front end e services (portals and online transactions) but still have relatively modest telecommunications infrastructure and human capital development values, keeping EGDI in the middle range. Sustaining progress in these "service-first" countries require improvements in broadband, connectivity and digital skills so that EGDI can move toward their higher Online Services Index values. Niger, for example, has an Online Services Index value around 0.63 compared to an EGDI value of around 0.32, implying a sophisticated service layer relative to a still weak enabling environment.

Figure 1.8 Top 30 countries with the largest OSI-EGDI value gaps by country and region, 2026



Source: 2026 United Nations E-Government Survey.

Notes: The chart presents the top 15 countries with the largest positive (green) and negative (red) gaps. Each bar is labelled with a country name (and region) and a numeric delta (for example, +0.310 or –0.333), allowing readers to see both the direction and the magnitude of the divergence.

Countries where the Online Services Index lags behind EGDI include Botswana (-0.333), Comoros (-0.246), Palau (-0.244), Libya (-0.223), Algeria (–0.195), Democratic People's Republic of Korea (–0.193), Antigua and Barbuda (–0.190), Bosnia and Herzegovina (–0.182) and Gabon (–0.181). These countries have relatively stronger digital foundations reflected in higher telecommunications infrastructure and human capital indices, but the potential for online service delivery is under-utilized.

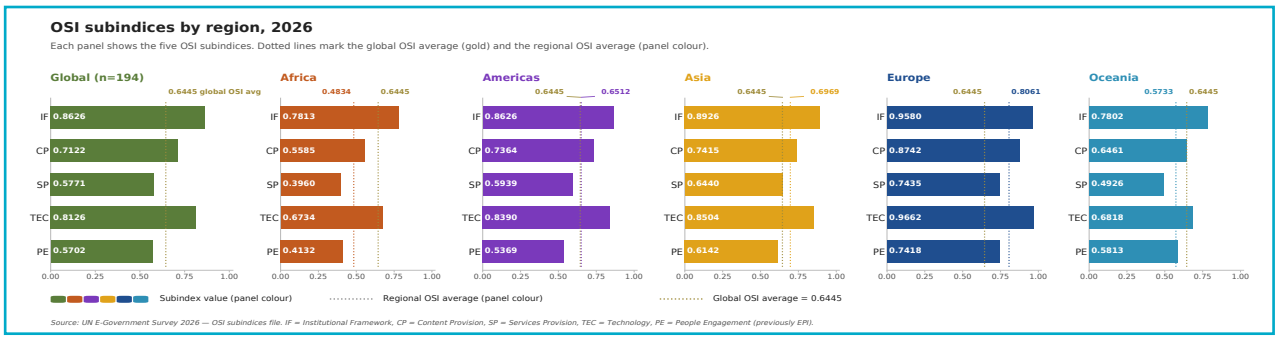
A third group of countries improved between 2024 and 2026 even though their EGDI values declined, indicating that progress on services was offset by weaker movement in other EGDI components: infrastructure, human capital or both. Notable examples include Barbados, Luxembourg, Sri Lanka, Paraguay, Honduras, Mauritius, Hungary, Czech Republic, Iceland, Angola, and Brunei Darussalam. These cases suggest short term service improvements (new portals, better content, more sophisticated transactions) that have not been matched by parallel gains in telecommunications infrastructure or human capital, or where other sub index movements pulled EGDI down despite OSI advances.

From a policymaking perspective, countries that are ahead in the Online Services Index, where progress in service delivery is faster than in infrastructure or human capital, demonstrate that it is possible to "leap" on e-services provision even in relatively constrained environments. Furthermore, this trend is growing stronger: in 2026 there are 17 such "service-first" countries compared to 11 in 2024. Nevertheless, a sustained rise into high EGDI levels will require strengthening all areas, including infrastructure and human capital.

1.8.2 Online Services Index subindices

When improvements in online service provision are needed, it is important to understand which specific aspects of this component require attention. As shown in figure 1.9, the institutional framework (IF) is the strongest dimension of the Online Services Index with a global average of 0.8626, reflecting the near-universal presence of basic institutional information and structures on national portals (organizational charts, leadership information and links to sectoral sites and policies). Technical characteristics (TEC) is the second-strongest dimension with a global average of 0.8126, indicating that the technical underpinnings of portals (availability, functionality and use of enabling technologies) are generally robust among Member States. Technical aspects of the Online Services Index improved between 2024 and 2026 by over 51 per cent (from 0.5363 to 0.8126), which indicates rapid progress in the technical aspects of national portals, including online services capabilities and interoperability.

Figure 1.9 Values for OSI subindices (IF, CP, SP, TEC and PE) at the regional and global levels, 2026



Source: 2026 United Nations E-Government Survey.

Content provision (CP) in most countries is also strong with a global average of 0.71, indicating that countries provide relatively rich informational content. The most advanced features such as analytics, usage statistics or data-rich content, however, are not yet universal. Service provision (SP) is weaker, around 0.5771 globally, indicating that the transformation from information provision to fully transactional online services still falls behind more foundational aspects of the Online Services Index, though there are significant variances across the regions: the average service provision value for Europe is 0.7435, followed by Asia (0.6440), the Americas (0.5939), Oceania (0.4926) and Africa (0.3960).

Participation and engagement (PE) remain the least developed subindex, at a global average of about 0.5702, confirming that the interactive, participatory and co-creative elements of online government remain underdeveloped relative to other Online Services Index dimensions. While countries have continued to add online services and participation features between 2024 and 2026, the pace of improvement in these two dimensions is slower than in more foundational areas.

Overall, the data suggest that foundations for Online Services Index advancement are in place: institutional framework and technical characteristics values show that most governments now have the basic institutional and technical conditions for digital government, including national portals, sectoral gateways and reliable underlying infrastructure. The value of three out of five Online Services Index subindices in 2026 are above the global Online Services Index average of 0.6445, except service provision and participation and engagement, which pull down the overall Online Services Index performance. This indicates that the shift from information to end-to-end transactional services remains incomplete. Many countries still only provide information about the services or partially digitalized online processes rather than fully digital services (reflected in service provision values). Efforts are needed to improve interaction and make people the focus of service provision

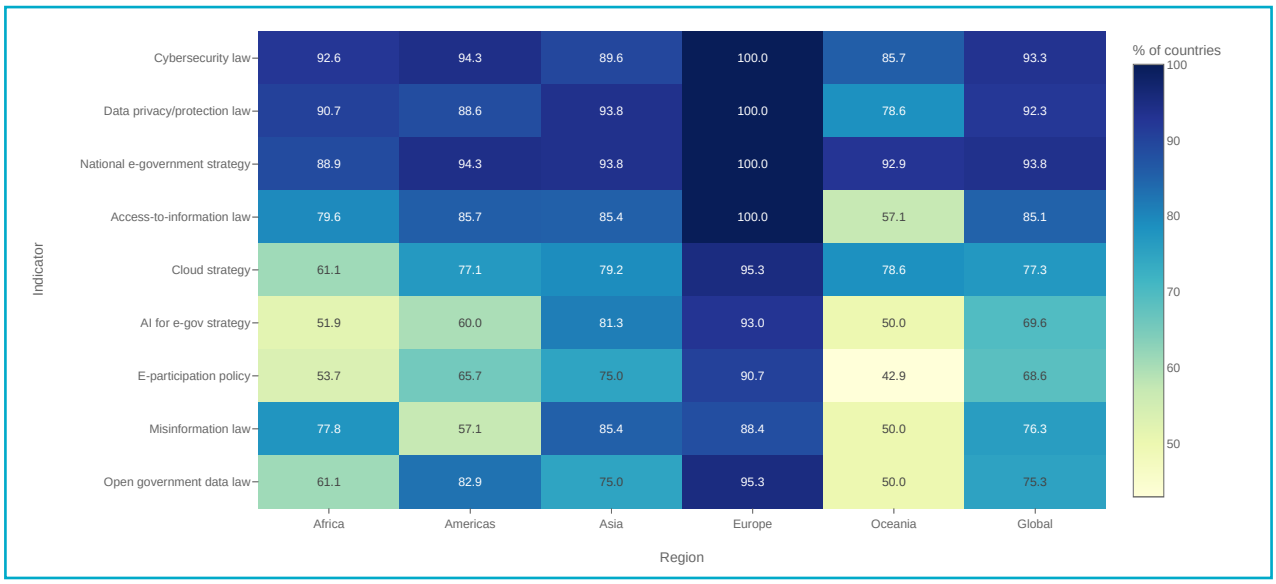
through consultation, feedback mechanisms, participatory budgeting and co-creation (reflected in participation and engagement values).

The overall regional performance patterns of Online Services subindices remain broadly consistent since 2024: Europe has the highest average Online Services Index and subindex values, followed by Asia and the Americas, with Oceania and Africa falling behind, particularly for more advanced online services functions and e participation.

1.8.3 Online Services Index institutional framework subindex—Legislative Framework

As described above, the coverage of basic organizational information on national portals in 2026 has become nearly universal with organizational charts, names, titles of agency heads and links to key sectoral or ministerial sites present for well over nine out of ten United Nations Member States. Information about national Chief Information Officers or equivalent roles and links to subnational or local government portals has improved from 85 per cent to 90 per cent range globally, confirming that information on institutional responsibility for digital government is increasingly made visible online. National portals also link to sectoral portals and relevant policies (education, health, employment, environment, justice and social protection) at nearly universal rates, with only a handful of countries still missing one or more sectors. This means that the organizational side of the institutional framework is essentially mature in most countries; the remaining gaps are now concentrated in a relatively small group of late adopters, often low income countries or small island developing States.

Figure 1.10 Digital government legislative and policy frameworks by region, 2026



Source: 2026 United Nations E-Government Survey.

The legislative frameworks necessary for advancing digital ecosystems, however, remain uneven and are stratified by region. Figure 1.10 highlights that by 2026 most regions have consolidated a near universal core of data protection, access to information, cybersecurity and national e government strategies, but important gaps persist in newer policy areas. Europe and Asia set the global benchmark, with at least 95 per cent coverage in Europe and between 79.2 and 93.8 per cent in Asia for cybersecurity and data protection laws, national e-government strategies and cloud frameworks, alongside very high adoption of AI and e-participation policies, suggesting that more advanced

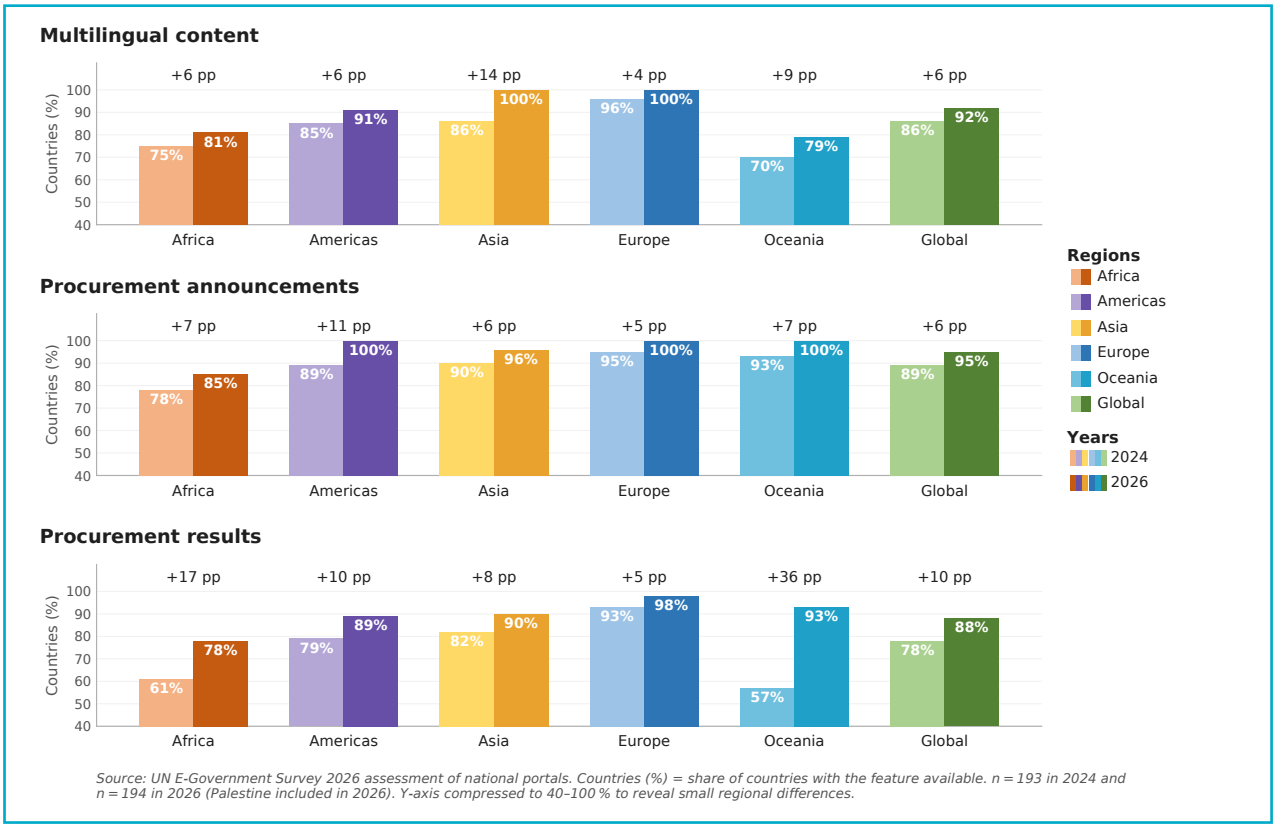
digital government tools are spreading at a slower pace. Oceania remains the main outlier: although cybersecurity, data-protection and national e government strategies are relatively strong, only about half of countries have open data laws, AI strategies, misinformation measures and e participation policies, pointing to a much more uneven institutional landscape than in other regions.

1.8.4 Online Services Index content provision subindex

Globally, 95 per cent of countries published announcements of forthcoming procurement or bidding processes, 88 per cent disclosed procurement or bidding results, and 92 per cent provided content in more than one official language.

Compared with 2024, this marks improvements of about 6 percentage points in multilingual content, 6 points in procurement announcements, and 10 points in procurement results. Europe and Asia led multilingual provision, with full coverage in both regions, while Oceania (79 per cent) and Africa (81 per cent) lag behind. Procurement announcements became nearly universal in the Americas, Europe and Oceania (100 per cent each), and procurement results were most widely available in Europe (98 per cent). Although Africa remained the lowest-performing region on procurement results at 78 per cent, it also recorded one of the largest gains since 2024, rising from 61 per cent.

Figure 1.11 Content provision on national portals, 2026
(Percentage of countries, by region and percentage change between 2024 and 2026)



Source: UN E-Government Survey 2026 assessment of national portals. Countries (%) = share of countries with the feature available. n = 193 in 2024 and n = 194 in 2026 (Palestine included in 2026). Y-axis compressed to 40–100 % to reveal small regional differences.

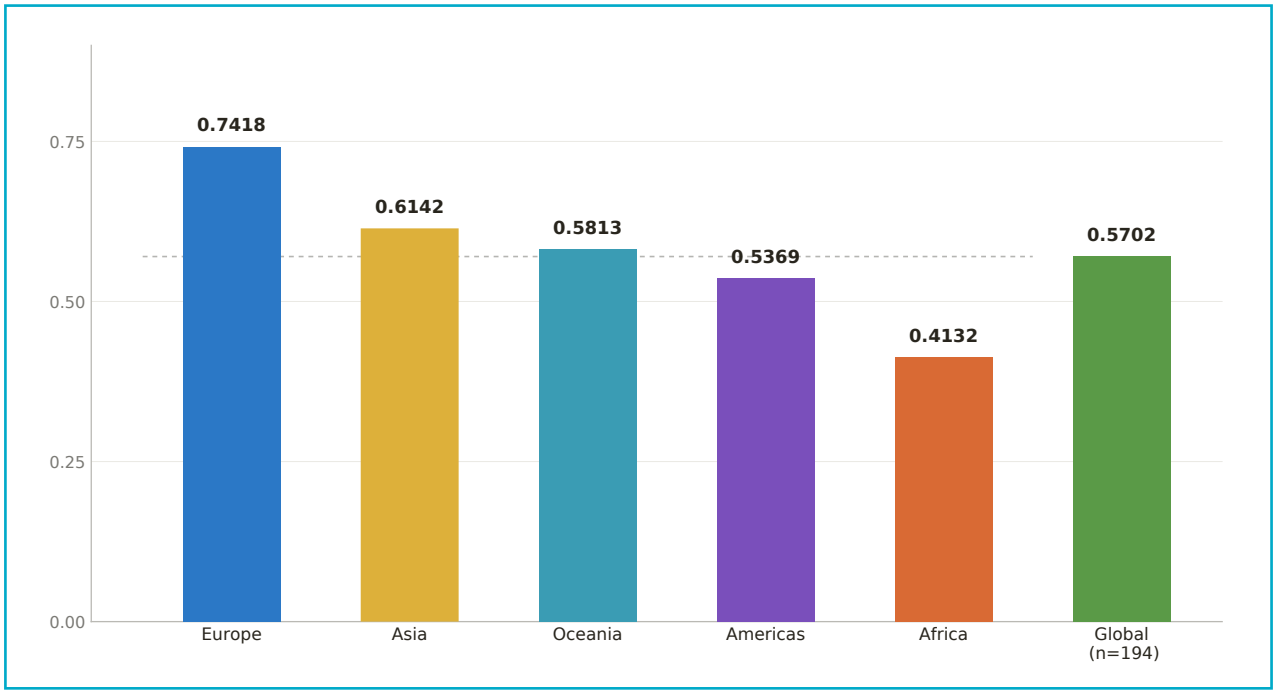
Source: 2024 and 2026 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

1.8.5 Online Services Index participation and engagement subindex

In 2026 participation and engagement subindex assesses whether governments provide meaningful opportunities for online public participation in policymaking, with particular attention to six thematic sectors -- health, education, employment, social protection, environment, and justice -- and six key demographic and social groups identified in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as core populations requiring special protection: youth, women, older people, persons with disabilities, persons living in poverty and migrants and refugees. For each sector and each vulnerable population group, the subindex captures both the availability of online consultations held in the twelve months preceding the survey and the evidence that inputs from participants were reflected in policy decisions. It also assesses the availability of participatory mechanisms such as e-petitions, online reporting of corruption, the ability of public to request new open datasets, and the publication of feedback showing how citizen inputs informed policy. The subindex value derives from 29 features observed on a national government portal, normalized to a 0–1 scale within the Online Services Index. As this instrument differs from the E-Participation Index (EPI) used in the 2024 Survey, direct 2024-to-2026 comparisons at the subindex level should be interpreted with caution.

In 2026, Europe continues to lead with an average participation and engagement value of 0.7418, followed by Asia (0.6142), Oceania (0.5813), the Americas (0.5369) and Africa (0.4132), against a global average of 0.5702 (figure 1.12).

Figure 1.12 Participation and engagement levels across the United Nations Member States by region, 2026



Source: 2026 United Nations E-Government Survey.

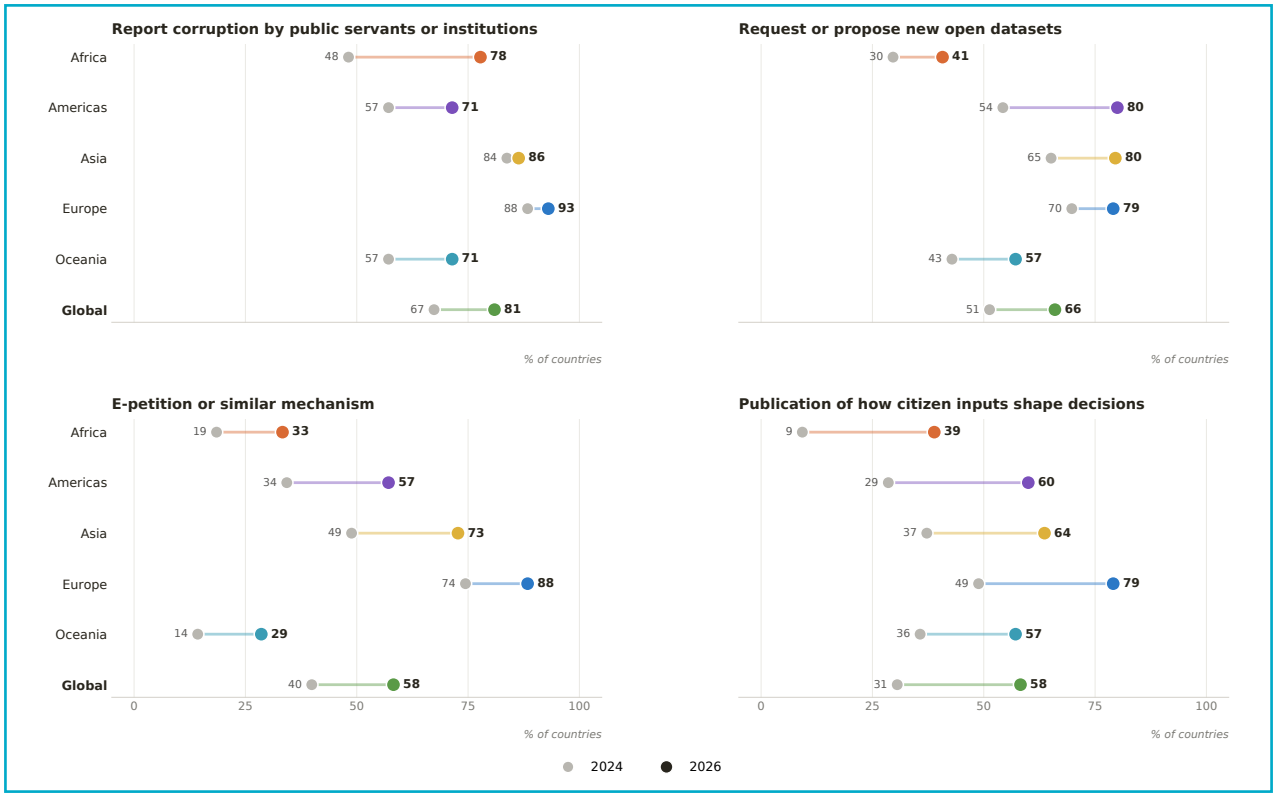
Notes: The participation and engagement subindex is normalized within the Online Services Index and reported on a 0–1 scale. n = 194 in 2026 (all United Nations Member States, including Palestine).

Four cross-cutting dimensions within the participation and engagement subindex are administered identically in the 2024 and 2026 Surveys (figure 1.13) and can therefore be compared directly. The availability of accountability channels and participatory mechanisms such as e-petitions assessed by subindex have expanded globally. Channels for reporting corruption by public servants or institutions are present on the national portals of 157 out of 194 United Nations Member States (81 per cent),

up from 130 in 2024 (67 per cent) — a gain of 13.6 percentage points. The share of countries where the public can request or propose new open datasets rose from 99 to 128 Member States (51 to 66 per cent, an increase of 14.7 percentage points). E-petitions and similar deliberative mechanisms are now available in 113 Member States (58 per cent, up from 40 per cent in 2024, an increase of 18 percentage points). The share of countries that publish information on how citizen inputs inform policy decisions has nearly doubled, reaching 113 countries (58 per cent) in 2026, compared with 59 countries (31 per cent) in 2024.

European countries continue to lead across all four dimensions, with between 79 and 93 per cent of countries offering each feature online. Asia recorded the strongest regional gain in e-petition or similar mechanisms, with coverage rising from 49 per cent in 2024 to 73 per cent of countries in 2026, trailing only Europe. In the Americas, the share of countries allowing the public to request new open datasets expanded from 54 to 80 per cent over the last two years, and more than doubled on the publication of evidence showing how citizen inputs shape decisions (from 29 to 60 per cent). Oceania doubled the share of countries with an online e-petition mechanism (from 14 to 29 per cent) and reached parity with the Americas on the publication of evidence that public consultations informed policymaking (57 per cent of countries in 2026); online corruption-reporting coverage in the region also rose from 57 to 71 per cent. Africa recorded double-digit percentage-point gains on all four dimensions — including a more than fourfold increase in the share of African countries publishing evidence of citizen input in policy decisions (from 9 to 39 per cent), while still remaining a region furthest from the global average on e-petition mechanisms and on responding to public requests for new open datasets.

Figure 1.13 Mechanisms for participation and engagement among the United Nations Member States, 2026

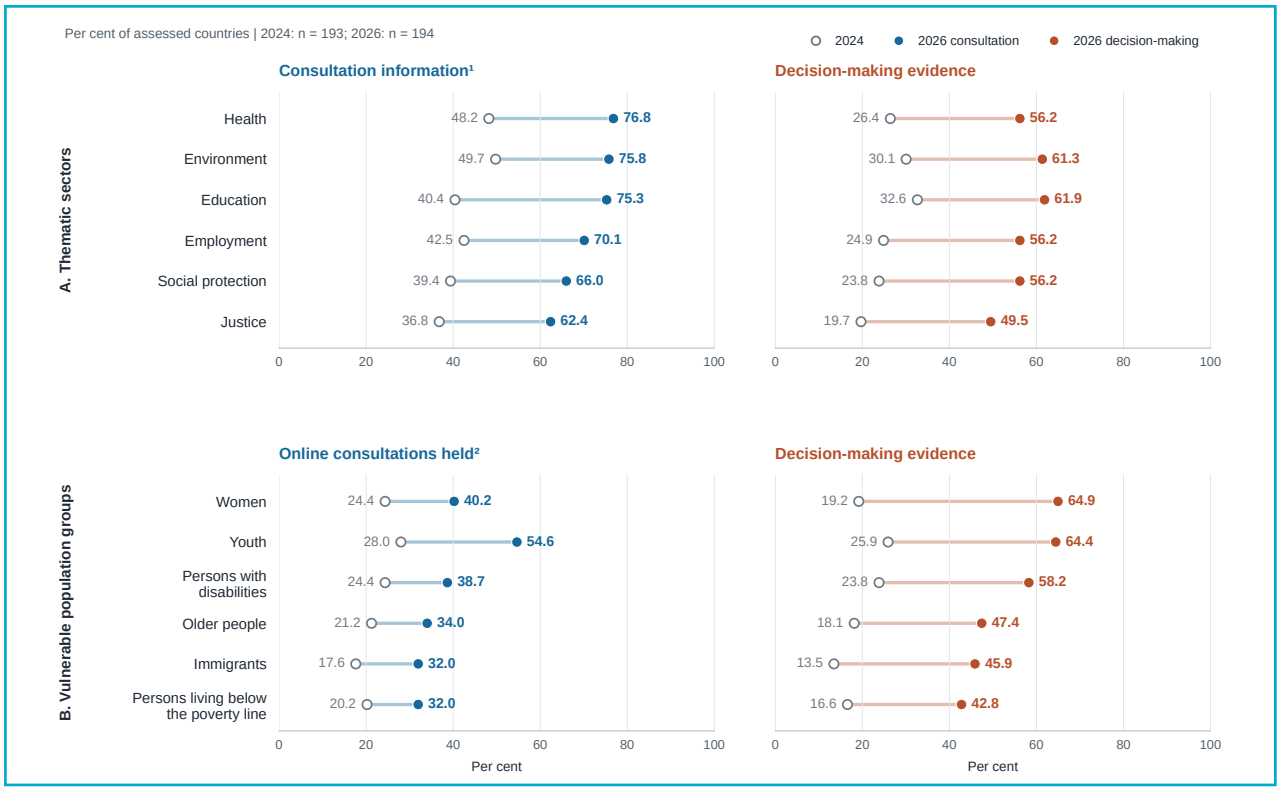


Source: 2024 and 2026 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

Note: Values show the percentage of United Nations Member States with each feature present on national government portals. n = 193 in 2024 and n = 194 in 2026 (Palestine included in 2026).

Between 2024 and 2026, both the availability of online consultations and the evidence that citizen inputs shape policy decisions expanded across every thematic sector and every vulnerable group assessed through participation and engagement subindex (figure 1.14). At the sectoral level, online consultations held in the twelve months preceding the Survey are now reported by roughly three quarters of United Nations Member States on health, environment and education, and around two thirds of countries on employment, social protection and justice. Increasingly more countries provide evidence on national portals on how citizen inputs shaped policy decision-making (over 55 per cent of the Member States). This marked increase in e-consultations and e-decision making is encouraging, notwithstanding the limitations in direct comparability of findings with 2024 survey due to methodological adjustments implemented in 2026 for the assessment of participation and engagement subindex.

Figure 1.14 Online consultations and decision-making evidence by thematic sector and vulnerable group, 2024 and 2026, per cent of countries



Source: 2024 and 2026 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

Note: Values show the percentage of United Nations Member States with each feature present on national government portals. n = 193 in 2024 and n = 194 in 2026 (Palestine included in 2026).

Overall, the 2026 findings highlight continued asymmetry in participation and engagement: countries at higher levels of digital government are consolidating already mature participatory systems, while several lower-baseline regions are catching up quickly in relative terms. Countries with higher participation and engagement values tend to provide open datasets across all sectors; report recent online consultations in multiple sectors; and show evidence that feedback from both the public and vulnerable groups was reflected in policy decisions. By contrast, countries with lower participation and engagement values often have sectoral datasets and some reporting tools but lack documented consultations or evidence that inputs from people have shaped the policies.

1.8.6 Online Services Index service provision subindex

The service provision subindex assesses the availability and level of digitalization of public services online, including how services are accessed (through a single portal or multiple channels) and whether they are organized around major life events. It also examines the existence and functionality of e-procurement and digital invoicing systems, the integration of geographic information systems (GIS) and other geospatial technologies in service provision, and the availability of sector-specific services and services for people in vulnerable situations.

The 2026 assessment analysed 72 online services across all 194 countries. Of these, 49 services had a comparable 2024 baseline, allowing for like-for-like analyses of 9,457 country–service observations between 2024 and 2026. The remaining 23 services were newly introduced in the 2026 questionnaire, accounting for 4,511 newly assessed observations. This expanded coverage enabled the Survey to capture a broader and more detailed picture of digital government service provision, while still maintaining a robust basis for measuring progress over time where direct comparison was possible.

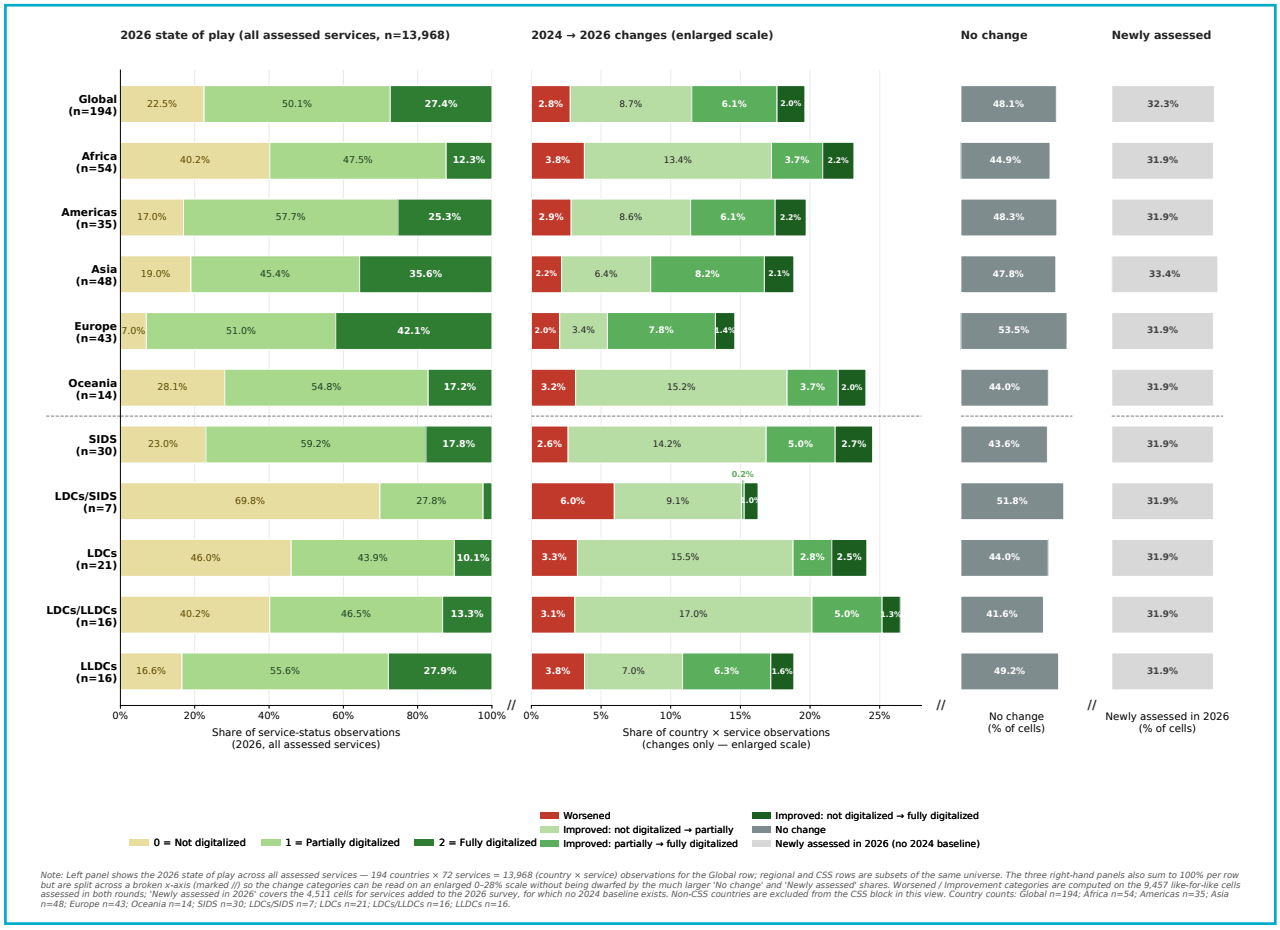
For the first time, all country portals are assessed to check for the availability of at least one national portal through which services are organized and offered as life events. A life event is generally understood as a significant change in a person's circumstances that triggers a need for one or more public services—such as the birth of a child, marriage or the loss of a loved one. Life events cluster related services that individuals and businesses need at key moments in their lives, such as the birth of a child, starting or closing a business, entering or leaving employment, or retirement, rather than to the internal structure of government institutions. This life event approach is considered more user centric, as it aligns the design and delivery of digital services with people's real needs and journeys, placing the individual, rather than the administration, at the centre of service integration and thus provides a stronger basis for assessing the maturity of integrated, people centred e-government service provision. The data analysis and key findings are presented below.

Maturity of public services digitalization—global, regional, and countries in special situations outlook

In 2026, 77.5 per cent of all assessed services are at least partially digitalized (50.1 per cent partially and 27.4 per cent fully). Only 22.5 per cent of services are not digitalized (figure 1.15). Global progress in service digitalization between 2024 and 2026 was broad-based, though still concentrated at the early stages of transformation. Globally, only 2.8 per cent of observations worsened, while 16.8 per cent improved, mainly through movement from not digitalized to partially digitalized services (8.7 per cent). By comparison, transitions from partially to fully digitalized accounted for 6.1 per cent, while direct jumps from not digitalized to fully digitalized remained rare at 2.0 per cent. At the same time, 48.1 per cent of observations showed no change, indicating that progress remains gradual across much of the service landscape.

Regional patterns reveal different stages of digital maturity. Africa and Oceania are progressing rapidly in expanding basic digital service availability, with relatively high shares of services moving from not digitalized to partially digitalized (13.4 per cent and 15.2 per cent, respectively). However, their shares of transitions from partially to fully digitalized services remain comparatively modest at 3.7 per cent in both regions. This suggests that these regions are still focused primarily on establishing a digital footprint rather than deepening integration and transactional maturity.

Figure 1.15 Service digitalization by region (2026), and distribution of transition in digitalization between 2024-2026



Note: Left panel shows the 2026 state of play across all assessed services — 194 countries × 72 services = 13,968 (country × service) observations for the Global row; regional and CSS rows are subsets of the same universe. The three right-hand panels also sum to 100% per row but are split across a broken x-axis (marked //) so the change categories can be read on an enlarged 0–28% scale without being dwarfed by the much larger 'No change' and 'Newly assessed' shares. Worsened / Improvement categories are computed on the 9,457 like-for-like cells assessed in both rounds; 'Newly assessed in 2026' covers the 4,511 cells for services added to the 2026 survey, for which no 2024 baseline exists. Non-CSS countries are excluded from the CSS block in this view. Country counts: Global n=194; Africa n=54; Americas n=35; Asia n=48; Europe n=43; Oceania n=14; SIDS n=30; LDCs/SIDS n=7; LDCs n=21; LDCs/LLDCs n=16; LLDCs n=16.

Source: 2024 and 2026 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

Europe has the most advanced digitalization profile. By 2026, 42.1 per cent of services were already digitalized fully and another 51 per cent partially, and only 7.0 per cent of services remained non-digitalized. Europe also recorded the highest share of upgrades from partially to fully digitalized services (7.8 per cent), consistent with more mature digital ecosystems where many services had already achieved partial digitalization in earlier years. Asia displays a similarly advanced trajectory, with the highest regional share of fully digitalized services in 2026 (35.6 per cent) outside Europe and the lowest rate of worsening service delivery (2.2 per cent). Asia was also the only region where progress toward full digitalization (8.2 per cent) exceeded gains at the entry level from not digitalized to partially digitalized services (6.4 per cent), suggesting a stronger emphasis on service completion and integration. The Americas occupied an intermediate position, with 25.3 per cent of services fully digitalized in 2026 and a relatively balanced transition pattern between entry-level expansion (8.6 per cent) and progression toward full digitalization (6.1 per cent).

**All percentages on the left-hand panels are computed across all assessed services (194 countries × 72 services = 13,968 country × service observations). On the right-hand panel each bar still sums to 100 per cent of all assessed services in the group; the Worsened, No change and three Improvement categories are computed on the 9,457 like-for-like services assessed in both 2024 and 2026, while the Newly assessed in 2026 category covers the 4,511 data points that correspond to services newly added to the 2026 questionnaire.*

The analysis of online service-delivery patterns among the countries in special situations (LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS) reveals significant differences in the pace and depth of service digitalization. LLDCs have a comparatively strong performance among structurally vulnerable groups, with 27.9 per cent of services fully digitalized and a relatively high share of transitions toward full digitalization (6.3 per cent).

By contrast, LDCs and SIDS emerged as the most structurally constrained group. In 2026, nearly 70 per cent of services (69.8 per cent) remained entirely non-digitalized, while only a very small share had reached full digitalization. This group also recorded the highest rate of worsening outcomes (6.0 per cent), the lowest share of movement from partially to fully digitalized services (1.0 per cent), and almost no direct jumps from not digitalized to fully digitalized services (0.2 per cent). These findings suggest that many LDCs and SIDS are still struggling to establish even basic digital service provision, let alone more advanced integration.

SIDS and LDCs showed more mixed trajectories. SIDS have a relatively strong base of partially digitalized services (59.2 per cent) and moderate progress toward full digitalization, while LDCs recorded somewhat stronger entry-level gains, with 15.5 per cent of services moving from not digitalized to partially digitalized. LDCs and LLDCs performed slightly better overall, combining relatively high entry-level expansion (17.0 per cent) with moderate advances toward full digitalization (5.0 per cent).

Life-events: global, regional, and countries in special situations outlook

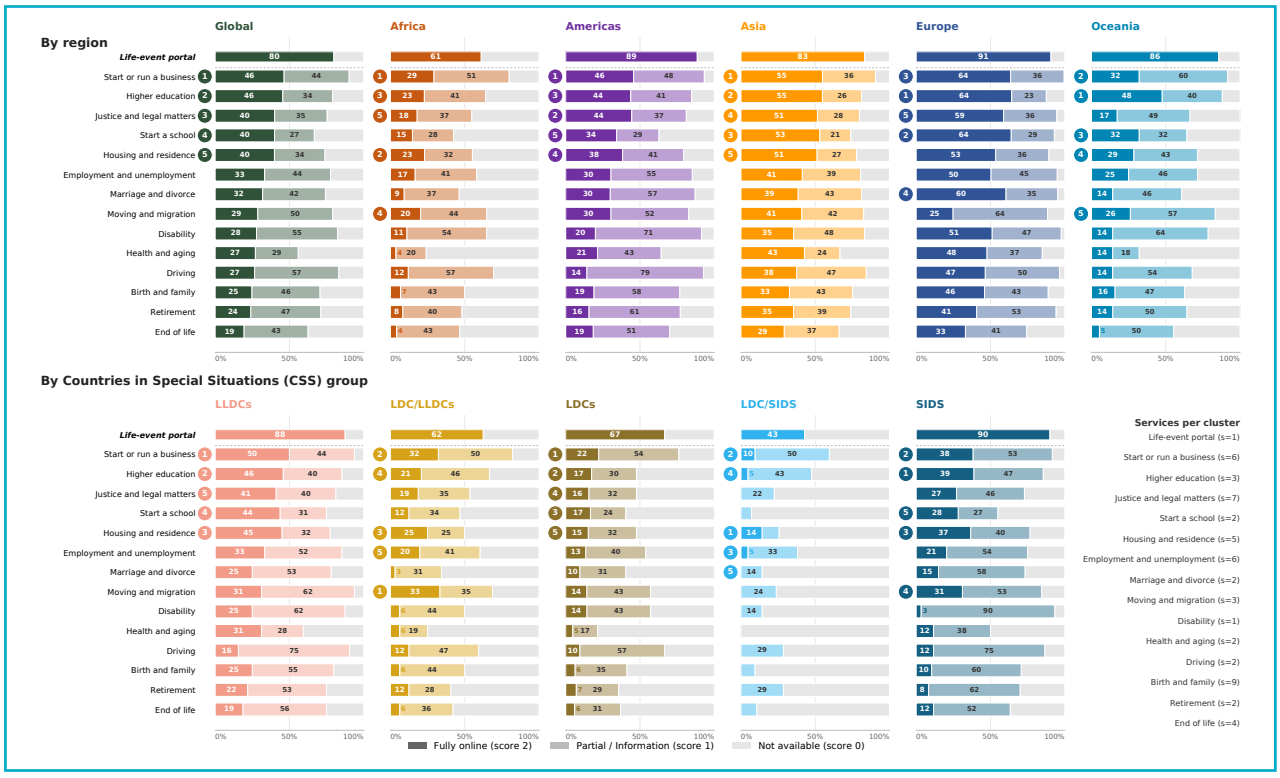
The 54 services assessed in the 2026 Survey are grouped into 14 life-event clusters that reflect key moments and needs in the lives of individuals and businesses. Rather than organizing services according to government ministries or administrative structures, life events are designed around how people interact with their governments throughout specific events in their lives. The largest cluster, Birth and family, includes nine services related to childbirth, parenting and family support, such as birth certificates, child benefits, parental leave, childcare support and social security registration. Other major clusters include Justice and legal matters (seven services), covering court services, legal assistance, grievance mechanisms and online payment of penalties; and Start or run a business (six services), which includes company registration, tax filing, permits and business licences.

Several clusters focus on key economic and social transitions. Get employed or unemployed covers employment-related taxes, government job applications, unemployment benefits and workers' compensation, while education-related services are divided into Education — start school and Education — higher level, covering school enrolment, immunization records, scholarships, student loan support and university applications. Other clusters address practical everyday interactions with government, including Driving, Housing and residence, Moving and migration, and Get married or divorced.

The framework also highlights services related to aging, health and vulnerable situations. Dedicated clusters include Manage health and aging, Retire, Disability, and End of life, reflecting the growing importance of digital public services linked to healthcare, social protection and long-term care. In addition, the Survey assesses the availability of a unified Life-event portal, which captures whether countries organize services around users' needs rather than administrative structures.

Not all clusters contain the same number of services. While most group together several related services, the Disability and Life-event portal clusters each contain only a single assessed service and therefore represent the digitalization status of that service alone. By contrast, larger clusters such as Birth and family, Justice and legal matters, and Start or run a business provide a broader picture of how governments are digitalizing complex areas of service delivery that require coordination across multiple institutions and agencies.

Figure 1.16 Digitalization of public services by life-events (including top five life-event clusters) at the global and regional levels, and among the countries in special situations (CSS), 2026



Source: 2026 United Nations E-Government Survey.

Note: Cluster rows are listed in the descending order of fully digitalized services (in percentages), so the same row sits at the same vertical position in every panel. Colour-numbered badges (1–5) mark each group's own top five most digitalized clusters. Bar fill indicates the extent of digitalization: darker shade = full, lighter shade = partial digitalization, and grey shade = not digitalized. The Life-event portal row at the top indicates availability of the portal for each group. The "Services per cluster" key on the right shows the number of distinct services assessed in each cluster (s = 1 to s = 9).

Global patterns

Figure 1.16 shows that four in five governments organize their digital service delivery around major life events. The most digitally advanced life-event categories globally are those linked to economic activity, education, and access to legal and housing-related services. Start or run a business is the most digitally advanced cluster worldwide, with 46 per cent of services fully online and another 44 per cent partially digitalized, bringing total online availability to 90 per cent. This reflects sustained investment in business-facing services such as company registration, tax filing, permits and business licensing. Services related to higher education, such as scholarship applications, university admissions and student financial support, also reach 46 per cent of full digitalization, although their overall online availability is lower (about 80 per cent). Digitalization of services at the primary level, such as school enrolment and immunization systems appear relatively advanced where they exist digitally (40 per cent full and 27 partial digitalization). Digitalization of services pertaining to Justice and legal matters stands at 40 per cent full and 35 per cent partial digitalization). This reflects the growing approach by governments to offer citizens access to online court proceedings, the ability to file petitions for grievances, and the ability to pay their criminal penalties and fees online. Housing and residence-related services complete the global top five list approaching 40 per cent full and 34 per cent partial digitalization.

Digitalization levels gradually decline for other life-event clusters. Services related to employment, marriage, migration, disability, health, aging and driving generally fall within the 27 per cent to 33

per cent range for full digitalization, although many still have high overall availability of services online. For example, Driving reaches 83 per cent combined availability, Disability-related services 82 per cent, and Moving and migration-related services 79 per cent, if partial digitalization is also included. These findings suggest that while many governments have introduced digital access points, integration across agencies and completion of transactional workflows remain in favour of in-person loops of completion.

The least digitally advanced clusters are those connected to health, aging and end-of-life administration. Services under Manage health and aging are the most unavailable online (44 per cent). Services such as food-assistance applications and access to medical records often involve complex data protection requirements, interoperability challenges and coordination across multiple agencies. End of life services also remain difficult to digitalize, with 38 per cent still unavailable online and only 19 per cent fully digitalized. Processes such as death certification, autopsy documentation and death-benefit administration typically involve sensitive legal and identity-verification procedures that complicate full digital transformation.

Regional patterns

Regional patterns reveal three distinct stages of digital maturity. Europe emerges as the most advanced region, combining near-universal life-event portal availability (91 per cent) with consistently high levels of digitalized services across almost all life-event clusters. Education services—including higher education and starting school—as well as services related to starting and running a business, each reach 64 per cent full digitalization. Marriage, justice and legal services also perform strongly, with around 60 per cent fully digitalized services and more than 90 per cent combined digitalization. Europe is also the only region where Marriage and divorce services appear among the top-performing clusters, reflecting more advanced integration of civil-administration services. In addition, Europe shows strong performance in Disability services, where more than half of assessed services are fully digitalized.

Asia follows closely behind, with 83 per cent of countries offering a life-event portal and a distinctive digitalization profile in which fully digitalized services often exceed partially digitalized ones. This suggests that many Asian countries are moving beyond basic online information provision toward end-to-end transactional service delivery, particularly in business, education and legal services. Most of the region's leading life-event clusters record between 51 per cent and 55 per cent full digitalization. Asia also stands out globally for Moving and migration services, where it records the highest level of full digitalization (41 per cent) among all regions, surpassing even Europe.

The Americas, Oceania and Africa represent a more intermediate stage of digital development, where online access is widespread but full digitalization remains uneven and generally less advanced than in Europe and Asia. The Americas combine high portal availability (89 per cent) with a relatively balanced distribution of digital progress across clusters. Services related to business, justice and legal matters, as well as higher education are among the most advanced, with around 44 per cent to 46 per cent of services fully digitalized. However, outside these leading areas, progress slows, and many services remain partially rather than fully digitalized, particularly in domains such as disability support.

Oceania shows similarly high portal coverage (86 per cent) but a more uneven digitalization profile. Higher education is relatively advanced, reaching 48 per cent fully online, yet most other clusters remain closer to 30 per cent full digitalization. Partial digitalization dominates across many service areas, indicating that while information and access are increasingly available online, end-to-end transactional services are still limited. The region also places greater emphasis on moving and migration services, reflecting its geographic and demographic context.

Africa has the lowest level of portal coverage (61 per cent) and the lowest levels of full digitalization, remaining below 30 per cent across all major clusters. Nonetheless, many services, particularly in business, migration and higher education, are at least partially digitalized, suggesting steady progress in building foundational digital public service infrastructure even if transactional maturity remains limited.

Patterns among countries in special situations (CSS)

LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS display sharply differentiated trajectories of digital public service development, ranging from relatively advanced to severely constrained digital ecosystems.

LLDCs stand out as the strongest performers, with 88 per cent life-event portal availability and comparatively higher levels of full digitalization in clusters such as starting or running a business, higher education and housing-related services. The overall LLDC profile resembles that of Asia more than other CSS groups, reflecting more advanced progress in transactional service delivery. A similar pattern is reinforced in the LDC/LLDC subgroup, where moving and migration-related services emerge as most advanced, highlighting the importance of cross-border mobility in landlocked contexts.

SIDS present a different configuration: they record the highest life-event portal availability among CSS countries (90 per cent), yet this does not translate into equivalent transactional depth. While higher education, business and housing-related services show moderate levels of digitalization (around 30 per cent are fully digitalized and close to 50 per cent are partially digitalized), most other clusters remain only partially digitalized. Migration-related services also appear among the top-performing clusters, reflecting the structural importance of mobility for SIDS.

In contrast, LDCs and especially the LDC/SIDS subgroup exhibit substantially lower digital maturity. LDCs are characterized by predominantly partially digitalized services, with few life-event clusters exceeding 20 per cent full digitalization. The LDC/SIDS group represents the most constrained profile, with only 43 per cent portal availability, very limited full digitalization across nearly all clusters, and several life-event services that are entirely unavailable online. Even in the relatively strongest area, housing and residence, full digitalization reaches only 14 per cent, underscoring severe structural barriers and compounded disadvantages affecting countries that are both LDCs and SIDS.

Combined key message and policy implications

Several overarching patterns emerge. Digitalization of services around key life events is uneven both across life-event clusters and across country groupings by region or special situation.

First, the existence of a life-event portal does not necessarily translate to more mature digital service delivery. SIDS for instance, have a high percentage of countries with life-event portals but comparatively low levels of fully digitalized services. Africa relies more on partially online or entirely offline processes, while Europe combines both broad coverage of digital services and deep transactional functionality.

Second, the balance between fully and partially digitalized services is a strong indicator of digital maturity. Where fully digitalized services dominate—most clearly in Europe, Asia and parts of LLDCs—governments appear to be moving beyond access toward integrated, end-to-end digital service delivery. By contrast, where partially digitalized services dominate—across Africa, Oceania, LDCs and SIDS—digital systems are still primarily focused on expanding online access and information provision rather than completing full transactional workflows.

Third, digitalization levels vary systematically across life-event domains. Life-event clusters that touch large shares of populations over their lifespans, for example services under Birth and family,

Retirement, End of life and Health and aging clusters, are widely available online in some form, but tend to reach moderate levels of full digitalization (20 per cent to 25 per cent) and end-to-end digital delivery lags. Likewise, driving-related services reach 83 per cent combined availability, disability-related services 82 per cent, and migration-related services 79 per cent when partial digitalization is included. This pattern suggests that governments often succeed in creating online entry points, but struggle to integrate systems across agencies to enable completely digital transactions, which still frequently require in-person steps. Further, these patterns reflect persistent structural and interoperability constraints, particularly in areas such as medical records, food assistance, and cross-agency coordination. End-of-life services are similarly constrained, with 38 per cent still unavailable online and only 19 per cent fully digitalized, due to the legal sensitivity and identity-verification requirements of processes such as death certification and benefits administration.

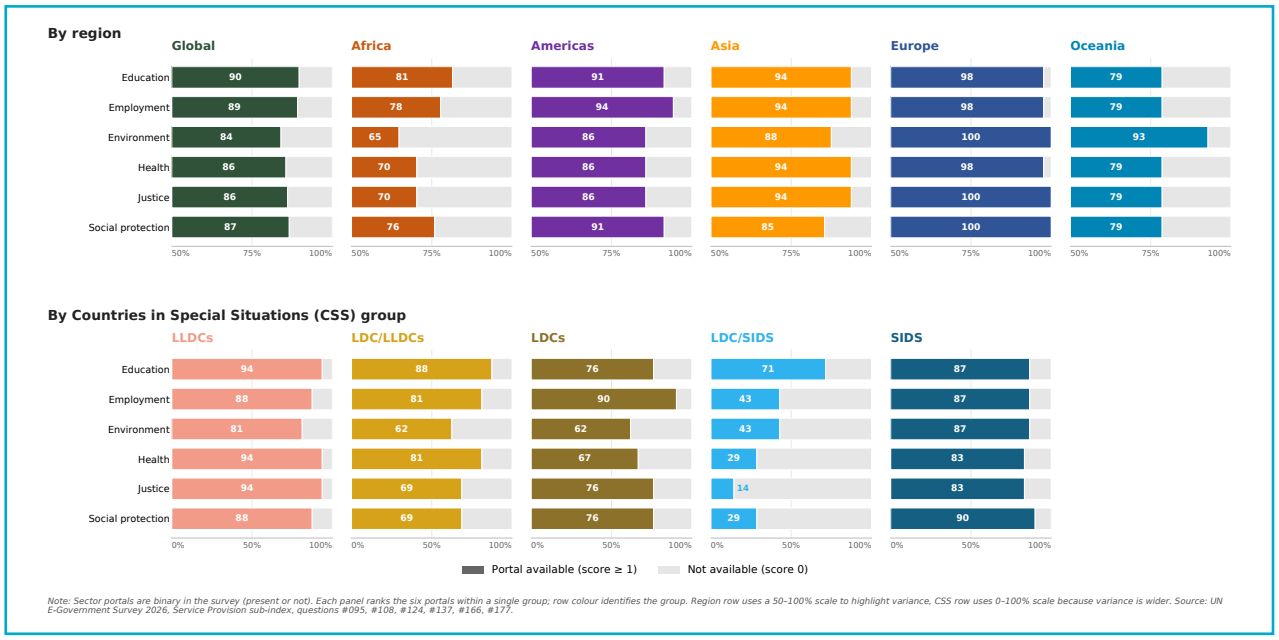
Together, the findings point to a clear three-tier global landscape of service digitalization around key life events. At the top, Europe and Asia, and in some cases LLDCs, are progressing toward mature, end-to-end digital government systems. A second, larger group of regional and country groupings has achieved broad online availability of most services, but those remain partially digitalized. And last, LDCs and SIDS continue to face fundamental gaps in digital infrastructure and access that constrain the development of integrated life-event services across most domains.

1.8.7 Sector-specific online information and services: sharing via mobile technologies

The sector-specific online services offered through dedicated government portals have become a standard feature of digital government worldwide. For six sectors assessed by the Survey in 2026 the percentage of countries offering services in specific areas are as follows: education, 90 per cent; employment, 89 per cent; social protection, 87 per cent; justice, 86 per cent; health, 86 per cent; and the environment, 84 per cent. Nevertheless, regional differences remain visible. Europe shows near-universal coverage across all six sectors. Asia follows closely behind, with some 85 per cent to 94 per cent coverage across all sectors. The Americas also demonstrate consistently high portal availability, particularly in education, employment and social protection. Africa records the lowest levels overall and the widest variation between sectors, ranging from 81 per cent for education to only 65 per cent for the environment. In Oceania, while most sector portals are available in roughly four out of five countries, the portal and services related to the environment stand out at 93 per cent coverage, reflecting the central importance of climate and environmental governance in many Pacific island states.

Likewise, disparities are significant among the CSS group. Services or information on dedicated portals for environmental issues are least prevalent across most CSS groups: 62 per cent of LDCs offer such services with an even lower 43 per cent among the overlapping LDC/SIDS group. The main exceptions are SIDS where services related to environmental issues are among the most covered, again reflecting the high policy priority of climate resilience and environmental management. By contrast, services and portals related to employment show the most consistent global presence, with relatively high coverage across nearly all regions and CSS groups. This coverage likely reflects the influence of internationally supported labour-market systems and employment-service platforms that create a common baseline for digital employment services.

Figure 1.17 Percentage of countries offering sector-specific services by region and by CSS group, 2026



Note: Sector portals are binary in the survey (present or not). Each panel ranks the six portals within a single group; row colour identifies the group. Region row uses a 50–100% scale to highlight variance, CSS row uses 0–100% scale because variance is wider. Source: UN E-Government Survey 2026, Service Provision sub-index, questions #095, #108, #124, #137, #166, #177.

Source: 2026 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

Note: Questions on sector-specific services are binary (present or not on the portal). The top panel for regions uses an x-axis scaled at 50 to 100 per cent, the bottom panel for CSS groups uses an x-axis scaled at 0 to 100 per cent.

Among CSS groups, SIDS and LLDCs perform comparatively well. SIDS record highly consistent sector-portal coverage across all six sectors, generally between 83 per cent and 90 per cent. LLDCs also demonstrate strong performance, with several sectors reaching 94 per cent coverage. LDCs and LDC/LLDCs show more uneven progress, while the overlapping LDC/SIDS group records by far the weakest results. In this group, only education portals exceed 50 per cent coverage, while justice portals are available in only 14 per cent of countries. These findings highlight the compounded structural constraints facing countries that are simultaneously least developed and small island States.

1.8.8 Targeted services for people in vulnerable situations

Services targeted to vulnerable population groups present a different picture. Unlike sector-specific portals, which are now widespread globally, inclusion-oriented digital services remain largely informational rather than transactional. Across most regions and groups, information pages and basic online guidance for vulnerable populations are broadly available, with combined fully and partially digitalized service coverage often exceeding 80 per cent to 90 per cent. The share of fully digitalized services, however, remained at about 30 per cent (figure 1.18). These indicators measure the availability and degree of digitalization of services from the supply side and should not be interpreted as evidence that all intended users are able to access, afford, use or benefit from those services effectively.

Europe again leads in inclusion-related digitalization, recording the highest levels of fully digitalized services across all six groups. Services for all vulnerable groups are at least available online in every European country and those for people with disabilities and youth exceed 50 per cent full digitalization. This near-universal service availability nevertheless coexists with important within-country disparities in connectivity, accessibility, digital skills and effective use, particularly among rural, remote and socioeconomically disadvantaged populations discussed in Chapter 2.

Asia follows with moderate-to-high levels of full digitalization, especially on services for older persons and people with disabilities. The Americas occupy a middle position, with moderate transactional depth but broad overall availability.

Africa and Oceania reveal a significant gap between availability and functionality. In both regions, information about services for vulnerable groups is widely available online, but fully transactional services remain rare. In Africa, fully digitalized services generally remain below 12 per cent across all vulnerable groups, indicating that most platforms still function primarily as information portals. Oceania shows a similar pattern, with very high levels of partial digitalization but almost no fully transactional services in several categories, including services for women. These findings suggest that many governments have succeeded in creating online visibility for inclusion-related services but have not yet developed integrated digital delivery systems. This service-level pattern is compatible with the broader regional findings in Chapter 2: both Africa and Oceania have recorded significant overall EGDI progress, but structural and population-level disparities remain substantial, particularly in Africa and among Pacific SIDS.

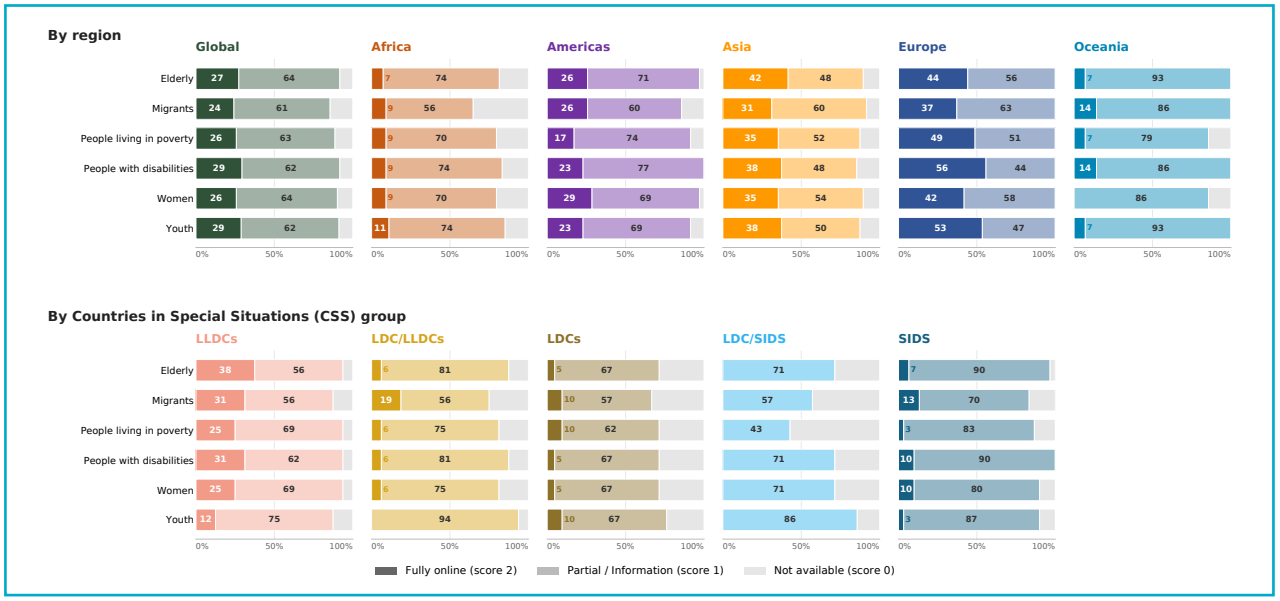
Across both regions and CSS groups, services for people with disabilities and older people tend to show the deepest levels of digitalization. These services are often linked to formal entitlement systems such as pensions, disability registries, or health insurance schemes, which are generally easier to integrate into digital administrative systems. By contrast, services for migrant populations remain the weakest inclusion category overall, and many countries in Africa, as well as LDCs, LDC/LLDCs, and especially LDC/SIDS groups have no online services for migrants at all. This suggests that migrant support services remain underdeveloped in many capacity-constrained settings or are handled outside national digital-government systems.

Overall, the findings reveal a clear regional gradient in the availability and transactional depth of digital services, rather than a comprehensive hierarchy of digital inclusion or digital maturity. Europe leads across both sector portals and inclusion services, followed by Asia. The Americas show broad portal coverage but more moderate inclusion depth. Africa and Oceania have expanded digital access substantially but remain dominated by partial digitalization. Among CSS groups, SIDS and LLDCs perform relatively strongly, while LDCs and especially LDC/SIDS continue to face major structural barriers with important gaps in connectivity, affordability, resilience, digital skills and effective use of service discussed in Chapter 2.

Taken together, these findings, together with the population-weighted analysis in Chapter 2 underline that expanding the availability of targeted digital services is necessary but insufficient to close the digital divide. The next phase of digital-government development will require not only shifting from information provision toward integrated, end-to-end digital services, particularly for vulnerable and underserved populations, but also ensuring meaningful connectivity, affordability, accessibility, digital skills and effective service uptake.

Further, in 2026 the Survey findings mark a clear reversal of the contraction of service provision to vulnerable population groups observed in 2024 (figure 1.19). The earlier concerns that services for vulnerable populations were being deprioritized is no longer supported by the 2026 data. This recovery in service provision, however, should not be interpreted as evidence that the broader digital divide experienced by vulnerable population groups has been eliminated given that effective inclusion also depends on connectivity, affordability, accessibility, skills and actual use of the services Across all six groups that are tracked—people living in poverty, migrants, women, youth, older people and people with disabilities—service provision expanded by an average of 20 per cent, with the largest

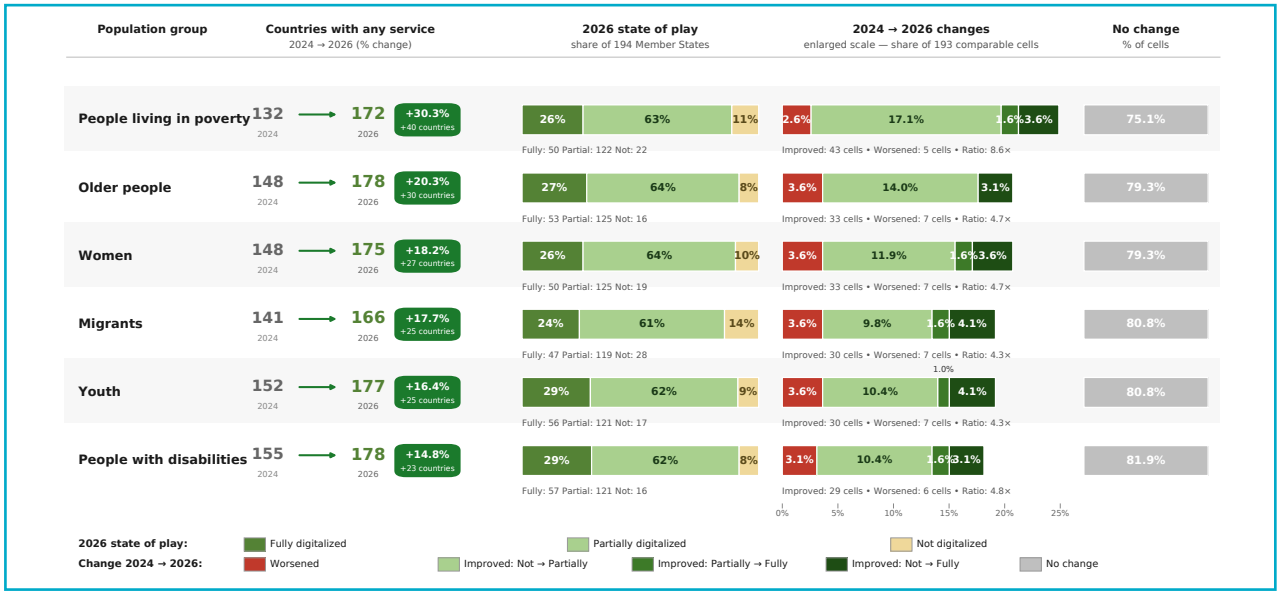
Figure 1.18 Percentage of countries offering dedicated services for people in vulnerable situations that can be completed partially or fully online, by region and by CSS group, 2026



Source: 2026 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

gains recorded for the groups that had previously fallen the furthest behind. The share of services for people living in poverty grew by 30 per cent, which was the largest increase in 2026 and a full reversal of the 8.3 per cent decline reported between 2022 and 2024. At the same time, services for migrants, the group most affected by the previous contraction (–13.5 per cent in 2022–2024), recovered strongly (+17.7 per cent) but migrants remain the least-served group in absolute terms.

Figure 1.19 Digital services for vulnerable population groups, 2024-2026



Source: 2024 and 2026 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

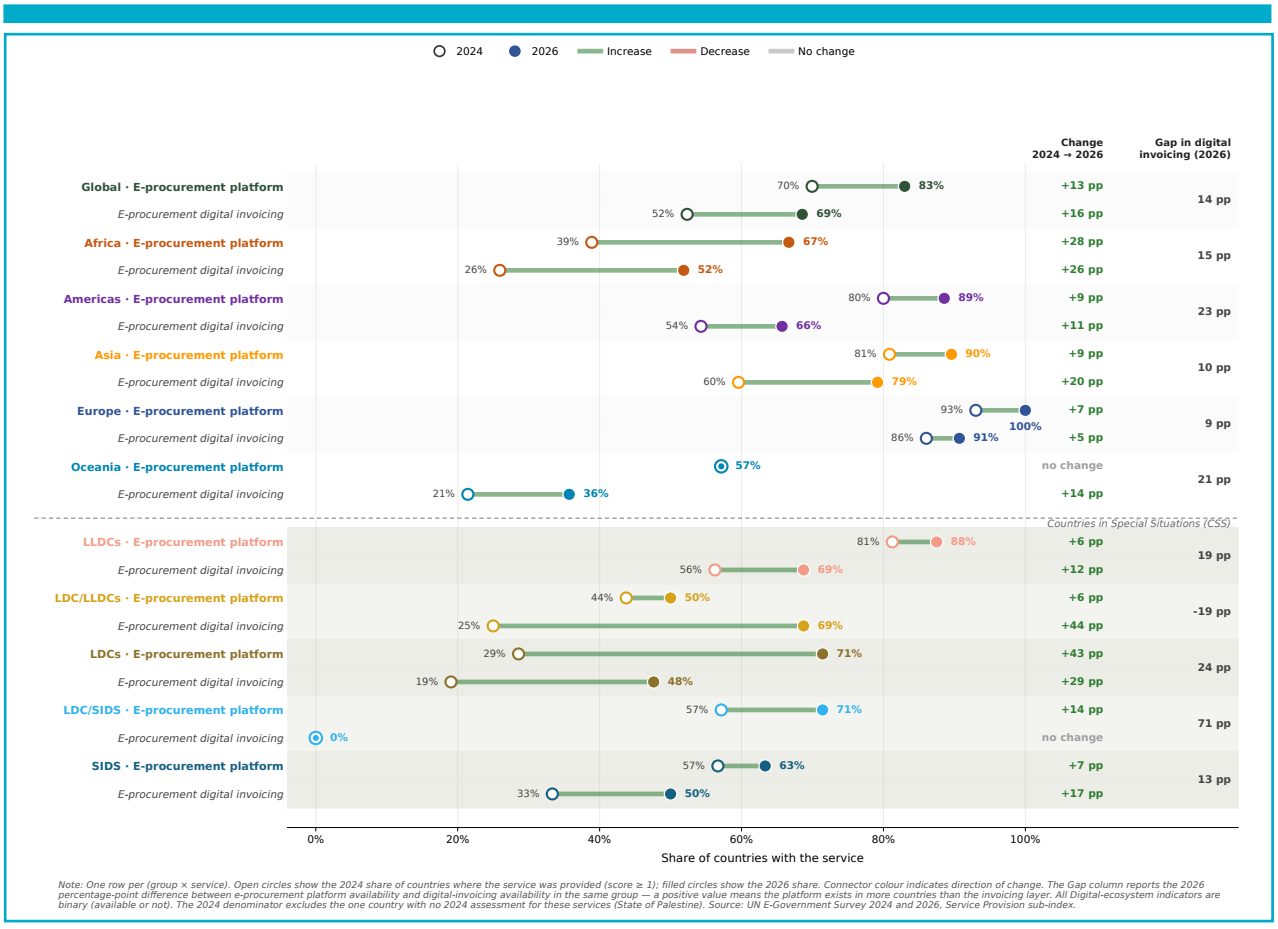
Note: the graph presents two complementary views. On the left: how many countries offer services for each of the vulnerable groups; and on the middle and right: how service provision is distributed on the spectrum of fully to not digitalized, and if service provision has improved.

1.8.9 Public procurement services

The 2024–2026 period saw substantial global progress in both e-procurement platforms and digital invoicing systems, although digital invoicing continues to lag behind platform adoption (figure 1.20). Globally, the share of countries operating an e-procurement platform increased from 70 per cent to 83 per cent, while digital invoicing rose from 52 per cent to 69 per cent. Despite faster growth in invoicing, a 14 percentage point gap remains between the two layers in 2026, indicating that many countries have established procurement portals without yet integrating end-to-end invoicing functionality.

Regional trends reveal different stages of digital ecosystem maturity. Europe is approaching universal coverage, with all countries operating e-procurement platforms in 2026 and 91 per cent also offering digital invoicing. Asia also shows strong performance, reaching 90 per cent platform coverage and 79 per cent digital invoicing, while recording the largest regional increase in invoicing adoption (+20 percentage points). Africa experienced the fastest overall expansion, with platform coverage rising from 39 per cent to 67 per cent and digital invoicing from 26 per cent to 52 per cent in the two years from 2024 to 2026. This suggests that many African countries are increasingly developing procurement and invoicing systems together rather than sequentially.

Figure 1.20 E-procurement platform and digital invoicing, global, regional and by CSS groups in 2024 and 2026



Source: 2024 and 2026 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

The Americas and Oceania present a different pattern. Both regions have relatively high levels of procurement platform adoption, but significantly lower digital invoicing coverage. In the Americas, 89 per cent of countries operate e-procurement platforms, compared with only 66 per cent offering digital invoicing, creating the widest regional gap (23 percentage points). Oceania shows an even more uneven trajectory: platform coverage remained unchanged at 57 per cent, while digital invoicing increased from 21 per cent to 36 per cent. This limited progress may reflect structural constraints faced by small islands and Pacific states.

Countries in special situations generally remain below global averages, but most showed positive momentum between 2024 and 2026. LDCs more than doubled the share of e-procurement platforms (from 29 per cent to 71 per cent) and digital invoicing (from 19 per cent to 48 per cent). However, the gap between the two layers suggests that integration of invoicing continues to lag behind platform rollout. LLDCs also reached 88 per cent platform coverage and 69 per cent digital invoicing in 2026, whereas SIDS experienced more modest but still steady progress, particularly in digital invoicing adoption.

Overall, the findings point to a global shift toward broader adoption of digital public procurement systems, with digital invoicing increasingly following behind. Europe leads in maturity and near-universal integration, while Africa and LDCs are advancing most rapidly from a lower base. At the same time, persistent gaps between procurement platforms and invoicing systems highlight that many countries are still developing the foundational layers of integrated digital procurement ecosystems.

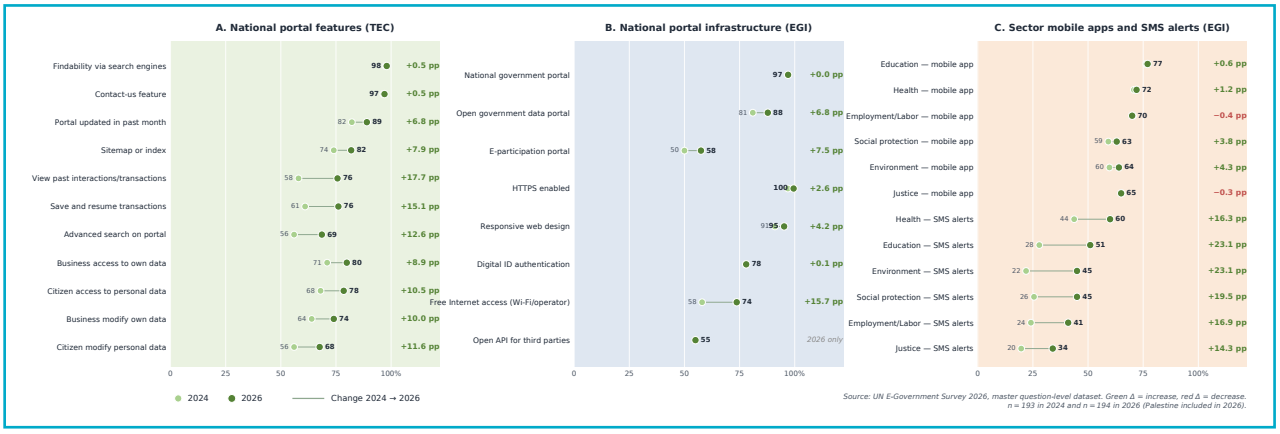
1.8.10 Technology subindex and digital infrastructure development

At the time of the 2026 Survey assessment, all United Nations Member states had national portals and nearly all (98.5 per cent) could be found by search engines, had a "contact us" page (97.9 per cent), and had been regularly updated (95.4 per cent). Figure 1.21 highlights that these national portal features have nearly reached full saturation (Panel A). The next tier of features—availability of a sitemap (81.4 per cent); ability of users to view, save and resume past transactions (between 58 and 61 per cent); and use advanced search options on the portals are less common, even though they have improved between 7.9 and 17.7 percentage points since 2024. About 80 per cent of governments let businesses and citizens view their own data but only 68 per cent let citizens modify personal data versus 74 per cent for businesses. Availability of these technical features has improved by roughly 11 per cent since 2024—the highest improvement in this cluster feature.

Panel B of figure 1.21 presents at the top the availability of three core public-service portals: the general national portal, an open-government data portal and an e-participation portal. The figure also highlights changes on a number of important features for e-government/digital public infrastructure overall: the use of Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS) to provide a safe experience for users, responsive web design, the use of digital ID for user authentication, availability of open application programming interface (API) for third party use and co-creation and availability of free internet in designated spaces for digital inclusion.

Survey data from 2026 confirm that national government portals (99.5 per cent), basic web standards such as HTTPS (99.5 per cent) and responsive web design (95.4 per cent) are now nearly universal. The availability of open government data portals has reached 87.6 per cent and e-participation portals are found in 57.7 per cent of assessed countries. The 30-percentage-point gap between the availability of open government data portals and e-participation portals, despite about a 7 per cent expansion since 2024, suggests that transparency-enhancing features are institutionalised faster than those related to people's participation. Nearly nine out of ten countries now publish open data, but only about six out of ten provide a dedicated channel for citizen participation.

Figure 1.21 Technical and infrastructure-related features of national portals, 2024 and 2026 (Percentage of countries)



Source: 2024 and 2026 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

Note: Each row on the graph represents one survey question. Dots show the share of countries answering 'yes' in 2024 (light green) and 2026 (dark green). Panel A questions are part of the OSI's TECH sub-index, whereas Panel B and C questions serve as a proxy to assess overall E-Government Infrastructure (EGI) readiness. In 2024, 193 countries were assessed. In 2026, 194 countries were assessed (after including the State of Palestine in the assessment).

Digital ID authentication for online services remains unchanged during the last two years and is at 78 per cent coverage among the Member States. By contrast, government-provided free Internet access (Wi-Fi or operator agreements) jumped by 15.7 percentage points (from 58 per cent in 2024 to 73 per cent in 2026). This suggests that digital authentication infrastructure is mature where it exists and connectivity for digital inclusion is improving. The 2026 Survey assessed also the availability of API for third parties to integrate with government digital services. The majority of United Nations Member States (59.3 per cent) already expose at least one open API, putting open-API availability roughly on par with e-participation portals.

Service-specific apps for service delivery are common in over two thirds of the United Nations Member States (figure 1.21, panel C), and the use of SMS alerts to notify users about important sector-specific issues is expanding rapidly—by 14 per cent to 23 per cent.

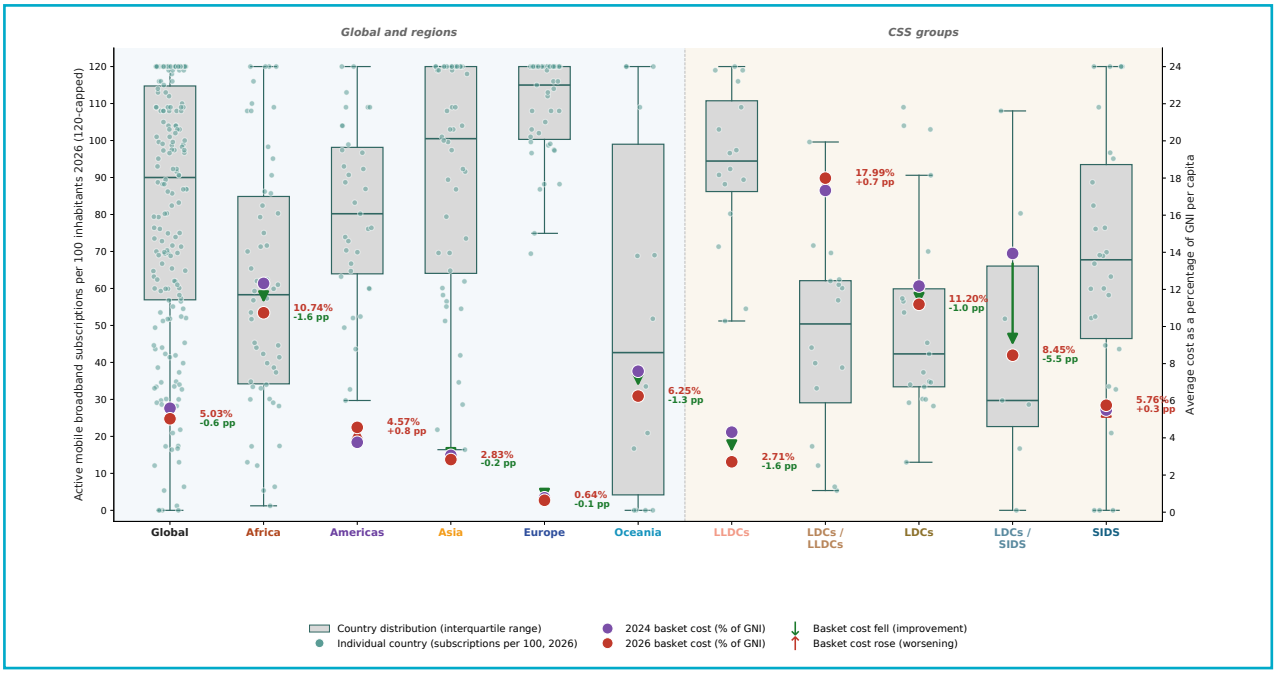
Affordability

The technology subindex of the Online Services Index does not include Telecommunication Infrastructure Index component data. However, given the key role affordability plays in digital access and engagement, figure 1.22 highlights the changes in the affordability component of the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index indicators as part of the evolving landscape of technological advancement.

Affordability and broadband uptake by region

Regional patterns show that progress on affordability is uneven and often decoupled from subscription growth. Africa remains at the lower end of broadband distribution, with a median of about 58 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants and a wide interquartile range (IQR) of 34–85, while the lower bound approaches zero. Despite this, affordability improved notably: the broadband basket declined from 12.3 per cent to 10.7 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI), a reduction of 1.6 percentage points. Progress is therefore evident, but from a high-cost base and alongside the slowest uptake globally.

Figure 1.22 Mobile broadband affordability as a percentage of gross national income per capita, by region and CSS groups, 2026



Source: ITU, Statistics on individuals using the Internet (2026), available at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx.

Note: Box plot (left axis): country-level subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in 2026 (120 capped as per EGDI methodology).

The Americas present a contrasting trajectory. Broadband penetration is relatively strong (median 80; IQR 64–98), yet affordability deteriorated—the only region where this occurred. The basket cost rose from 3.8 per cent to 4.6 per cent of GNI (an increase of 0.8 percentage points), indicating that gains in access are being offset by rising relative prices.

Asia is approaching saturation in subscriptions, with a median of 100 and an upper range extending to 120, reflecting both high adoption and regional heterogeneity. Affordability was already comparatively low at 2.8 per cent of GNI and improved marginally (–0.2 percentage points), suggesting limited remaining room for price reductions.

Europe occupies the most advanced position in both dimensions. Broadband levels are near the upper bound (median 115), and the basket cost is minimal at 0.6 per cent of GNI, declining slightly (–0.1 percentage points). Both uptake and affordability indicators show signs of maturity, with limited scope for further gains.

Oceania exhibits the greatest dispersion in broadband uptake, spanning the full range from near zero to close to universal access, reflecting stark contrasts between high-income and small island economies. Affordability improved significantly, with the basket falling from 7.6 per cent to 6.3 per cent of GNI (–1.3 percentage points). However, actual usage continues to lag behind subscription levels in parts of the region.

Affordability across countries in special situations

In LLDCs, the broadband distribution (median 95; IQR 86–111) aligns with mid-to-high performing regions, and affordability improved substantially, with the basket prices falling to 2.7 per cent of GNI (1.6 percentage points reduction). In this snapshot, being landlocked does not appear to constrain either uptake or affordability.

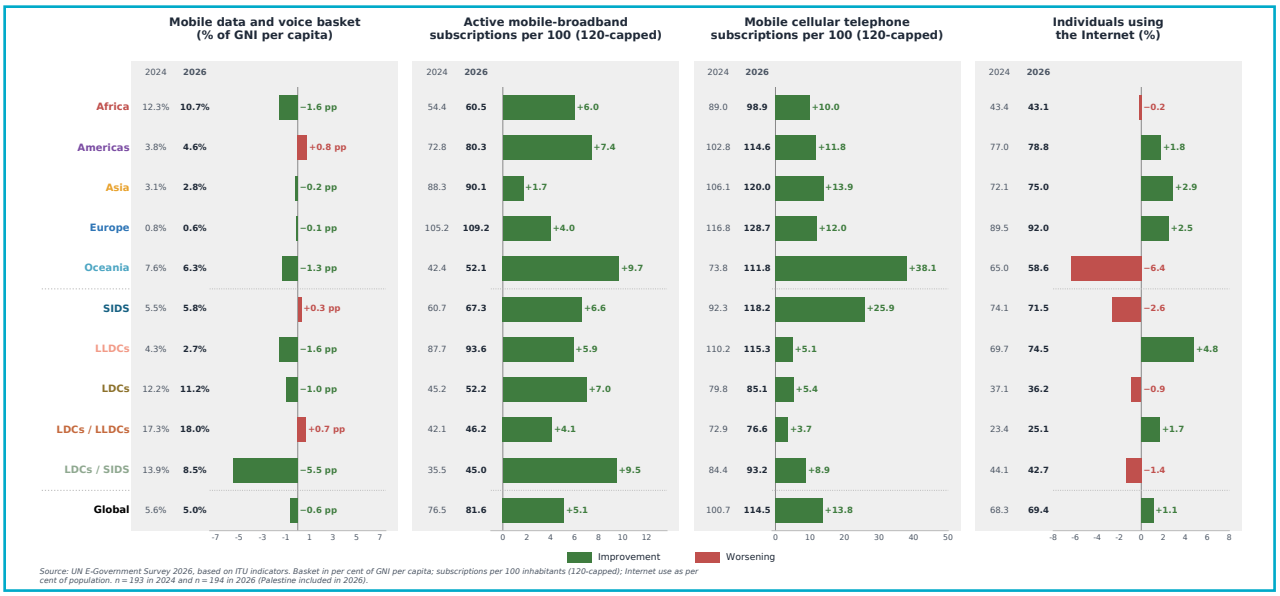
By contrast, countries that are both least developed and landlocked (LDCs/LLDCs) face the most acute constraints. This group records the highest basket cost—rising from 17.3 per cent to 18.0 per cent of GNI (+0.7 percentage points) and relatively low broadband penetration (median around 50; IQR in 28–62 range). The combination of structural disadvantages is associated with both weak access and worsening affordability.

LDCs as a single category also remain under pressure. Their basket cost stands at 11.2 per cent of GNI, improving modestly (–1.0 percentage point), while active mobile-broadband uptake reaches only 52.2 per 100 inhabitants (up from 45.2, +7.0) and mobile cellular sits at 85.1 per 100 inhabitants (up from 79.8, +5.4). Internet use actually slipped from 37.1 to 36.2 per cent (–0.9 pp), leaving LDCs the second-lowest connected group after LDCs/LLDCs.

A more positive dynamic is observed among countries that are both least developed and small island developing States (LDCs/SIDS). This group records the largest affordability improvement across all categories, with the basket declining sharply from 13.9 per cent to 8.5 per cent of GNI (5.4 percentage point reduction). Active mobile-broadband subscriptions rose from 35.5 to 45.0 per 100 inhabitants (+9.5) and mobile cellular from 84.4 to 93.2 per 100 inhabitants (+8.9), yet Internet use fell from 44.1 to 42.7 per cent (–1.4 pp)—a reminder that lower prices and more SIMs have not translated into more people online reflecting structural and geographic constraints.

Globally, the world is adding subscriptions faster than it is adding actual users, and prices are not falling fast enough to keep pace with the rollout of devices and SIMs. Mobile cellular subscriptions rose by 13.8 per cent to 114.5 per 100 inhabitants, and active mobile-broadband subscriptions rose by 5.1 per cent to 81.6 per 100 inhabitants. Internet use crept up by only 1.1 per cent to 69.4 per cent overall.

Figure 1.23 Percentage change at the global and regional levels in Internet usage and in active mobile broadband and mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, 2024-2026



Source: ITU, Statistics for individuals using the Internet (2024 and 2026), available at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx; ITU, "Mobile data and voice high-consumption basket," DataHub, available at https://datahub.itu.int/data/?i=34619.

Note: Green bars mark improvement; red bars mark worsening. For the mobile data and voice basket panel, the sign is flipped so that a lower cost shows as a rightward gain. Active mobile-broadband and mobile cellular subscriptions are 120-capped as per EGDI methodology for both years. (after including the State of Palestine in the assessment).

Mobile cellular and broadband subscriptions increased by double-digit gains in most countries, but Internet use expanded by only 1.1 per cent globally and fell in Africa, Oceania, among SIDS, LDCs and LDCs/SIDS. The pattern indicates that recent connectivity gains are being driven by additional SIMs and devices per user rather than by first-time users coming online.

Affordability (expressed by the mobile data and voice basket) improved by less than 1 per cent of GNI. In the Americas and LDCs /LLDCs, prices have increased. Among LDCs /SIDS affordability has improved by 5.5 per cent—the largest gain in the chart—but starts from a very high base of 13.9 per cent of GNI per capita and ends at 8.5 per cent, still well above the global level of 5.0 per cent and roughly ten times the European average of 0.6 per cent. In other words, even after the sharpest improvement on record for this group, a representative mobile bundle in an LDC/SIDS still consumes about one-twelfth of per-capita income, compared with about one-sixth of 1 per cent in Europe—a gap that continues to shape both uptake and, ultimately, meaningful use.

1.9 Summary of key findings and policy recommendations

Key findings

Digital government continues to advance, with progress that is broad but uneven across regions and country groupings.

The global average EGDI value increased from 0.6382 in 2024 to 0.6675 in 2026, representing a 4.6 per cent rise over the two-year cycle. The global median also moved upward, from 0.6678 to 0.6880, indicating that gains were not confined to leading countries but extended across the middle of the distribution. The highest very-high EGDI rating class expanded from 18 countries in 2024 to 21 in 2026. The Republic of Korea ranked first globally, followed by Denmark and Singapore. Ireland, Kazakhstan and Poland joined this leading group, the United States of America returned to it, and Japan was no longer included.

Over the past two years, 18.1 per cent of Member States have changed their EGDI level. The pattern is decisively upward: upgrades outnumber downgrades by approximately four to one, resulting in a net movement of 21 countries to higher groups. The largest single flows are from the middle to the high group (14 countries) and from the high to the very-high group (11 countries), reflecting consolidation in the upper half of the distribution.

Among the three EGDI components, online services lead progress, while infrastructure and human capital have progressed more slowly.

In 2026, the Online Services Index contributed most to the increase in EGDI values at the regional and global levels. The global average Online Services Index value rose by 12.0 per cent since 2024, while the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index increased by 2.1 per cent and the Human Capital Index by only 0.6 per cent. This pattern indicates that Member States are expanding digital public services more rapidly than the connectivity and human-capital foundations on which those services depend. Without renewed attention to infrastructure quality and use, meaningful connectivity, digital skills and institutional capacity, gains in the service layer may not translate into comparable gains in citizen uptake and effective use.

Countries in special situations are improving, with LDCs advancing the fastest but facing the most uneven progress across components.

Average EGDI values continued to rise across countries in special situations in 2026, although all groups remained below the global average of 0.6675. LDCs recorded the largest EGDI increase, at 16.5 per cent, driven by gains of 35.7 per cent in the Online Services Index and 20.5 per cent in the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index. Their Human Capital Index, however, declined by 4.1

per cent, indicating that progress in service delivery and connectivity were not accompanied by an increase in the measured human capital. LLDCs recorded gains across all three components with EGDI increasing by 11.4 per cent alongside improvements in the Online Services Index of 24.2 per cent, the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index of 8.9 per cent and the Human Capital Index of 1.9 per cent. SIDS recorded EGDI growth of 8.2 per cent, driven mainly by a 27.2 per cent increase in the Online Services Index, while the Human Capital Index and Telecommunication Infrastructure Index improved more modestly, by about 2.0 per cent and 1.7 per cent, respectively. The persistence of gaps across these groups underscores that absolute progress has not eliminated the structural constraints shaping digital government development.

The 2026 results reaffirm that the income gradient remains a defining feature of the global digital divide. Low-income countries increased their average EGDI value by 17.7 per cent, with the Online Services Index rising by 32.0 per cent and the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index by 31.4 per cent. Yet the Human Capital Index in this group declined by 5.3 per cent, indicating that service and infrastructure expansion is outpacing the human-capital base needed to sustain and use these gains. About 88 per cent of high-income countries score above the global average EGDI value, compared with only 4 per cent of low-income countries.

The composition of the Online Services Index reveals strong institutional foundations but persistently weak public engagement.

Within the Online Services Index, the institutional framework subindex records the highest global average, at 0.8626, followed by technical characteristics at 0.8126, content provision at 0.7100, service provision at 0.5771, and participation and engagement at 0.5702. Technical characteristics increased by more than 51 per cent between 2024 and 2026, reflecting rapid progress in portal capabilities and interoperability, although methodological changes should be considered when interpreting this increase. Service provision and participation and engagement remain below the global Online Services Index average of 0.6445. The findings indicate that institutional and technical foundations are comparatively strong, while the transition to fully transactional services and meaningful public participation remains incomplete.

The relationship between the Online Services Index and the broader EGDI also points to underused service-delivery potential. In 17 countries, the Online Services Index level is higher than the EGDI level, indicating a "service-first" approach in which online services outperform the broader development context. In 25 per cent of Member States, the opposite is true: the Online Services Index level is lower than the EGDI level, indicating service-delivery capacity below what the country's overall development would predict. The largest positive value gap is observed in Niger (+0.310) and the largest negative gap in Botswana (-0.333).

The digitalization of life-event and sector services has broadened, but depth remains uneven, especially in countries that are both least developed and small island developing States (LDCs/SIDS).

Across the 72 online services assessed in 2026, 77.5 per cent are at least partially digitalized globally, although only 27.4 per cent are fully digitalized. Among the 54 services grouped into 14 life-event clusters, Start or run a business is the most advanced cluster, with 46 per cent of services fully digitalized and 44 per cent partially digitalized. In the LDCs/SIDS overlap group, however, 69.8 per cent of assessed services remain not digitalized, making this the most structurally constrained group worldwide in terms of service digitalization.

The pattern is similar for sector-specific portals. Portals are widely available globally for education (90 per cent), employment (89 per cent), and health (86 per cent). In the LDCs/SIDS group, however, only the education portal exceeds 50 per cent coverage, while the justice portal—central to access to rights and to the rule of law—is available in just 14 per cent of countries. This gap has direct

implications for the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions—which commits Member States to provide access to justice for all and to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions—in the most constrained settings.

Services for vulnerable populations have rebounded, but migrants remain consistently underserved.

After the contraction observed in 2024, services targeted at people living in poverty have expanded by 30 per cent in 2026—the largest increase recorded among all vulnerable groups and a full reversal of the 8.3 per cent decline reported in 2022–2024. Service provision expanded across all six vulnerable groups that are tracked (people living in poverty, migrants, women, youth, older people and people with disabilities) by an average of 20 per cent, with the largest gains for the groups that had previously fallen furthest behind. Despite this recovery, services targeting some of the most vulnerable population groups, particularly migrants, remain relatively limited. Although service provision for migrants rebounded by 17.7 per cent—partially offsetting the 13.5 per cent contraction recorded in 2022–2024—migrants are still the least-served group in absolute terms, with only 166 of 194 Member States offering dedicated online services, and many countries in Africa, LDCs, LDC/LLDCs and LDC/SIDS providing none at all. This persistent inclusion gap demands urgent attention.

E-procurement and digital-trust infrastructure are now near-universal, though e-participation portals lag behind.

The digitalization of public procurement has accelerated. Global coverage of e-procurement portals has risen from 70 per cent in 2024 to 83 per cent in 2026, and e-invoicing has risen from 52 per cent to 69 per cent. Africa has recorded the largest regional jump, from 39 per cent to 67 per cent. Among LDCs, e-procurement coverage has more than doubled, from 29 per cent to 71 per cent, demonstrating that rapid progress is achievable even in resource-constrained settings.

In the broader technology and trust stack, government portals are now near-universal, HTTPS adoption has reached 99.5 per cent, and open-government data portals are present in 87.6 per cent of Member States. By contrast, dedicated e-participation portals are available in only 57.7 per cent of countries—a notable lag given the rapid expansion of other horizontal capabilities.

Subscriptions are outpacing actual Internet use, and affordability gains are unevenly distributed, leaving the most constrained groups further behind.

In 2026, mobile cellular subscriptions have risen by 13.8 per cent globally to 114.5 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, and active mobile-broadband subscriptions have risen by 5.1 per cent to 81.6 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants. Yet Internet usage has grown by only 1.1 per cent globally, and has fallen in Africa, Oceania, SIDS, LDCs and LDCs/SIDS. Subscriptions are accumulating faster than the underlying user base, suggesting that purely supply-side measures are no longer sufficient to expand meaningful digital participation.

Affordability has improved at the global level, though by less than 1 percentage point of GNI per capita, and progress is highly uneven across regions and country groupings. Africa recorded one of the largest reductions, with the mobile data and voice basket falling from 12.3 per cent to 10.7 per cent of GNI per capita (–1.6 percentage points), although from a high-cost base. Oceania improved from 7.6 per cent to 6.3 per cent of GNI (–1.3 percentage points), while Asia and Europe were already low and changed only marginally (2.8 per cent and 0.6 per cent of GNI, respectively). The Americas were the only region where affordability deteriorated, with the basket rising from 3.8 per cent to 4.6 per cent of GNI (+0.8 percentage points). Among countries in special situations, LDCs/LLDCs face the most acute constraint: the basket rose from 17.3 per cent to 18.0 per cent of GNI (+0.7 percentage points), the highest cost recorded among all groups. LDCs/SIDS recorded the largest single improvement, with the basket falling from 13.9 per cent to 8.5 per cent of GNI (a

5.5 percentage point reduction), but from a very high base. Non-LDC SIDS also experienced a slight deterioration, from 5.5 per cent to 5.8 per cent of GNI.

Taken together, the 2024–2026 results suggest that progress is broadening at the service layer, while the deeper foundations of digital government are advancing at a slower and more uneven pace.

Service portals, e-procurement systems, open government data and life-event coverage have expanded rapidly across most regions and country groupings, and digital government has become an increasingly familiar part of the citizen-State interface. At the same time, the deeper layers of the digital government ecosystem—public participation and decision-making, affordability, meaningful Internet use, human capital and inclusion of the most vulnerable populations—appear to be progressing more slowly and unevenly. The pattern is not one of stagnation: gains are visible across nearly every dimension, including in LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS and low-income settings, where some of the largest relative improvements have been recorded. However, the data also indicate that without sustained and coordinated action on these underlying foundations, the breadth of progress visible at the service layer may not translate into a corresponding depth of impact in citizens' daily lives. Maintaining the current momentum will therefore require continued investment not only in the visible front end of digital government, but also in the institutional, infrastructural, human and participatory capacities that ultimately determine whether digital transformation reaches everyone.

Policy recommendations

- *Move from connectivity expansion to meaningful digital adoption*

  Internet usage has grown by only 1.1 per cent globally and has fallen in Africa, Oceania and in several country groupings in special situations. Sustaining the gains made in mobile subscription and broadband rollout will require a complementary focus on demand-side measures, including digital literacy programmes, affordable devices, accessible local-language content, and targeted outreach to women, older persons, persons with disabilities and rural populations. Investing in usage, not only in connectivity, is critical if recent infrastructure gains are to translate into broader citizen participation in digital services.

- *Address affordability gaps in countries facing the deepest constraints*

  The mobile data and voice basket has worsened in LDCs/LLDCs and remains above 18 per cent of GNI per capita—well above the affordability threshold of 2 per cent of GNI established by the ITU/UN Broadband Commission. Closing this gap will require a combination of policy actions, including revisiting spectrum and licensing-fee structures, encouraging infrastructure sharing among operators, supporting universal-service funds, and offering targeted subsidies for entry-level data baskets. Affordability is not only an economic issue; it is the precondition for digital inclusion.

- *Strengthen participation and engagement, particularly e-consultation and e-decision-making*

  Participation and engagement should be further strengthened as a core dimension of inclusive and responsive digital government. With e-participation portals currently available in 57.7 per cent of Member States, Governments are encouraged to broaden their reach, embed them more systematically in policy-making processes, establish clear consultation and response mechanisms, and communicate how public input informs decisions. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that these channels are accessible and responsive to women, youth, persons with disabilities and other groups at risk of exclusion, thereby reinforcing trust, accountability and the responsiveness of public institutions.

- *Deepen life-event services and close the justice and inclusion gaps*

  Globally, 77.5 per cent of the 72 online services assessed in 2026 are at least partially digitalized, but only 27.4 per cent are fully digitalized. Priority should be given to advancing high-impact life-event services—such as starting school, registering births and deaths, losing or finding a job, and accessing social protection—toward fully transactional status. At the same time, the 14 per cent justice portal coverage in the LDCs/SIDS group and the persistent service gap for migrants, with only 166 of 194 Member States offering dedicated services, require targeted national strategies and regional cooperation, supported where appropriate by development partners.

- *Differentiate support for countries in special situations*

  The 2026 results show that LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS face distinct challenges. LDCs combine rapid gains in online services and telecommunications infrastructure with a decline in human capital. LLDCs are advancing in a comparatively balanced manner but remain below the global average. SIDS—particularly countries that are both LDCs and SIDS—face compounded constraints relating to infrastructure, affordability, human capital and service digitalization. Effective support should therefore be tailored to each development context, including sustained investment in human capital and infrastructure for LDCs, continued support for cross-border connectivity and interoperable services in LLDCs, and climate-resilient digital infrastructure and shared regional platforms for SIDS.

- *Anchor digital-government strategies to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Digital Compact, and strengthen monitoring*

  The methodological refinements introduced in 2026—including the E-Government Infrastructure subindex and the broader set of life-event-based service indicators—provide finer-grained signals on the state of digital government. National e-government strategies should align explicitly with relevant Sustainable Development Goal targets and the commitments of the Global Digital Compact, supported by national dashboards that disaggregate progress by sex, age, disability, geography and income so that inclusion can be tracked and acted upon in near real time.

The 2026 Survey confirms that digital government has become the default operating model of modern governments. Service portals are nearly universal, e-procurement and open government data are mainstream, and countries in the lower tiers of the EGDI groups are catching up faster than ever before. Turning broad service availability into real use and benefit for citizens is a priority, making participation meaningful, affordability real, and digital inclusion visible in the lives of those who are currently at the margins of the digital state.

Endnotes

1 William D. Eggers, J. Knight, J. Boyd, P. Kishnani and S. Cooper, "How government can deliver streamlined life event experiences", Deloitte Insights, 12 July 2022. Available at https://www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/government-public-sector-services/citizen-centric-government.html

2 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, "Modernising Government: The Way Forward" (Paris, 2005). Available at https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264010505-en.

2. Megatrends: Regional Country Groupings

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of global e-government development from both regional and country-grouping perspectives. Using the E-Government Development Index (EGDI) as the main analytical framework, this chapter examines the evolution of digital government across regions and highlights major trends that are shaping digital transformation worldwide. The analysis also draws on insights from the Member States Questionnaire (MSQ), which provides additional qualitative evidence on national priorities, policies and innovations in digital government.

The chapter first explores key megatrends at the regional level, focusing on progress made in expanding digital government and on the persistent challenges related to the digital divide. It assesses disparities in digital readiness and service delivery across regions and examines how different country groupings are advancing in their digital transformation journeys.

Particular attention is given to the population-weighted digital divide across regions, examining the extent to which progress in digital government is translating into more equitable access for people, rather than only improvements in country-level averages. The analysis highlights both advances and persistent disparities across and within regions, including differences in the share of populations living in countries above or below the global EGDI average. By analysing both regional dynamics and the specific circumstances of these country groups, the chapter provides a clearer understanding of global progress, remaining gaps and emerging opportunities in advancing inclusive and sustainable digital government.

2.2 Megatrends at the regional level

The development of digital government continues to follow a clear upward global trajectory, with regions increasingly leveraging digital technologies to improve service delivery, strengthen transparency and deepen citizen engagement. This progress is reflected in the EGDI global average increase of 4.59 per cent since 2024, confirming continued momentum while regional and within-country disparities persist.[1]

The post-pandemic acceleration of digital transformation has continued through 2025–2026, supported by sustained investment in resilient infrastructure and advanced solutions such as cloud computing, broadband expansion and secure data-sharing architecture. This shift is further enabled by increased computing power, declining unit costs and the rapid growth of data generated by mobile and connected devices.

In parallel, the global surge in the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI)—driven by the rapid expansion of generative AI and large language models (LLMs)—is triggering a major infrastructure cycle, especially in data centres, that is reshaping the foundations on which digital government



AI-generated image: INTERMID

In this chapter:

2.1 Introduction 43
2.2 Megatrends at the regional level 43
2.3 Regional country grouping analysis 48
2.3.1 Africa: Accelerating digital transformation through digital public infrastructure and adaptive transformation 48
2.3.2 Americas: Continued regional improvement with new upward movement across the Caribbean 52
2.3.3 Asia: Expanding digital government capacity beyond traditional regional front-runners 55
2.3.4 Europe: Sustained leadership and broader convergence in digital government 60
2.3.5 Oceania: Stronger digital momentum driven by Pacific SIDS transformation 65
2.4 Bridging the population-weighted digital divide: progress, challenges and disparities 67
2.4.1 A proxy to measure the digital divide 67
2.4.2 Africa: a broad and deep population-weighted digital divide 70
2.4.3 Americas: a relatively limited but concentrated population-weighted digital divide 71
2.4.4 Asia: strong aggregate performance alongside a differentiated population-weighted digital divide 73
2.4.5 Europe: the narrowest population-weighted digital divide 74
2.4.6 Oceania: strong progress alongside a persistent SIDS digital divide 75
2.5 Key takeaways 76
Endnotes 77

operates. The International Energy Agency (IEA) reports that global investment in data centres nearly doubled since 2022 and amounted to some USD 500 billion in 2024, reflecting how AI workloads are driving new capacity, with direct implications for energy systems and national infrastructure planning. The IEA also projects that electricity consumption from data centres could reach about 945 TWh by 2030, underscoring the scale of the energy challenge associated with AI-enabled digital transformation.2 Complementing this, Jones Lang LaSalle Incorporated (JLL), a global commercial real estate and investment management firm with expertise in data-centre development and operations, estimates that hyperscalers are allocating around USD 1 trillion to data-centre spending between 2024 and 2026, while supply constraints—particularly electricity availability and grid-connection timelines—are increasingly determining where and how quickly new capacity can be deployed.3 For digital government, this infrastructure cycle should not be treated only as a technology trend. The rapid expansion of computing infrastructure—including cloud services, data centres and electricity-grid capacity—is emerging as a major political economy and sustainability challenge. It raises strategic questions for policymakers concerning energy planning, green public procurement, sustainable and sovereign cloud strategies, open cloud ecosystems, technological dependencies, cybersecurity, data governance and the environmental footprint of AI-enabled public administration. As governments increasingly integrate AI into service delivery, policy design and institutional decision-making, the availability, location, ownership and sustainability of large-scale computing facilities may become a defining factor in national digital capacity and resilience.

At the same time, the challenges associated with large-scale AI infrastructure are generating interest in complementary architectures and more distributed deployment approaches. These include Small Language Models—compact models requiring fewer computational resources; World Models—systems that learn to represent and predict how environments evolve; and Edge AI—the deployment of AI directly on local devices or infrastructure rather than primarily through remote cloud services. Although still emerging, these approaches may enable more context-specific, energy-efficient and locally deployable applications, particularly for public administrations seeking to balance innovation with cost, sovereignty, environmental sustainability and inclusion. Against this backdrop, digital government is increasingly being shaped by a broader shift towards more integrated, data-driven and intelligent public administration. Across regions, governments are moving beyond the simple digitization of individual services towards more connected digital ecosystems that link service delivery, digital identity systems, data governance, interoperability frameworks and institutional decision-making. At the same time, the growing use of generative and predictive AI is beginning to influence not only administrative processes and public service delivery, but also how governments anticipate needs, allocate resources, design policies and strengthen accountability.

However, this transition also brings important challenges and limitations. Many public administrations continue to face fragmented legacy systems, uneven data quality, weak interoperability, limited institutional capacity and shortages of specialized digital and AI skills. The adoption of AI in government also raises concerns related to transparency, explainability, accountability, bias, cybersecurity, privacy, procurement capacity and the risk of dependency on a limited number of technology providers. Without adequate governance frameworks, safeguards and human oversight, AI-enabled public administration may reinforce existing inequalities, create new forms of exclusion, or reduce public trust in digital services.

This evolution is therefore accompanied not only by the continued expansion of remote and hybrid working arrangements, wider use of analytics and emerging technologies, but also by a growing need to strengthen resilience, trust, inclusion, institutional readiness and the capacity of governments to operate responsibly in increasingly complex digital environments.

For the most advanced digital governments, a further emerging frontier is the possible evolution towards more systemic forms of AI-enabled public administration, sometimes framed as an Agentic State, in which agentic systems are deployed across multiple layers of government while human authorities retain responsibility for oversight, accountability and public trust.4 However, this concept remains forward-looking and should be treated with caution, as it has not yet been formally tested through academic consensus, intergovernmental deliberation or United Nations normative processes. Its relevance for digital government lies less in technological inevitability than in the governance questions it raises. These include auditability, model risk management, human oversight, redress mechanisms, procurement capability, public-sector workforce skills, cyber resilience, data quality, institutional accountability and public trust. Without these safeguards, the deployment of agentic systems in government could deepen existing asymmetries between digitally advanced countries and those still working to strengthen foundational digital capacities.

These considerations reinforce a broader recognition that digital transformation must be assessed through an equity and governance-readiness lens, prioritizing inclusion, accessibility, safety, transparency, accountability and openness, so that digital progress expands rights and opportunities rather than deepening inequalities.

This equity-driven framing is also increasingly anchored in United Nations-led global processes on digital cooperation and governance. In September 2024, Member States adopted the Global Digital Compact (GDC) as Annex I to the Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution A/RES/79/1), outlining shared principles and commitments to shape an open, safe, secure and inclusive digital future and strengthen international cooperation on digital governance, including AI.[5]

In parallel, attention has converged around Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)—foundational and interoperable systems, such as digital identification, payments and data exchange, that enable population-scale service delivery—alongside safeguards to ensure DPI is trusted, rights-based and inclusive. Such safeguards are essential to prevent risks related to exclusion, biometric authentication failures, cyber vulnerabilities, surveillance, vendor and cloud dependency, synthetic identity fraud, algorithmic bias and excessive concentration of state power, while strengthening transparency, accountability, redress, open standards, cybersecurity and effective public oversight.

In this context, the Universal DPI Safeguards Framework provides an important reference point for guiding the safe and inclusive design, deployment and governance of population-scale digital systems. Released in September 2024 alongside the adoption of the GDC and developed through a multistakeholder process under the stewardship of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Framework translates the call for DPI "guardrails" into a more operational set of principles, risk categories and implementation recommendations. Its current version is structured around 18 principles, 13 interrelated risk categories, 5 DPI life-cycle stages and approximately 300 process and practice recommendations, offering practical guidance for governments and other responsible authorities to ensure that DPI advances inclusion, trust, accountability and human rights while mitigating risks at both individual and societal levels.[6]

Crucially, the current wave of technology and infrastructure investment is being matched by intensified efforts to strengthen institutional capacity, digital skills and governance readiness. In Europe, the relevant policy landscape extends beyond the current implementation phase of the Digital Europe Programme. It is framed by the Digital Decade Policy Programme, which provides the European Union's overarching mechanism for monitoring progress towards 2030 targets in connectivity, digital

skills, digital business and digital public services, and is currently under review in connection with Europe's competitiveness and digital sovereignty agenda. Looking ahead, the proposed European Competitiveness Fund is also expected to support strategic technologies, including the digital transition, while more specific initiatives—such as the AI Continent Action Plan, the Apply AI Strategy, and the implementation of the Interoperable Europe Act—are shaping Europe's approach to AI adoption, public-sector interoperability, digital public services and technological sovereignty.[7]

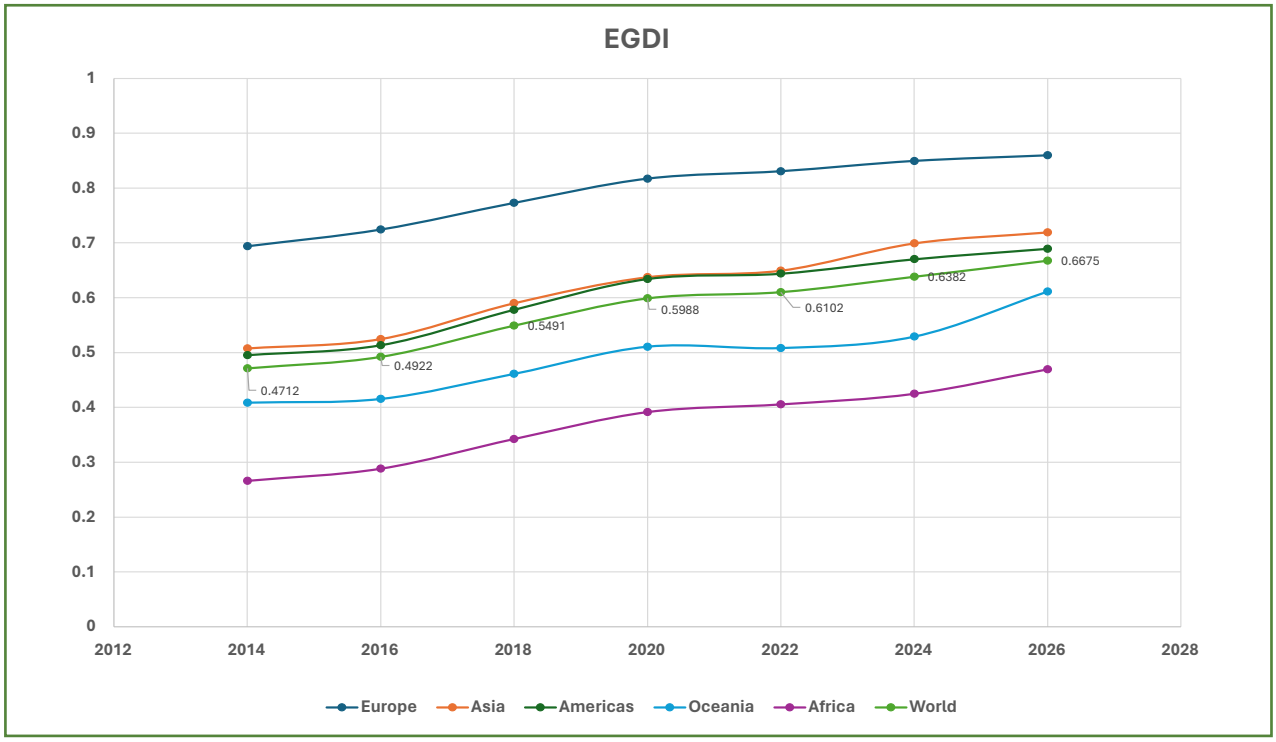
These efforts are also evident in the increasing alignment of investments in AI infrastructure and computing capacity with initiatives to develop the skilled workforce needed to design, deploy and manage these technologies. Across regions, governments, public institutions and technology providers are investing not only in data centres and cloud infrastructure, but also in the specialized skills required to design, operate and govern AI-enabled systems. For example, in Saudi Arabia, Microsoft and the National IT Academy launched the first Microsoft Datacenter Academy in the Middle East to build technical skills for the AI era, including in data-centre infrastructure, cloud technologies, AI, automation, data analytics and cybersecurity. In the United Arab Emirates, Microsoft Elevate UAE is expanding AI training for students, educators and government employees, including a programme for federal government officials. These initiatives illustrate how the AI infrastructure cycle is increasingly linked to capacity-building, but they also underline the need to ensure that such partnerships are aligned with public-sector priorities, long-term institutional capability, sustainability, inclusion and responsible AI governance.[8]

At the same time, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) underscores that preparing an AI-ready public workforce is not simply a matter of training staff to use new tools, but a core element of redesigning governance systems for trustworthy and effective digital government transformation. Building on earlier work, including by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre and other policy institutions, this preparation requires public administrations to combine workforce development with change management, institutional learning, governance capacity, risk management, accountability, procurement capability and organizational redesign. In this sense, AI readiness should be understood as a whole-of-government capability, linking skills, data governance, interoperability, cybersecurity, leadership and public trust.[9]

These transformations extend across sectors such as education, employment, social protection, healthcare, justice and environmental management—supporting more integrated service delivery, stronger digital skills ecosystems and more evidence-informed policymaking. Collectively, these transformations contribute to more robust and resilient institutions and economies, while also making clear that progress depends on advancing infrastructure scale-up, including AI-driven data-centre capacity, together with workforce capability-building, governance readiness and institutional safeguards. These efforts should be aligned with the principles of the Global Digital Compact, the strengthened United Nations digital governance architecture following the establishment of the United Nations Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies on 1 January 2025, and the Universal DPI Safeguards Framework as an operational reference for trusted, inclusive, rights-based and accountable DPI deployment. [2 5 9]

This broader transformation is reflected in regional performance trends, as sustained investment in digital infrastructure, institutional capacity and skills development continues to translate into measurable EGDI progress across all regions. Average EGDI values have improved in all the regions since 2024, pushing the global average from 0.6382 to a new high of 0.6675 in 2026.

Figure 2.1 EGDI global and regional trends



Source: United Nations E-Government Survey (2014-2026)

At the same time, these trends are bringing greater attention to digital sovereignty as an emerging governance lens for digital government. Rather than a protectionist concept, digital sovereignty can be understood as the capacity of governments to make strategic choices over the digital infrastructures, data systems and technological dependencies that underpin public administration. As countries expand their reliance on cloud platforms, data centres, DPI and AI-enabled services, questions of control, jurisdiction, interoperability, resilience and strategic autonomy are becoming increasingly central to the digital government agenda. This is particularly relevant for advanced digital-government ecosystems, where the next phase of progress may depend not only on service maturity and infrastructure availability, but also on the ability to ensure trusted, secure, interoperable and strategically governed digital foundations.

These dynamics provide important context for interpreting regional EGDI performance. In 2026, Europe remains the leader in e-government development, with an average EGDI value of 0.8595, followed by Asia at 0.7191, the Americas at 0.6893, Oceania at 0.6110 and Africa at 0.4693.

While the 2022–2024 period saw Asia leading in growth, the 2024–2026 cycle reveals a marked geographic shift in digital momentum. Oceania recorded the largest relative increase in its average EGDI value, rising by 15.52 per cent, followed by Africa, with an increase of 10.50 per cent. In contrast, Asia recorded more moderate growth. Including the State of Palestine, the regional average EGDI increased by 2.87 per cent. When the State of Palestine is excluded to ensure strict comparability with the 2024 assessment, Asia's average EGDI rose from 0.6990 in 2024 to 0.7221 in 2026—an absolute increase of 0.0231 EGDI points, equivalent to a relative increase of approximately 3.31 per cent.

The Americas showed marginal gains (2.86 per cent), and Europe experienced a slight, stable increase (1.02 per cent) indicative of a plateau at the very highest tiers of digital maturity. Despite the significant progress achieved in Oceania and Africa, the EGDI average for these two regions remains

below the new global average of 0.6675.

In the Americas, e-government development showed marginal but steady improvement, moving from 0.6701 to 0.6893. This positive trend continues to be supported by countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, that are sustaining their commitment to enhancing online services delivery and expanding Internet access, albeit at a slower, more consolidated pace compared to previous years.

In Africa, digital trends confirm the accelerating momentum already observed in 2024, with the upward movement of several LDCs representing one of the most notable features of the 2026 results. Three LDCs moved from the middle to the high EGDI group, while two advanced from the low to the middle group, indicating that progress is beginning to extend beyond the region's established digital frontrunners. However, this positive movement should be interpreted alongside persistent structural constraints and a still significant digital divide. The region's overall improvement therefore points not only to growing digital ambition and reform capacity, but also to the need for stronger foundational infrastructure, institutional coordination, safeguards and inclusive implementation to ensure that measurable EGDI gains translate into broader and more equitable development outcomes.

2.3 Regional country grouping analysis

2.3.1 Africa: Accelerating digital transformation through digital public infrastructure and adaptive transformation

In Africa, recent digital government trends point to a clear acceleration in the pace of transformation, building on the trajectory observed in 2024. With the regional average EGDI rising by 10.50 per cent to 0.4693, Africa has continued to make significant progress. The regional median, at 0.4747, is very close to the average, indicating a relatively balanced distribution around the regional central value and suggesting that the overall result is not being strongly driven by a small number of exceptionally high-performing countries. At the same time, the EGDI standard deviation declined slightly, from 0.1775 in 2024 to 0.1735 in 2026, pointing to a modest narrowing of cross-country dispersion. The change remains limited, however, and substantial differences in digital government maturity persist across the region. Africa's trajectory should therefore be understood as one of broad regional advancement accompanied by gradual, rather than uniform, convergence.

Table 2.1 Regional average, median and standard deviation breakdown for Africa

Africa	EGDI	OSI	HCI	TII
Average	0.4693	0.4834	0.4264	0.4982
Median	0.4747	0.4816	0.4062	0.4967
Stdev	0.1735	0.2139	0.1883	0.2212
Stdev (2024)	0.1775	0.1978	0.1701	0.2680

The component-level results reveal a more differentiated pattern beneath this overall progress. For the Online Services Index, the average and median remain closely aligned, but the standard deviation increased from 0.1978 to 0.2139, indicating greater dispersion in online service performance across countries. The Human Capital Index shows a similar tendency, with the average above the median and the standard deviation rising from 0.1701 to 0.1883, suggesting widening cross-country differences in human-capital conditions. By contrast, the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index shows a notable reduction in dispersion, with its standard deviation falling from 0.2680 to 0.2212, indicating that infrastructure performance has become more closely distributed across African countries, although significant differences remain.

Taken together, these results suggest that Africa's digital transformation is advancing through

differentiated pathways. Overall EGDI dispersion has narrowed modestly and infrastructure disparities have declined more substantially, while differences in online services and human capital have widened. Regional progress should therefore not be interpreted as uniform convergence across all dimensions of digital government. A growing number of African States are leveraging mobile ecosystems, digital public infrastructure and interoperable governance frameworks to expand service delivery and strengthen institutional capability, but countries continue to advance from different institutional, technological and human-capital starting points.

At the same time, this pattern should not be understood as a substitute for foundational infrastructure or core state capacity. While mobile-first platforms, digital public infrastructure and modular digital services can accelerate progress and help narrow some gaps, their effectiveness still depends on reliable electricity, affordable data, resilient connectivity, cybersecurity, data protection, legal safeguards, institutional coordination and local-language usability. The 2026 results reinforce the importance of these foundations: although infrastructure disparities have narrowed, differences in online services and human capital have increased, indicating that technological progress alone does not necessarily produce balanced digital government development. Digital transformation will therefore need to be accompanied by sustained investment in human, legal, regulatory and institutional capabilities if progress is to scale safely, inclusively and sustainably across the region.

Upward mobility across EGDI tiers reflects broad-based progress as well as movement across performance categories. The new results broadly confirm the gains led by South Africa, Morocco, Mauritius and Tunisia, while indicating that a second wave of countries is also moving upward. At the same time, the relatively modest decline in overall EGDI dispersion shows that, despite this progress, substantial differences in digital government maturity remain across African countries. The regional picture is therefore characterized by simultaneous advancement and differentiation: overall EGDI performance is becoming slightly less dispersed, but this masks contrasting trends across its underlying components. The narrowing of disparities within the region also does not yet translate into a comparable closing of Africa's digital divide with more advanced regions. Table 2.2 presents the key Survey results for the top African performers in the very high and high EGDI groups in 2026. It also highlights advances among countries moving from the middle to the high EGDI group, notably Zimbabwe, Cameroon and Nigeria, as well as the LDCs Benin, Togo and Uganda.

In particular, many countries—especially LDCs—have prioritized low-bandwidth, mobile-accessible platforms, interoperable digital identity systems and modular digital services. This shift has helped reduce barriers to access, accelerate service deployment and extend services to underserved and remote populations, particularly in parts of Middle, Eastern and Western Africa. The decline in infrastructure dispersion is consistent with broader improvements in connectivity and digital foundations across the region. At the same time, the increased variation in online service performance suggests that countries differ considerably in their ability to translate these foundations into mature and comprehensive digital public services.

As a result, digital government development in these contexts is increasingly being driven by accessibility, scalability and cost-efficiency, rather than by infrastructure density alone. Evidence from recent assessments and project documentation suggests that progress in several African countries is associated with the adoption of DPI, digitally enabled public-service delivery models and mobile-accessible approaches.[10] This is reflected in ongoing reforms and investments in countries such as Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia, where digital identification, digital public-service delivery, interoperable data systems, broadband connectivity and institutional capacity for digital transformation are being strengthened.[11] [12] [13] In parallel, the 2026 Survey results indicate that Burundi and Niger moved from the low to the middle EGDI group, suggesting that improvements in online services, infrastructure and/or human capital are beginning to translate into measurable changes in their overall digital government performance.

Table 2.2 Countries leading e-government development in Africa, 2026

Country	Rating Class	EGDI Rank	Sub-Region	OSI	HCI	TII	EGDI (2026)	EGDI (2024)
South Africa	V2	52	Southern Africa	0.8386	0.7773	0.8978	0.8379	0.8616
Morocco	HV	89	Northern Africa	0.685	0.643	0.877	0.735	0.6841
Mauritius	HV	92	Eastern Africa	0.6239	0.6975	0.8465	0.7226	0.7506
Tunisia	HV	96	Northern Africa	0.632	0.6754	0.8186	0.7086	0.6935
Zambia	HV	99	Eastern Africa	0.8062	0.5952	0.6544	0.6853	0.5424
Namibia	HV	101	Southern Africa	0.6767	0.7174	0.6509	0.6817	0.6007
Kenya	H3	102	Eastern Africa	0.6832	0.649	0.6957	0.676	0.6314
Rwanda	H3	104	Eastern Africa	0.8347	0.5971	0.5857	0.6725	0.5799
Cabo Verde	H3	108	Western Africa	0.6097	0.6082	0.7693	0.6624	0.6238
Egypt	H3	109	Northern Africa	0.6401	0.62	0.7151	0.6584	0.6699
Ghana	H3	115	Western Africa	0.619	0.5315	0.7505	0.6337	0.6317
Algeria	H3	117	Northern Africa	0.4363	0.6724	0.7863	0.6317	0.5956
Côte d'Ivoire	H2	120	Western Africa	0.7034	0.3908	0.7345	0.6095	0.5587
Zimbabwe *	H2	121	Eastern Africa	0.6534	0.635	0.5358	0.6081	0.4481
Seychelles	H2	123	Eastern Africa	0.4322	0.6225	0.7482	0.601	0.6773
Cameroon *	H2	125	Middle Africa	0.7587	0.5209	0.5164	0.5986	0.4294
Eswatini	H2	127	Southern Africa	0.4283	0.6111	0.7542	0.5979	0.6081
Nigeria *	H2	134	Western Africa	0.7359	0.4916	0.4966	0.5747	0.4815
Libya	H1	138	Northern Africa	0.3415	0.5476	0.804	0.5644	0.5466
Benin *	H1	142	Western Africa	0.7304	0.3892	0.5587	0.5594	0.4578
Togo *	H1	143	Western Africa	0.6926	0.5727	0.4082	0.5578	0.392
Senegal	H1	144	Western Africa	0.6085	0.2929	0.7686	0.5567	0.5162
Uganda *	H1	145	Eastern Africa	0.7226	0.5428	0.3886	0.5513	0.4464
Gabon	H1	150	Middle Africa	0.3368	0.5614	0.6545	0.5175	0.5741

Notes: Italicized countries are least developed countries, landlocked developing countries or small island developing States. An asterisk denotes countries that have moved up from the high to the very high EGDI group in 2026; a hash denotes countries that have moved down from the very high to the high EGDI group in 2026.

This pattern is better understood as part of a broader process of adaptive digital development rather than technological leapfrogging alone. Agile and modular digital architectures can help countries accelerate service delivery and avoid some legacy constraints, but their long-term impact depends on the parallel strengthening of infrastructure, legal safeguards, institutional coordination and implementation capacity. The contrasting trends across the EGDI components further underscore the importance of a balanced approach: narrowing infrastructure gaps need to be matched by stronger human capital and more broadly distributed capacity to design and deliver sophisticated online services. Sustained investment in skills, institutional capability and service transformation will therefore be essential if improvements in regional averages are to translate into deeper and more durable convergence. Importantly, this transformation is supported by a growing ecosystem of continental strategies, regional cooperation, international partnerships and targeted investments.

At the continental level, the African Union Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030) provides the overarching policy framework, promoting inclusive digital development, interoperable systems and the long-term objective of a Digital Single Market.[14] Within this broader agenda, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Protocol on Digital Trade represents an important milestone. Adopted by the African Union Assembly in February 2024, and complemented by eight

technical annexes adopted in February 2025, the Protocol seeks to support cross-border digital services, digital identity, data flows, digital payments, online safety and e-commerce integration.[15] At the same time, it should be presented as an emerging legal and regulatory framework rather than as a fully settled enabling environment, since entry into force still depends on ratification by the required number of State Parties and subsequent national implementation. These continental efforts are further reinforced by the African Union Data Policy Framework and by ongoing work on digital identity interoperability, including United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)-led capacity-building initiatives aimed at supporting the harmonization of identity and payment systems across countries.[16] Taken together, these initiatives point to a maturing continental architecture for digital integration, whose impact will depend on sustained implementation, institutional capacity and the ability to translate regional commitments into trusted, interoperable and inclusive digital services.

At the operational level, international development partners have also played a significant role in enabling implementation. The World Bank's Digital Economy for Africa (DE4A) initiative provides a comprehensive framework to support digital transformation across five pillars, including digital infrastructure, platforms, financial services, entrepreneurship and skills.[17] Complementing this, the Western Africa Regional Digital Integration Program (WARDIP) has expanded support to LDCs such as Liberia, Benin and Sierra Leone, focusing on broadband expansion, regional connectivity and increased digital service usage, thereby reinforcing the viability of mobile-first and cost-efficient development models.[18]

Similarly, the UNDP Regional Programme for Africa (2022–2025) and the launch of the timbuktoo initiative in 2024 have contributed to strengthening Africa's digital ecosystem by supporting innovation, modular digital solutions and DPI deployment.[19] These initiatives place particular emphasis on interoperability, open digital ecosystems and scalable solutions, including support for digital identity and public service delivery systems. For example, UNDP-supported platforms have facilitated large-scale service delivery and governance processes, including digital electoral support reaching tens of millions of users.[15]

A further important dimension of this progress has been the strengthening of data governance systems, which are increasingly recognized as foundational to effective digital transformation. In this regard, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs supported Ethiopia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, United Republic of Tanzania and The Gambia through a multi-phase project aimed at advancing digital data management for the Sustainable Development Goals (see box 2.1). The initiative combined desk research, stakeholder workshops and capacity-building activities to assess national data governance systems and generate in-depth country-level insights. It resulted in baseline reports with actionable recommendations and was complemented by regional knowledge-sharing efforts aimed at promoting peer learning and South–South cooperation. Such efforts illustrate how improved institutional readiness and stronger governance foundations can complement investments in digital platforms and infrastructure, thereby enhancing the sustainability and developmental impact of digital transformation.[20]

In parallel, UNECA's work under initiatives such as DITE4Africa, together with its support for national digital identity strategies, has reinforced foundational DPI layers across the continent. Evidence suggests that a large majority of African countries now operate digital identity systems backed by electronic databases, many of them incorporating biometric features that are critical for enabling secure and scalable digital services.[21] Additional contributions from organizations such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UNICEF further underscore the importance of strengthening enabling conditions, including digital skills, connectivity, and civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems, as foundational elements of inclusive digital government.[22]

Taken together, these developments point to the emergence of a layered and increasingly coordinated regional ecosystem, in which continental policy frameworks, international financing and technical assistance converge to support national digital transformation pathways. Africa's recent progress therefore reflects not only reforms at the national level, but also the growing impact of integrated, multi-stakeholder efforts to build interoperable, inclusive and scalable digital systems.

From a policy perspective, the region's experience suggests that targeted strategies centered on mobile ecosystems, DPI and inclusive service design can deliver significant gains even in resource-constrained environments. At the same time, sustaining this momentum will require continued investment in governance frameworks, interoperability standards, cybersecurity and institutional capacity, so that rapid digital expansion can translate into long-term resilience, trust and sustainability.

Overall, Africa's trajectory underscores the importance of context-specific digital transformation pathways and demonstrates that innovative policy choices, supported by continental coordination and global partnerships, can drive meaningful and measurable progress towards inclusive digital government.



Box 2.1 United Nations Peace and Development Fund "Developing Institutional Capacities for Digital Data Management and Cooperation to Advance Progress Toward the Sustainable Development Goals"

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs supported the strengthening of data governance systems in five African countries—Ethiopia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, United Republic of Tanzania, and The Gambia—under the project titled "Developing Institutional Capacities for Digital Data Management and Cooperation to Advance Progress Toward the Sustainable Development Goals." The initiative followed a structured, multi-phase approach informed by the findings and recommendations of the United Nations E-Government Survey 2020 and United Nations E-Government Survey 2022, which emphasize the importance of robust data governance frameworks as a foundation for effective digital governance. Strengthening these frameworks is critical to enhancing government agility and improving the delivery of public services. This process began with comprehensive desk research conducted by United Nations staff members to assess country-specific data governance landscapes. This analysis was subsequently deepened through two-day national workshops that combined capacity-building and training activities with participatory methods, including surveys and group discussions, to engage key stakeholders and capture critical insights on existing systems and challenges. These efforts culminated in the development of baseline reports for each country, providing a detailed assessment of current data governance frameworks alongside targeted recommendations to strengthen data management capacities. The project further facilitated a regional workshop to disseminate findings, promote peer learning, and foster South–South cooperation and regional collaboration among participating countries.

Sources: Developing institutional capacities for digital data management and cooperation to advance progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (2022 - 2025) | Public Institutions.

2.3.2 Americas: Continued regional improvement with new upward movement across the Caribbean

The Americas continued to improve their e-government performance in 2026, building on the positive trajectory already identified in 2024. The regional average EGDI increased from 0.6701

in 2024 to 0.6893 in 2026, while the median reached 0.6866. The close alignment between the average and median indicates a relatively balanced distribution around the regional central value. At the same time, the EGDI standard deviation declined slightly, from 0.1476 in 2024 to 0.1436 in 2026, pointing to a modest narrowing of cross-country dispersion. The change is limited, however, indicating that differences in digital government maturity across the region remain significant despite the improvement in overall performance.

Table 2.3 Regional average, median and standard deviation breakdown for the Americas

Americas	EGDI	OSI	HCI	TII
Average	0.6893	0.6512	0.6956	0.7210
Median	0.6866	0.6467	0.7145	0.7446
Stdev	0.1436	0.1751	0.1477	0.1502
Stdev (2024)	0.1476	0.2095	0.1310	0.1530

Northern America remains the regional anchor, with both the United States and Canada firmly positioned in the very high EGDI group, and with the United States joining the top cluster of world-leading countries. In Latin America, South America remains the strongest subregion, led by Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, all ranked in the very high EGDI group, while Central America shows more uneven progress, with Costa Rica remaining in the very high group and Mexico moving back to the high group.

The Caribbean recorded the most visible upward mobility in 2026, emerging as the principal source of new progress within the region. Trinidad and Tobago, the Dominican Republic and Saint Kitts and Nevis moved from the high to the very high EGDI group, while Cuba and Belize advanced from the middle to the high group. These movements suggest both continuity and a widening depth of progress compared with 2024, indicating that digital government gains are no longer concentrated only among the region's long-standing frontrunners. Table 2.4 presents the key Survey results for countries leading e-government development in the Americas in 2026.

The component-level results reveal a differentiated pattern beneath this overall progress. The Online Services Index shows the clearest narrowing of disparities, with its standard deviation declining substantially from 0.2095 in 2024 to 0.1751 in 2026, while the average and median remain closely aligned. By contrast, Human Capital shows widening dispersion: although the median remains above the average, the standard deviation increased from 0.1310 to 0.1477, indicating growing differences in human-capital conditions across countries. Telecommunications infrastructure remains comparatively stable, with the median above the average and only a slight decline in dispersion between 2024 and 2026.

Taken together, these results suggest that the Americas are experiencing broad regional advancement accompanied by modest overall convergence, but with different dynamics across the underlying components. Convergence is most evident in online service provision, while telecommunications infrastructure disparities have changed little and human-capital differences have widened. The Americas nevertheless remain comparatively strong overall, and the remaining digital divide is increasingly concentrated in a limited number of countries, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean (see para. 2.4.3).

Table 2.4 Countries leading e-government development in the Americas, 2026

Country	Rating Class	EGDI Rank	Sub-Region	OSI	HCI	TII	EGDI (2026)	EGDI (2024)
United States of America	VH	13	Northern America	0.9293	0.9316	0.9712	0.944	0.9194
Argentina	V3	25	South America	0.9061	0.9396	0.8821	0.9093	0.8573
Chile	V3	30	South America	0.9028	0.8898	0.8953	0.896	0.8827
Canada	V3	35	Northern America	0.9164	0.9087	0.8333	0.8861	0.8452
Brazil	V3	39	South America	0.9517	0.8381	0.8596	0.8831	0.8403
Uruguay	V2	49	South America	0.7826	0.8525	0.9131	0.8494	0.9006
Colombia	V1	65	South America	0.7947	0.7641	0.8358	0.7982	0.7793
Costa Rica	V1	69	Central America	0.7224	0.7755	0.8433	0.7804	0.8009
Trinidad and Tobago *	V1	70	Caribbean	0.7844	0.808	0.7429	0.7784	0.6973
Ecuador	V1	74	South America	0.7955	0.7753	0.7268	0.7659	0.78
Peru	V1	78	South America	0.7353	0.7145	0.8415	0.7638	0.807
Dominican Republic *	V1	79	Caribbean	0.7745	0.7443	0.7647	0.7612	0.7013
Saint Kitts and Nevis *	V1	81	Caribbean	0.6351	0.8411	0.7985	0.7582	0.6305

Notes: Italicized countries are least developed countries, landlocked developing countries or small island developing States. An asterisk denotes countries that have moved up from the high to the very high EGDI group in 2026.

Historical and institutional trends help explain these gains. In Northern America, sustained digital-service modernization, digital identity, cybersecurity, and user-centred service reform in the United States and Canada have continued to support high levels of digital government maturity. In Latin America and the Caribbean, regional cooperation and capacity-development initiatives have also played an important enabling role. Frameworks and mechanisms such as the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean 2024 (eLAC2024), the Inter-American Digital Government Network (Red Interamericana de Gobierno Digital—Red GEALC), ECLAC-led capacity-building, and practical interoperability tools, including Uruguay's regional digital-signature platform, have supported cooperation on digital public services, interoperability and institutional modernization.[23] These initiatives do not explain every country's movement on their own, but they provide strong institutional evidence that regional cooperation, interoperability and sustained investment in connectivity and digital public services have contributed to the broader upward trend now visible in the 2026 data.

At the same time, the regional picture remains uneven. The advances of Trinidad and Tobago, the Dominican Republic and Saint Kitts and Nevis are particularly notable because they appear to rest on relatively balanced performance across online services, human capital and telecommunication infrastructure. Cuba also moved upward despite continued infrastructure constraints, suggesting gains in online services and human capital, while Belize's progress points to more gradual broad-based improvement. By contrast, Venezuela moved from the high to the middle EGDI group, likely reflecting the cumulative effects of prolonged crisis, infrastructure weakness, high connectivity costs and tighter online restrictions, while Mexico moved from the very high to the high group. Haiti remained in the low group, underscoring that progress in the Americas remains uneven and that persistent broadband divides, territorial disparities and uneven digital uptake continue to constrain overall performance.

This interpretation is also consistent with broader regional evidence, including the OECD/IDB Digital Government Index for Latin America and the Caribbean, which identifies proactiveness as

one of the weakest dimensions of digital government in the region. This reflects limited strategic goals for proactive service delivery, insufficient use of data for monitoring and decision-making, and the still limited strategic integration of trustworthy AI in public-sector transformation. This finding is analytically important for the 2026 Survey because it suggests that the next phase of digital government development in the Americas will depend not only on expanding access and service availability, but also on strengthening anticipatory, user-centred, data-driven and trustworthy government capabilities.

This direction is reflected in the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2026), adopted in November 2024 as the successor to eLAC2024 and the region's current framework for digital cooperation. Its 38 objectives are organized around three enabling axes—meaningful connectivity and digital infrastructure; governance and digital security; and innovation, emerging technologies and artificial intelligence—and three thematic pillars covering productive development, well-being and the digital transformation of the State. The latter promotes proactive and omnichannel public services, secure and interoperable digital identity systems, open government, innovation in government, and robust digital and data governance for evidence-informed policymaking. Implemented through a regional cooperation mechanism supported by ECLAC, eLAC2026—together with Red GEALC—provides an important platform for peer learning, capacity-building and coordinated action, particularly in proactive services, interoperability, data governance, AI readiness and support for countries at earlier stages of digital government development.

2.3.3 Asia: Expanding digital government capacity beyond traditional regional front-runners

Asia continued to improve in 2026, but at a more moderate pace than in the previous cycle. In the 2024 Survey, Asia was the fastest-improving region globally, with 24 countries already in the very high EGDI group and an average EGDI of 0.6990, a 7.65 per cent increase over 2022. The 2024 Survey attributed that momentum largely to the strong performance of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, China, and countries in Western and Central Asia. Excluding the State of Palestine for strict comparability with 2024, Asia's regional average EGDI increased from 0.6990 in 2024 to 0.7222 in 2026, an increase of approximately 3.32 per cent. When the State of Palestine is included, Asia's 2026 regional average stands at 0.7191, with a median of 0.7582 and a standard deviation of 0.1968. The higher median indicates that a lower-performing group of countries continues to pull down the regional average, while the standard deviation points to substantial variation in performance across the region. For the strictly comparable series excluding the State of Palestine, the median stood at 0.7592 in 2026, while the standard deviation declined slightly from 0.2019 in 2024 to 0.1977 in 2026. This indicates continued regional progress accompanied by a modest narrowing of cross-country dispersion, although substantial internal differences remain.

Table 2.5 Regional average, median and standard deviation breakdown for the Asia

Asia *	EGDI	OSI	HCI	TII
Average	0.7222	0.7020	0.6818	0.7827
Median	0.7592	0.7392	0.6872	0.8622
Stdev	0.1977	0.2444	0.1770	0.2127
Stdev (2024)	0.1977	0.2444	0.1770	0.2127

Note *: For strict comparability, the 2024 and 2026 values in the table exclude the State of Palestine. Including the State of Palestine, the 2026 Asia values are: EGDI average 0.7191, median 0.7582 and standard deviation 0.1968; OSI 0.6969, 0.7352 and 0.2444; HCI 0.6818, 0.6872 and 0.1751; and TII 0.7787, 0.8615 and 0.2123, respectively.

Asia also maintains a strong presence among the highest-performing countries globally, with four of the top five positions in the 2026 ranking held by countries from the region, including the Republic of Korea in first place. The number of countries in the very high EGDI group increases from 24 to 26, while the number in the low group falls from three to two. India and Kyrgyzstan move into the very high EGDI group, Turkmenistan advances from middle to high, and Afghanistan rises from low to middle. Brunei Darussalam is the only country to move down a full group, slipping from very high to high. At the subregional level, however, the 2026 pattern is more differentiated than in 2024. Southern Asia records the strongest average improvement in the uploaded dataset, followed by Central Asia, while Western Asia advances more modestly, South-Eastern Asia is nearly flat overall, and Eastern Asia shows a slight decline.

This pattern matters analytically. It suggests that Asia's progress is increasingly differentiated across subregions and levels of digital maturity, rather than following a single regional trajectory. Progress is no longer being driven only by the region's already advanced digital frontrunners, but increasingly also by countries strengthening digital government from high, middle and even low starting points. A more useful way to interpret Asia's 2026 performance is therefore to distinguish among different transformation pathways. Mature digital governments, especially in the GCC and parts of Eastern Asia, are increasingly moving from rapid infrastructure expansion towards consolidation, optimization and whole-of-government integration. Other countries are accelerating through DPI, mobile-first service delivery and platform-based reforms. A third group is advancing from lower starting points through more basic institutionalization, while fragile, post-conflict or data-constrained environments continue to face deeper structural barriers. This differentiated pattern helps explain why Asia combines very high overall performance with persistent cross-country dispersion and a visible lower-performing tail.

A key finding is that, on the strictly comparable basis excluding the State of Palestine, the regional average increased by approximately 3.32 per cent between 2024 and 2026—well below the 7.65 per cent increase recorded in the previous cycle. One important reason appears to be that several of the countries that had previously driven Asia's rapid rise—especially in the GCC and parts of Western and Central Asia—have moved from a phase of rapid infrastructure build-out into one of consolidation and optimization. In these contexts, the next stage of digital government progress depends less on expanding basic connectivity or launching new portals, and more on the difficult work of integrating platforms across governments, improving data governance, strengthening cybersecurity, embedding AI responsibly, and redesigning services around life events and user needs. This finding suggests that, for mature digital governments, future EGDI gains may become more incremental, even where the underlying digital ecosystem remains highly advanced.

At the same time, Asia presents one of the clearest cases in which the median exceeds the average. With an average EGDI of 0.7191 and a median of 0.7582, combined with a still relatively high standard deviation of 0.1968, the regional distribution reflects both a strong-performing majority and substantial internal variation, with a lower-performing group pulling down the regional mean. The same pattern is especially visible in the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index, where the median of 0.8615 is substantially above the average of 0.7787. Although the standard deviation declined from 0.2205 in 2024 to 0.2123 in 2026, indicating some narrowing of dispersion, significant infrastructure gaps remain concentrated among a smaller group of countries. The Online Services Index shows a similar, though less pronounced, dynamic, with dispersion also declining from 0.2554 to 0.2444, whereas the Human Capital Index appears more balanced, with the average and median much closer and the standard deviation broadly stable.

Taken together, these results point to gradual regional convergence rather than uniform progress. Overall EGDI, online services and telecommunications infrastructure have become slightly less

dispersed since 2024, while human-capital differences have remained broadly stable. From a development perspective, Asia therefore combines a large and increasingly mature group of strong digital government performers with a smaller group of countries affected by conflict, instability, structural constraints or difficult data environments.

Within this broader regional pattern, five transformation pathways can be identified. The first is mature optimization, represented by highly advanced digital governments that are now focused on platform consolidation, service integration, AI governance and cybersecurity rather than basic expansion. The second is DPI-led acceleration, where countries are using digital identity, payments, data exchange and service platforms to scale digital government more rapidly. The third is mobile-first catch-up, particularly relevant for countries where mobile access and simplified service channels are helping expand reach despite infrastructure or capacity constraints. The fourth is whole-of-government integration, where progress is driven by the alignment of institutional mandates, interoperability frameworks and shared platforms across ministries. The fifth is fragile or post-conflict recovery, where digital government development remains constrained by instability, weak infrastructure, limited administrative capacity or difficult data environments. This typology provides a clearer basis for interpreting country movements in the 2026 results. Taken together, these results show that Asia's averages alone understate the performance of the median country and confirm a regional profile of strong advancement alongside significant internal differentiation.

The GCC represents the clearest example of the mature optimization pathway. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman all improve further in the 2026 data, while Qatar and Kuwait remain in the very high EGDI group despite more moderate momentum. The broader enabling environment remains exceptionally strong. The World Bank reported in late 2025 that all GCC countries had advanced telecom networks, over 90 per cent 5G coverage, affordable connectivity, and growing investments in data centres and high-performance computing.[24] Saudi Arabia continues to anchor its progress in a formal Digital Government Strategy and in a broad national digital-government performance framework led by the Digital Government Authority. The United Arab Emirates continues to build on its Digital Government Strategy 2025 and related national digital transformation programmes. Bahrain's digital-first and cloud-first approach continues to support service redesign and integrated delivery. Oman's Government Digital Transformation Program 2021–2025 and National Program for the Digital Economy likewise provide strong institutional continuity.

Table 2.6 presents the top-performing Asian countries in 2026 and shows that the region's upper tier has remained both large and competitive, with 26 countries now in the very high EGDI group. At the top, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates form the leading cluster, followed by Bahrain and Kazakhstan. The broad composition of the top tier confirms that Asia continues to combine long-established digital leaders with fast-rising reformers from Western, Central, South-Eastern and Southern Asia. Table 2.6 should therefore be read not only as a ranking of top performers, but as evidence of Asia's increasingly diversified digital government landscape, where long-established leaders, GCC reformers, Central Asian accelerators and Southern Asian DPI-driven countries now coexist within the region's upper performance tier.

Table 2.6 Countries leading e-government development in Asia, 2026

Country	Rating Class	EGDI Rank	Sub-Region	OSI	HCI	TII	EGDI (2026)	EGDI (2024)
Republic of Korea	VH	1	Eastern Asia	0.9966	0.9465	0.9953	0.9794	0.9679
Singapore	VH	3	South-Eastern Asia	1	0.9291	0.9874	0.9722	0.9691
Saudi Arabia	VH	4	Western Asia	1	0.9163	1	0.9721	0.9602
United Arab Emirates	VH	5	Western Asia	0.9977	0.9155	1	0.9711	0.9533
Bahrain	VH	14	Western Asia	0.9552	0.8727	0.998	0.942	0.9196
Kazakhstan	VH	16	Central Asia	0.9444	0.8924	0.972	0.9363	0.9009
Israel	V3	24	Western Asia	0.925	0.8777	0.9319	0.9116	0.9014
Japan	V3	29	Eastern Asia	0.894	0.8914	0.9051	0.8968	0.9351
Uzbekistan	V3	32	Central Asia	0.8885	0.8692	0.9213	0.893	0.7999
Oman	V3	33	Western Asia	0.9078	0.8112	0.9434	0.8875	0.8576
Cyprus	V3	34	Western Asia	0.9	0.8988	0.8622	0.887	0.8619
Türkiye	V3	37	Western Asia	0.9153	0.8528	0.8884	0.8855	0.8913
Azerbaijan	V3	38	Western Asia	0.9501	0.8067	0.8975	0.8847	0.7607
China	V3	41	Eastern Asia	0.883	0.759	0.981	0.8743	0.8718
Mongolia	V3	42	Eastern Asia	0.8469	0.8161	0.95	0.871	0.8457
Philippines	V2	54	South-Eastern Asia	0.9035	0.786	0.7827	0.8241	0.7621
Armenia	V2	55	Western Asia	0.798	0.7932	0.8808	0.824	0.8422
Georgia	V2	58	Western Asia	0.6844	0.8171	0.9184	0.8066	0.7792
Qatar	V2	60	Western Asia	0.7457	0.6863	0.9832	0.8051	0.8244
Malaysia	V1	71	South-Eastern Asia	0.6794	0.674	0.9709	0.7748	0.8111
Thailand	V1	72	South-Eastern Asia	0.6977	0.7193	0.9026	0.7732	0.8351
Indonesia	V1	75	South-Eastern Asia	0.7147	0.7125	0.8662	0.7645	0.7991
Viet Nam	V1	77	South-Eastern Asia	0.7228	0.7259	0.8433	0.764	0.7709
India *	V1	80	Southern Asia	0.9407	0.6118	0.7251	0.7592	0.6678
Kuwait	V1	82	Western Asia	0.6487	0.6644	0.9586	0.7572	0.7812
Kyrgyzstan *	V1	83	Central Asia	0.7311	0.7073	0.8216	0.7534	0.7316

Notes: Italicized countries are least developed countries, landlocked developing countries or small island developing States. An asterisk denotes countries that have moved up from the high to the very high EGDI group in 2026.

At the same time, the 2026 results suggest that the GCC is no longer moving upward uniformly. Qatar and Kuwait remain very strong performers, but their relative momentum appears softer than that of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman. This does not suggest a weakening of national commitment. Qatar is implementing its Digital Agenda 2030, structured around six pillars covering digital infrastructure, digital government, digital technologies, digital innovation, the digital economy and digital society.[25] Its refreshed Digital Government Strategy further emphasizes whole-of-government coordination, proactive and integrated services, interoperability and the continuous optimization of government operations.[26] Kuwait, meanwhile, continues to expand the Sahel application as its unified platform for digital government services, adding new services and participating institutions while recording rapidly increasing transaction volumes.27 A more plausible interpretation is that, at this stage of digital maturity—characterized by advanced telecommunications infrastructure and increasingly sophisticated digital-government ecosystems—further gains are likely to be incremental and to depend less on expanding basic infrastructure than on the more complex tasks of whole-of-government integration, regulatory adaptation, interoperability and service optimization.[24]

Central Asia is one of the clearest success stories in the 2026 dataset and illustrates a pathway of

whole-of-government integration and platform-based acceleration. Kazakhstan strengthens further from an already high base, Uzbekistan records one of the largest gains in the region, Kyrgyzstan enters the very high EGDI group, and Turkmenistan advances from middle to high. The comparative lesson is that progress in this subregion is being supported not only by individual portals or digital strategies, but by the consolidation of institutional mandates, interoperability platforms, digital identity systems, mobile channels and public service centres. Kazakhstan's eGov.kz and eGov Mobile ecosystem, Kyrgyzstan's Tunduk and cloud-signature architecture, and Uzbekistan's Digital Uzbekistan–2030 framework point to a broader shift towards integrated digital state capacity.

Southern Asia also stands out in 2026, illustrating a mixed pathway of DPI-led acceleration and mobile-first catch-up. India moves into the very high EGDI group, Pakistan posts one of the region's largest gains, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh also improve, and Afghanistan rises from the low to the middle EGDI group from a very low base. India's performance is consistent with the continued scale-up of Digital India, UMANG—the Unified Mobile Application for New Age Governance, which provides a single digital access point to a wide range of central, state and local government services—and the wider India Stack ecosystem, which integrates digital identity, payments, data exchange and service delivery platforms. More broadly, gains in Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan suggest that mobile-accessible services, institutional reforms and DPI can support progress from different starting points. Pakistan's improvement coincides with the enactment of the Digital Nation Pakistan Act, 2025, which establishes a more formal governance architecture for national digital transformation. However, legislative adoption should not be interpreted as evidence that implementation impacts have already been fully realized. Its significance lies primarily in establishing the institutional and legal foundations for future coordination. Tangible improvements in service delivery, interoperability, data governance and user outcomes will depend on the effective adoption, implementation and nationwide rollout of digital solutions at a broader and more inclusive scale, supported by adequate budget prioritization, appropriate skills and institutional and organizational capacity, sufficient financial technical and human resources, and sustained political commitment.

Taken together, these shifts suggest that Southern Asia is benefiting from the diffusion of DPI models, mobile-accessible service delivery and broader digital-state modernization. At the same time, the subregion remains highly uneven, and improvements should be read alongside persistent challenges related to affordability, inclusion, infrastructure quality, institutional execution and the capacity to translate legal and policy reforms into measurable service outcomes.

Among other improved countries, Azerbaijan deserves particular attention. Azerbaijan records one of the largest gains in the region, reflecting both the international recognition of its service delivery model and the broader consolidation of a data-driven digital government architecture, including advances in myGov, digital identity and documents, data sharing, interoperability, Government Cloud, coordinated Chief Information Officer (CIO) leadership, and new digital development and AI strategies.

South-Eastern Asia presents a more mixed picture and illustrates the difference between platform acceleration, relative momentum loss and structural constraints. Singapore remains the subregion's leading performer, ranking second in Asia and third worldwide in 2026. Its performance reflects the continued evolution of its whole-of-government digital transformation under Smart Nation 2.0, introduced in 2024, which places renewed emphasis on trust, growth and community while pursuing citizen-centred, inclusive and resilient digital services. Cambodia posts the single largest gain in the dataset, which is consistent with implementation of the Cambodia Digital Government Policy 2022–2035. The Philippines also strengthens further, supported by the continued rollout of eGovPH and the enactment and implementation of the E-Governance Act in 2025–2026. Cambodia and the Philippines post strong gains, suggesting that national strategies, sectoral platforms and service-delivery reforms are beginning to translate into measurable EGDI progress. By contrast,

declines in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Timor-Leste and Brunei Darussalam should not be interpreted uniformly. Thailand continues to implement its Digital Government Development Plan and digital identity systems. Malaysia continues to strengthen its single government gateway and broader digital-government ecosystem. Indonesia is pressing ahead with SPBE (Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik, or Electronic-Based Government System), the national framework for integrating digital public administration and services across government institutions, improving interoperability, and consolidating thousands of fragmented government applications. These efforts are also supported by the new 2025–2045 Digital Government Master Plan. Among more advanced countries, declines may reflect relative slippage in a highly competitive environment and the effects of methodological revisions rather than a reversal of policy direction. In lower-performing or more capacity-constrained settings, however, they are more closely associated with persistent gaps in accessibility, affordability, reliability, institutional implementation and digital inclusion.

For Lao People's Democratic Republic, World Bank analysis continues to point to weak accessibility, slow and unreliable Internet access, and prohibitively high broadband costs relative to neighbouring countries. For Timor-Leste, official and World Bank sources continue to highlight expensive and unreliable Internet access, dependence on improving backbone connectivity, and an unfinished digital transformation agenda despite ongoing reforms in cybersecurity and digital governance. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the continued need for international support to restore basic infrastructure, including electricity systems, suggests that digital-government setbacks are likely part of a wider pattern of post-conflict fragility and institutional strain.

Eastern Asia remains one of the region's strongest subregions overall, but the 2026 data show a slight average decline. This appears to result mainly from Japan's lower score and the continued weakness of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which together outweigh further gains by the Republic of Korea first- in the region and globally, China and Mongolia. Here again, the decline of Japan should not be overstated. It reflects the fact that gains become harder to sustain at the top end of the distribution, especially when some peers are still moving rapidly upward from lower bases.

Overall, the 2026 Asia dataset points to four main conclusions. First, Asia continues to improve from an already strong 2024 base and remains one of the world's most digitally advanced and internally dynamic regions. Second, growth has moderated sharply compared with the previous cycle, partly because several leading digital governments have entered a phase of mature optimization rather than rapid infrastructure expansion. Third, the strongest upward movement now reflects multiple transformation pathways: GCC and Eastern Asian leaders are consolidating mature ecosystems; Central Asian countries are advancing through whole-of-government integration and platform-based reforms; Southern Asia is benefiting from DPI-led acceleration and mobile-first service delivery; and selected South-Eastern Asian countries are progressing through national strategies and service-platform expansion. Fourth, countries that decline are not doing so for the same reason: some appear to face relative slippage in a highly competitive and methodologically revised environment, while others continue to experience deeper constraints linked to connectivity, affordability, institutional capacity, fragility, post-conflict recovery or limited data observability. Similar caution should therefore be applied when interpreting results for countries where the political and information environment may limit the openness, reliability or independent verification of digital government evidence. This applies not only to conflict-affected or post-conflict cases, but also, in a different form, to politically constrained environments where data availability and verification conditions may affect the interpretation of digital government performance.

2.3.4 Europe: Sustained leadership and broader convergence in digital government

Europe entered the 2026 round from an already exceptionally strong base.[28] In 2024, it was the leading region globally, with the highest average EGDI, the lowest dispersion of country scores

among all regions and only one country below the world average. In 2026, the regional average rises further to 0.8595, with the median slightly higher at 0.8687. The standard deviation also declines from 0.0874 in 2024 to 0.0810 in 2026, indicating a further narrowing of cross-country dispersion from an already low level. The combination of a high average, a closely aligned median and declining dispersion confirms that very high digital government performance is increasingly concentrated around a common regional level rather than being driven primarily by a limited number of frontrunners.

Table 2.7 Regional average, median and standard deviation breakdown for Europe, 2026

Europe	EGDI	OSI	HCI	TII
Average	0.8595	0.8061	0.8626	0.9099
Median	0.8687	0.8174	0.8738	0.9147
Stdev	0.0810	0.1272	0.0828	0.0619
Stdev (2024)	0.0874	0.1484	0.0894	0.0613

Note *: For strict comparability, the 2024 and 2026 values in the table exclude the State of Palestine. Including the State of Palestine, the 2026 Asia values are: EGDI average 0.7191, median 0.7582 and standard deviation 0.1968; OSI 0.6969, 0.7352 and 0.2444; HCI 0.6818, 0.6872 and 0.1751; and TII 0.7787, 0.8615 and 0.2123, respectively.

The component-level results reinforce this pattern, although with some variation. Online services show the strongest convergence, with the standard deviation falling from 0.1484 to 0.1272, while human capital also becomes less dispersed, declining from 0.0894 to 0.0828. Telecommunications infrastructure remains the most tightly distributed component, with a very low standard deviation that is essentially stable between 2024 and 2026, despite a marginal increase from 0.0613 to 0.0619. Across all three components, the relatively small differences between averages and medians further indicate a broadly balanced regional distribution at high levels of performance.

From a development perspective, this confirms that Europe's progress is not confined to a narrow set of frontrunners. Very high levels of e-government development are now widespread across the region, supported by strong institutions, advanced infrastructure and solid human capital foundations. The 2026 pattern is therefore best understood as one of continued advancement accompanied by further convergence within an already mature regional ecosystem. This convergence is most evident in online services and human capital, while telecommunications infrastructure was already highly homogeneous and shows little further change in dispersion. This convergence, however, should be interpreted as a statistical and developmental pattern rather than as evidence that all upward movements reflect the same type or quality of public-sector progress.

The most important structural shift in the 2026 dataset is the further concentration of countries in the very high EGDI group. Their number rises from 36 in 2024 to 41 in 2026, while the number in the high group falls from seven to two. Five countries move up from high to very high—Monaco, Andorra, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Belarus—and no country drops to a lower group. This confirms the broader convergence pattern, although the Belarus upgrade should be interpreted with appropriate contextual caution, given that political and information environments may affect the openness, observability and independent verification of digital government evidence.

At the same time, Europe's remaining digital divide is increasingly less between countries than within countries, especially across rural, remote and disadvantaged areas.

Table 2.8 presents the top-performing European countries in 2026. At the top of the distribution, Europe remains extremely competitive. In the uploaded 2026 dataset, Denmark remains the regional frontrunner, while Iceland, the United Kingdom, Estonia and Finland all remain in the global top tier.

Spain also strengthens further and rises into the uppermost cluster. What stands out, however, is that several traditionally top-performing Northern and Western European countries are broadly stable or record only marginal score changes. This is consistent with the policy context. The European Union's Digital Decade framework[29] increasingly focuses on completing the transition from digitization to interoperability, cross-border data exchange, digital identity, cybersecurity and trusted digital public services. At the same time, the Interoperable Europe Act,[30] which entered into force in April 2024, is explicitly intended to strengthen cooperation among public administrations and support better-connected public services for people and businesses. In other words, for Europe's most advanced countries, the current phase is one of institutional consolidation and optimization rather than rapid catch-up.

The strongest gains in the 2026 dataset come instead from Southern and Eastern Europe, while Northern Europe is essentially flat from a near-saturated level. This is one of the clearest analytical findings in the uploaded table. Southern Europe records the largest average gain, followed by Eastern Europe, whereas Western Europe is almost unchanged.

The data also suggest that non-European Union countries improved faster on average than European Union members, pointing to a catch-up dynamic at Europe's periphery. A particularly relevant cluster is the Western Balkans: taken together, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia post a stronger average improvement than the region, even if Bosnia and Herzegovina remains an outlier on the downside. This wider pattern is consistent with broader regional trends. The World Bank has recently described the Western Balkans as modernizing through digital government, smarter public services and institutional reform, while the European Union's Digital Decade framework continues to support digital transformation capacity and public-sector modernization across the region.[31] [32]

Table 2.8 Countries leading e-government development in Europe, 2026

Country	Rating Class	EGDI Rank	Sub-Region	OSI	HCI	TII	EGDI (2026)	EGDI (2024)
Denmark	VH	2	Northern Europe	0.9725	0.9611	0.9995	0.9777	0.9847
Iceland	VH	6	Northern Europe	0.9355	0.9568	0.9748	0.9557	0.9671
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	VH	7	Northern Europe	0.9459	0.9507	0.9691	0.9553	0.9577
Estonia	VH	8	Northern Europe	0.9624	0.9281	0.972	0.9542	0.9727
Finland	VH	9	Northern Europe	0.9099	0.9854	0.9651	0.9534	0.9575
Spain	VH	11	Southern Europe	0.9801	0.8959	0.9731	0.9497	0.9206
Norway	VH	12	Northern Europe	0.9147	0.9691	0.9584	0.9474	0.9315
Netherlands	VH	15	Western Europe	0.9082	0.9368	0.9725	0.9392	0.9538
Sweden	VH	17	Northern Europe	0.8924	0.9404	0.9591	0.9306	0.9326
Germany	VH	18	Western Europe	0.9038	0.9652	0.9144	0.9278	0.9382
Ireland	VH	19	Northern Europe	0.8922	0.9517	0.9147	0.9196	0.9138
Poland	VH	21	Eastern Europe	0.8824	0.9032	0.9639	0.9165	0.8648
Serbia	V3	22	Southern Europe	0.9435	0.848	0.9553	0.9156	0.8618
Lithuania	V3	23	Northern Europe	0.9319	0.8742	0.9342	0.9134	0.911

Latvia	V3	26	Northern Europe	0.8648	0.8983	0.9524	0.9052	0.8852
Austria	V3	27	Western Europe	0.8174	0.9157	0.9713	0.9015	0.9065
Ukraine	V3	28	Eastern Europe	0.9788	0.8327	0.8832	0.8982	0.8841
Slovenia	V3	31	Southern Europe	0.9073	0.8738	0.9042	0.8951	0.8759
Greece	V3	36	Southern Europe	0.809	0.9558	0.8921	0.8856	0.8674
Malta	V3	40	Southern Europe	0.81	0.8434	0.9862	0.8799	0.8886
Monaco	V2	43	Western Europe	0.734	0.9679	0.9089	0.8703	0.7175
Italy	V2	44	Southern Europe	0.8231	0.8641	0.9188	0.8687	0.8356
France	V2	45	Western Europe	0.8269	0.8785	0.891	0.8655	0.8744
Slovakia	V2	46	Eastern Europe	0.8109	0.8535	0.9291	0.8645	0.8021
Croatia	V2	47	Southern Europe	0.8342	0.8495	0.9008	0.8615	0.8818
Switzerland	V2	48	Western Europe	0.7916	0.8746	0.9022	0.8561	0.9003
Russian Federation	V2	50	Eastern Europe	0.7728	0.8133	0.9459	0.844	0.8532
Luxembourg	V2	51	Western Europe	0.8124	0.8021	0.9133	0.8426	0.8466
Albania	V2	53	Southern Europe	0.8236	0.9082	0.7537	0.8285	0.8
Czech Republic	V2	56	Eastern Europe	0.7289	0.82	0.8888	0.8126	0.8239
Belgium	V2	57	Western Europe	0.7263	0.8861	0.8212	0.8112	0.8121
Portugal	V2	59	Southern Europe	0.6512	0.8306	0.9336	0.8051	0.8415
Republic of Moldova	V2	61	Eastern Europe	0.7342	0.8338	0.8437	0.8039	0.7719
Bulgaria	V2	62	Eastern Europe	0.6829	0.7927	0.9346	0.8034	0.8145
Andorra	V2	63	Southern Europe	0.7071	0.7915	0.904	0.8009	0.6893
Hungary	V1	64	Eastern Europe	0.7426	0.8432	0.8098	0.7985	0.8043
Liechtenstein	V1	67	Western Europe	0.7252	0.7739	0.8822	0.7938	0.8528
North Macedonia	V1	68	Southern Europe	0.7432	0.7921	0.8171	0.7841	0.707
Romania	V1	73	Eastern Europe	0.711	0.7181	0.8742	0.7678	0.7636
Montenegro	V1	76	Southern Europe	0.6311	0.8024	0.8595	0.7643	0.7211
Belarus	V1	84	Eastern Europe	0.5804	0.7401	0.9348	0.7518	0.7445

Note *: Italicized countries are least developed countries, landlocked developing countries or small island developing States. An asterisk denotes countries that have moved up from the high to the very high EGDI group in 2026. References to Eastern Europe follow the United Nations M49 statistical classification and should be understood as a statistical convention for regional reporting, not as a statement of political alignment or institutional affiliation.

Among the countries with larger gains, Spain, Poland, Serbia, Italy, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine stand out for different reasons. Spain's improvement is consistent with the continued implementation of Digital Spain 2026, supported by strong digital infrastructure and the 2025 rollout of the MiDNI mobile digital identification system, which allows citizens to use their national identity document digitally with legal validity. Poland's rise is aligned with the continued scaling of the official mObywatel—a government mobile application and digital wallet, supervised by the Ministry of Digital Affairs, that enables citizens to use digital identity documents and access a growing range of public services through their smartphones—alongside a broader digitalization strategy through 2035 and continued investment in cybersecurity and connectivity. Serbia's stronger position is consistent with the maturity of its eUprava portal as the single point of access for electronic public services. Italy's

gain also fits the policy picture: the European Commission's 2025 country report notes "remarkable progress" in digital infrastructure and public services, while the IO app and the rollout of the IT-Wallet have expanded citizens' access to documents and transactions in digital form.

The movement of North Macedonia and Montenegro into the very high EGDI group is especially significant because it illustrates the continued narrowing of Europe's internal digital divide. In North Macedonia, the national e-services portal (uslugi.gov.mk) has become a more visible vehicle for service uptake and expansion, with official communications in 2025–2026 emphasizing both rising usage and the rollout of new digital services. Montenegro's improvement appears consistent with its reform trajectory and the increasing emphasis on digital public services and administrative modernization within the country's wider reform agenda. In parallel, Monaco's move into the very high group is well aligned with the logic of the Extended Monaco digital programme, including the use of MConnect as the Principality's official digital identity for secure access to services and for legally valid digital signatures.

Eastern Europe also shows a more differentiated but largely positive picture. The Republic of Moldova improves further, which is consistent with the rapid rollout of the EVO government application—the country's integrated government mobile application and digital identity wallet, which allows citizens to access and verify digital documents, obtain public services, make payments and manage their interactions with the State from a single platform—alongside the continued expansion of online public services and the launch of a new national identity card incorporating a qualified electronic signature in 2025. Ukraine also continues to perform strongly despite wartime conditions. Its digital trajectory remains anchored in the Diia ecosystem, which the government defines as the unified state web portal for electronic services; by 2025, outside analysis noted that Diia had grown to more than 140 services and roughly 22 million users, while official Ukrainian sources also point to ongoing work to add an AI assistant to Diia. These cases underline that digital-government resilience in Europe is no longer limited to the European Union core.

As for countries with lower scores or declining trajectories, the 2026 data suggest that not all drops should be interpreted in the same way. For Switzerland, Portugal and Croatia, the declines are best read as relative slippage within a very crowded top tier, not as evidence of strategic retreat. Switzerland continues to operate under an updated Digital Switzerland Strategy. Portugal's 2025 Digital Decade report still points to stable growth in digital public services; and Croatia's 2025 country report notes that digital public services for citizens have steadily improved, supported by the long-running e-Citizens system. By contrast, Bosnia and Herzegovina appears to remain the region's clearest structural outlier. The country was already the only European country below the world average in the 2024 Survey, and more recent UNDP and World Bank data continue to point to institutional fragmentation, limited policy coordination and uneven service delivery as major governance constraints that weigh on digital-government performance.

Overall, the 2026 Europe dataset points to four broad findings. First, Europe remains the global leader in e-government development and has improved further from an already high 2024 base. Second, progress is increasingly taking the form of convergence, with more countries entering the very high EGDI group and no country falling to a lower group. Third, the strongest momentum comes less from the already saturated leaders in Northern and Western Europe and more from Southern Europe, Eastern Europe and parts of the Western Balkans, where institutional reform, interoperability, digital identity and service integration continue to translate into measurable gains. Fourth, where declines occur, they are often better explained by competitive repositioning within a mature ecosystem than by actual reversal—except in structurally constrained settings, most notably in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the same time, upward movements should not all be read in the same way: in countries where political and information environments may limit openness or independent verification, results should

be interpreted with appropriate contextual caution. In that sense, Europe's 2026 story remains one of continued leadership through consolidation, interoperability and broader regional catch-up, while also requiring careful attention to data observability and the qualitative conditions behind measured performance.

2.3.5 Oceania: Stronger digital momentum driven by Pacific SIDS transformation.

Based on the 2026 dataset, Oceania records one of the most striking regional shifts in the Survey. The regional average EGDI rises from 0.5289 in 2024 to 0.6111 in 2026, an increase of about 15.5 per cent. The internal structure of the region also changes markedly: from two countries in the very high EGDI group, four in the high group and eight in the middle group in 2024, to three very high, eight high and three middle countries in 2026. Fiji moves from high to very high, while Samoa, Tuvalu, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea and Nauru move from middle to high. No country falls into a lower EGDI group. The regional median also rises substantially, from 0.4861 to 0.5700, while the standard deviation declines from 0.1914 to 0.1683. The combination of a rising average and median with lower dispersion indicates both strong overall progress and a meaningful narrowing of differences across the region.

Importantly, this convergence is being driven primarily by catch-up among Pacific SIDS rather than further acceleration by Australia and New Zealand. Excluding the two regional leaders, the average EGDI for Oceania's SIDS increases from 0.4600 in 2024 to 0.5571 in 2026—an increase of about 21 per cent, considerably faster than the region as a whole. However, the standard deviation within the SIDS group rises from 0.0973 to 0.1124. This reveals an important dual dynamic: Pacific SIDS as a group are closing part of the gap with the regional leaders, but they are doing so at different speeds, resulting in greater differentiation among the island States themselves.

Table 2.9 Regional average, median and standard deviation breakdown for Oceania

Oceania	EGDI	OSI	HCI	TII
Average	0.6111	0.5733	0.6888	0.5710
Median	0.5700	0.4861	0.6689	0.5798
Stdev	0.1683	0.1809	0.1620	0.2316
Stdev (2024)	0.1914	0.2231	0.1750	0.2421
Oceania (No Australia and New Zealand)				
Average	0.5571	0.5178	0.6437	0.5097
Median	0.5484	0.4707	0.6298	0.5389
Stdev	0.1124	0.1289	0.1271	0.1904
Stdev (2024)	0.0973	0.1010	0.1254	0.1825

The component results reinforce this interpretation. For Oceania as a whole, dispersion decreases across online services, human capital and telecommunications infrastructure, with the strongest narrowing occurring in OSI. Among SIDS, however, dispersion increases, particularly in online services, suggesting that some island States are translating new digital foundations into public services more rapidly than others. Human-capital differences remain comparatively stable, while telecommunications infrastructure continues to show substantial variation. The regional picture is therefore one of convergence between broad groups, but uneven transformation within the Pacific island context.

This improvement is consistent with targeted investment in connectivity and digitally enabled public services across the Pacific. The expansion of submarine cable infrastructure has increased international bandwidth and created new opportunities for digital government, including through the Tui-Samoa cable, the East Micronesia Cable and Tuvalu's first international subsea cable connection. Connectivity, however, remains an enabling condition rather than an end in itself. Its developmental impact depends on affordability, resilience, cybersecurity, digital skills, institutional capacity and the ability to maintain services in highly vulnerable island environments

Country-level developments illustrate these differentiated pathways. Fiji's move into the very high EGDI group is consistent with the continued rollout of the digitalFIJI programme and its National Digital Strategy 2025–2030, while Samoa combines improved connectivity with greater emphasis on resilient infrastructure, cybersecurity and digitally enabled public services. Papua New Guinea records particularly strong progress alongside implementation of its Digital Government Plan 2023–2027 and eGovernment Portal 2.0. In Tonga, the number of government services available online increased from two at project closure to 15, alongside cybersecurity training for 217 officials from 47 government entities.[33]

Nauru's National Digital Transformation Strategy emphasizes resilient infrastructure, digital identity, digital payments, digital literacy and online government services,34 while the Marshall Islands' Digital Transformation and Identity Verification Act 2025 links digital transformation directly to improved access to government information and services.[35]

Australia and New Zealand remain Oceania's digital anchors, but they are not the principal source of the region's 2026 acceleration. Both remain in the very high EGDI group despite slight declines from their exceptionally high 2024 scores. At this level of maturity, small movements should not necessarily be interpreted as substantive regression, as priorities increasingly shift from basic expansion toward integration, responsible AI, data governance, cybersecurity, resilience and user-centred service transformation. Australia's Data and Digital Government Strategy: 2025 Implementation Plan reflects these priorities,[36] while New Zealand's Strategy for a Digital Public Service continues to focus on modernizing public services around the needs of people and businesses.[37] The stronger gains among Pacific Island States therefore represent a genuine broadening of regional digital-government progress.

In other words, Australia and New Zealand remain the region's digital anchors, but most of Oceania's statistical improvement in 2026 comes from catch-up dynamics among Pacific Island States rather than fresh leaps by the two regional leaders. Table 2.10 presents the top-performing countries in Oceania in 2026.

At the same time, this momentum does not eliminate Oceania's structural digital divide. The SIDS-only statistics demonstrate that faster average progress has been accompanied by widening differences within the group itself. Geographic isolation, small populations, high infrastructure and maintenance costs, shortages of technical expertise and exposure to climate-related shocks continue to constrain the pace and sustainability of transformation. Recent ITU analysis similarly highlights the distinctive challenges confronting Pacific SIDS and the importance of stronger digital skills, regulatory frameworks, resilient infrastructure and inclusive innovation ecosystems.[38]

Table 2.10 Countries leading e-government development in Oceania, 2026

Country	Rating Class	EGDI Rank	Sub-Region	OSI	HCI	TII	EGDI (2026)	EGDI 2024
Australia	VH	10	Australia and New Zealand	0.9109	1	0.9429	0.9513	0.9577
New Zealand	VH	20	Australia and New Zealand	0.9019	0.9177	0.9348	0.9181	0.9265
Fiji *	V1	66	Melanesia	0.7257	0.8575	0.8082	0.7972	0.6754
Samoa *	H3	103	Polynesia	0.7096	0.7151	0.599	0.6746	0.4899
Palau	H3	118	Micronesia	0.387	0.7583	0.7471	0.6308	0.5072
Tonga	H2	126	Polynesia	0.4661	0.8117	0.5172	0.5984	0.5164
Vanuatu	H2	132	Melanesia	0.5793	0.5258	0.6296	0.5782	0.5427
Tuvalu *	H1	139	Polynesia	0.4368	0.6148	0.6338	0.5618	0.4042
Marshall Islands *	H1	147	Micronesia	0.4753	0.693	0.4368	0.535	0.4823
Papua New Guinea *	H1	148	Melanesia	0.7245	0.5647	0.3098	0.533	0.3076
Nauru *	H1	149	Micronesia	0.4606	0.5609	0.5606	0.5274	0.4454
Kiribati	MH	152	Micronesia	0.3551	0.6447	0.4927	0.4975	0.4572
Micronesia (Federated States of)	M3	168	Micronesia	0.3968	0.5977	0.2091	0.4012	0.3235
Solomon Islands	M2	173	Melanesia	0.4969	0.3807	0.173	0.3502	0.3681

Notes: Italicized countries are least developed countries, landlocked developing countries or small island developing States. An asterisk denotes countries that have moved up from the high to the very high EGDI group in 2026.

Overall, the 2026 results point to a significant shift in Oceania's digital trajectory. The region is becoming less polarized between its traditional leaders and Pacific SIDS, but progress among the SIDS themselves remains uneven. The next phase will therefore require moving beyond connectivity expansion towards resilient and affordable infrastructure, stronger institutional and human capacity, cybersecurity, disaster recovery and sustainable shared digital services. This will be essential to ensure that the rapid gains recorded in 2026 translate into durable and more broadly shared digital-government development across the Pacific.

2.4 Bridging the population-weighted digital divide: progress, challenges and disparities

2.4.1 A proxy to measure the digital divide

The 2024 edition of the Survey introduced a practical approach to estimating the digital divide by using the global average EGDI value as a reference threshold. Under this approach, the combined population of countries with EGDI values below the global average serves as a population-weighted proxy for the number of people living in relatively less advanced digital-government environments.

A proxy is an indirect approximation: it provides a simple and consistent way to translate national EGDI results into a broader picture of global disparity, but it does not directly identify or count digitally excluded individuals. This distinction is important because the EGDI is a national-level composite measure of online services, telecommunication infrastructure and human capital. By design, its methodology does not capture the distribution of digital opportunities within countries or all dimensions of the digital divide, including affordability, connectivity quality, digital skills, geographic coverage and urban–rural disparities, as well as inequalities associated with gender, income, age and disability and differences in the actual uptake of digital public services. People may experience digital exclusion in countries above the global average, while some population groups in countries below it may enjoy advanced access and services.

This EGDI-based proxy should therefore be understood as an indication of broad, population-weighted disparities in digital government development across countries, rather than as a precise measure of digital exclusion experienced by individuals. Measuring digital exclusion goes beyond EGDI analysis and requires complementary tools and more granular evidence—such as geographically and socioeconomically disaggregated household, individual and service-use data, as well as other relevant assessment methodologies—to identify who is excluded within countries, in what ways and why. With these methodological limitations in mind—particularly that this approach captures broad country-level disparities rather than individual digital inclusion or exclusion—the same population-weighted methodology was applied to the 2026 data.

The 2026 results reveal an important distinction between overall progress in digital government and the evolution of the population-weighted digital divide. Although the global average EGDI increased and all regions recorded higher average values in 2026, the share of the world's population living in countries below the global average also increased. The population in these countries rose from approximately 1.90 billion in 2024 to 1.95 billion in 2026—an increase of 53.3 million people, or 2.81 per cent. As a share of the world's population, this represents an increase from 23.68 per cent in 2024 to 24.31 per cent in 2026, or 0.63 percentage points. On this EGDI-based proxy, the digital divide therefore widened slightly rather than narrowed, despite the overall improvement in digital government performance.

Table 2.11 Population-weighted EGDI digital divide proxy, 2024–2026

Indicator	2024	2026	Change
Global average EGDI	0.6382	0.6675	+0.0293 EGDI points
World population	8.010 billion	8.024 billion	+13.7 million
Population living in countries below the global average EGDI	1.897 billion	1.950 billion	+53.3 million (+2.81%)
Share of world population living in countries below the global average EGDI	23.68%	24.31%	+0.63 percentage points
Comparability check excluding the State of Palestine			
Indicator	**2024**	**2026**	**Change**
Population below the global average EGDI	1.897 billion	1.945 billion	+47.9 million (+2.52%)
Share of world population below the global average EGDI	23.68%	24.24%	+0.56 percentage points

Sources: UNDESA – Population Division.

This reflects the relative nature of the measure: as the global average EGDI rises, countries may continue to improve in absolute terms while still remaining below—or falling below—the higher global benchmark, particularly where large populations are involved. To ensure comparability with the 2024 assessment, the calculation was also repeated excluding the State of Palestine. The result remains essentially unchanged: the population living in countries below the global average increased by 47.9 million, or 2.52 per cent, while its share of the world population rose from 23.68 to 24.24 per cent, an increase of 0.56 percentage points. Table 2.11 summarizes this apparent divergence between rising overall EGDI performance and the population-weighted digital divide, together with the comparability check excluding the State of Palestine.

The key finding is therefore not an absence of progress, but that digital advancement has not been sufficiently even across countries and populations to reduce population-weighted disparities. Improvements in global and regional averages can coexist with a widening divide when large populations remain in countries below a rising global benchmark. Complementary connectivity data

reinforce this interpretation. ITU estimates that approximately 6 billion people—74 per cent of the world's population— were online in 2025, while 2.2 billion remained offline, predominantly in low- and middle-income countries. [39] Internet use reaches about 94 per cent in high-income countries, compared with only 23 per cent in low-income countries, and remains particularly low in Africa, LDCs and LLDCs, where only 36, 34 and 38 per cent of the population, respectively, are online. The divide is even sharper for advanced mobile connectivity: 5G coverage reaches around 55 per cent of the global population, but 84 per cent in high-income countries compared with only 4 per cent in low-income countries. [39] Taken together, these patterns show that the digital divide cannot be understood only in terms of e-government performance or basic Internet access. It also reflects inequalities in meaningful connectivity—including the availability, affordability and quality of access, as well as the skills and capabilities needed to use digital services effectively.

To deepen the analysis in 2026, quartiles are introduced for the first time to distinguish different levels of digital divide among countries with EGDI values below the global average of 0.6675. The quartile thresholds are calculated from the distribution of EGDI scores within this below-average group, dividing countries into four relative categories: low digital divide (L-DD), comprising countries closest to the global average; middle digital divide (M-DD); high digital divide (H-DD); and very high digital divide (VH-DD), comprising countries furthest from the global average. The three quartile thresholds are 0.5887, 0.5175 and 0.3559.

Table 2.12 Quartile classification of countries below the global average EGDI, 2026

Digital divide category	EDI range	Interpretation
Low digital divide (L-DD)	0.5887 to < 0.6675	Closest to the global average
Middle digital divide (M-DD)	0.5175 to < 0.5887	Moderate gap from the global average
High digital divide (H-DD)	0.3559 to < 0.5175	Substantial gap from the global average
Very high digital divide (VH-DD)	< 0.3559	Furthest from the global average

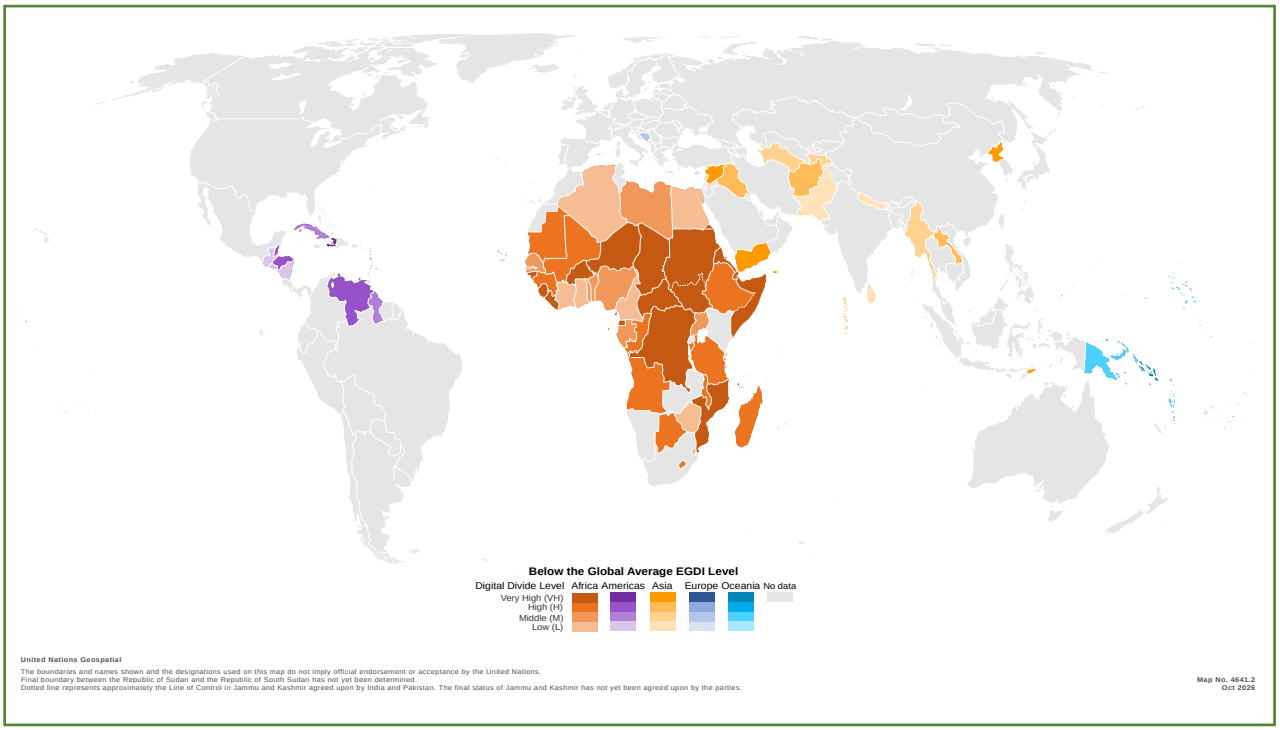
Note: These categories are derived only from the distribution of EGDI values among countries below the 2026 global average of 0.6675. They represent relative positions within this group and are distinct from the Survey's EGDI rating classes.

This classification shows that countries below the global average do not form a homogeneous group. Some are relatively close to the threshold, while others face substantially deeper digital-government development gaps. The four categories therefore indicate the relative intensity of the divide within the group of below-average countries and should not be interpreted as absolute global classifications of digital development.

The quartile approach adds analytical depth to the population-weighted EGDI proxy by distinguishing between shallower and deeper country-level gaps, but it does not measure digital exclusion within countries. Countries close to the global average may still face significant internal disparities, while countries with lower EGDI values may contain areas of strong connectivity or service innovation. This broader perspective is consistent with the Global Digital Compact, which emphasizes closing digital divides, expanding digital inclusion and promoting accessible, affordable and meaningful connectivity for all. In practical terms, the EGDI proxy helps identify where digital-government capacity remains below the global benchmark, while complementary indicators on connectivity, affordability, broadband quality, digital skills, rural–urban disparities and actual use of digital public services help explain why those gaps persist and which populations are most likely to be left behind.

The Figure 2.2 reproduces the geographical distribution of the population-weighted digital divide.

Figure 2.2 Geographical distribution of the population-weighted digital divide



2.4.2 Africa: a broad and deep population-weighted digital divide

Africa's overall improvement in digital government performance in 2026 is accompanied by a persistent population-weighted divide. Approximately 1.272 billion people, or 86.99 per cent of the regional population, live in countries with EGDI values below the global average. This represents an increase of about 37.1 million people compared with 2024, when the corresponding share was 84.4 per cent. The result reinforces an important distinction already highlighted in the global analysis: improvements in average EGDI performance do not necessarily translate into a reduction in the population living below a rising global benchmark.

Table 2.13 Africa: population-weighted EGDI divide, 2024–2026

Indicator	2024	2026	Change
Population living in countries below global average EGDI	1.234 billion	1.272 billion	+37.1 million (+3.01%)
Share of regional population below global average EGDI	84.40%	86.99%	+2.59 percentage points

Note : The regional population baseline used in the calculation is 1,461,864,000, consistent with the population source used in the 2024 Survey

Applying the quartile framework introduced above reveals that the divide is not only widespread but also deep. Of the 46 African countries below the global average, 30 fall within the high or very high digital-divide categories. Together, these countries account for approximately 671.5 million people—52.8 per cent of the population living in below-average countries in the region. The remaining 600.1 million people are in countries classified in the low or middle digital-divide groups, illustrating the considerable variation in the intensity of the gap across Africa.

Table 2.14 Africa: countries and population by digital divide quartile, 2026

Digital-divide class	Countries	Population	Share of population below global average	List of Countries
L-DD	9	272.2 million	21.4%	Cabo Verde; Egypt; Ghana; Algeria; Côte d'Ivoire; Zimbabwe; Seychelles; Cameroon; Eswatini
M-DD	7	327.8 million	25.8%	Nigeria; Libya; Benin; Togo; Senegal; Uganda; Gabon
H-DD	14	355.1 million	27.9%	Mauritania; United Republic of Tanzania; Congo; Ethiopia; Botswana; Sao Tome and Principe; Mali; Guinea; Malawi; Angola; Lesotho; Burundi; Gambia; Madagascar
VH-DD	16	316.4 million	24.9%	Burkina Faso; Liberia; Comoros; Niger; Djibouti; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Sierra Leone; Mozambique; Equatorial Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; South Sudan; Sudan; Chad; Eritrea; Somalia; Central African Republic
H-DD + VH-DD	30	671.5 million	52.8%	-
Total	46	1.272 billion	100%	-

Note : The regional population baseline used for these calculations is consistent with the population source used in the 2024 Survey.

This distinction is important for policy. Countries relatively close to the global threshold face different challenges from those in the high and very high digital-divide groups, where gaps are more structural and likely to require sustained investment in foundational capacities alongside digital-government reforms. A differentiated response is therefore needed, reflecting countries' different starting points and the depth of the constraints they face.

Regional and international cooperation can support this process by expanding capacity development, peer learning and South-South and triangular cooperation. Sharing institutional experience, digital public infrastructure approaches and practical implementation models can help countries facing deeper constraints accelerate progress, while stronger partnerships with development actors and multilateral institutions can reinforce the foundations needed for more inclusive and sustainable digital transformation. DD Africa.

2.4.3 Americas: a relatively limited but concentrated population-weighted digital divide

The Americas continue to perform comparatively well overall, but important disparities remain concentrated in Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2026, 15 countries in the region remain below the global average EGDI, together accounting for approximately 94.9 million people, or 9.19 per cent of the regional population. This represents only a marginal increase from 2024—about 215,000 people, or 0.23 per cent—with the regional share rising from approximately 9.17 to 9.19 per cent. Excluding Canada and the United States, the corresponding share increases only slightly, from about

14.54 to 14.57 per cent. The population-weighted divide in the Americas is therefore broadly stable rather than materially widening, but further progress in reducing it has slowed.

Table 2.15 Americas: population-weighted EGDI divide, 2024–2026

Indicator	2024	2026	Change
Population living in countries below global average EGDI	94.723 million	94.938 million	+0.215 million (+0.23%)
Share of regional population below global average EGDI	9.17%	9.19%	+0.02 percentage points
Share below global average, excluding Canada and United States	14.54%	14.57%	+0.03 percentage points

Note : The regional population baseline used for these calculations is consistent with the population source used in the 2024 Survey.

The quartile analysis adds an important dimension to this picture. Of the 15 countries below the global average, seven are in the low digital-divide category and four in the middle category, meaning that most countries are relatively close to the global benchmark. Population weighting, however, reveals a deeper concentration of disadvantage: the three H-DD countries and Haiti, the only VH-DD country, together account for approximately 51.0 million people, or 53.7 per cent of the population living in below-average countries in the region. The remaining 43.9 million people are located in countries in the low and middle digital-divide groups.

Table 2.16 Americas: countries and population by digital divide quartile, 2026

Digital-divide class	Countries	Population	Share of population below global average	List of Countries
L-DD	7	31.94 million	33.6%	Saint Lucia; Grenada; Barbados; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Guatemala; El Salvador; Nicaragua
M-DD	4	12.01 million	12.6%	Antigua and Barbuda; Cuba; Dominica; Guyana
H-DD	3	39.36 million	41.5%	Belize; Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of); Honduras
VH-DD	1	11.64 million	12.3%	Haiti
H-DD + VH-DD	4	50.99 million	53.8%	-
Total	15	94.94 million	100%	-

Note : The regional population baseline used for these calculations is consistent with the population source used in the 2024 Survey.

This distinction is important for policy. Countries relatively close to the global threshold may be able to narrow the remaining gap through targeted improvements in online services, infrastructure, skills and institutional capacity. By contrast, the concentration of large populations in the high digital-divide group, together with Haiti's position in the very high category, points to more persistent structural constraints involving institutional capacity, infrastructure, affordability, resilience, digital skills and the accessibility and quality of digital public services. DD America

The regional challenge is therefore less about a widespread digital divide than about addressing a smaller but persistent group of countries where the depth and population impact of the gap remain significant. Regional mechanisms such as the eLAC digital agenda and Red GEALC can support this effort through peer learning, technical exchange and targeted assistance, complemented by stronger South-South and triangular cooperation and sustained investment in institutional and human capacity

2.4.4 Asia: strong aggregate performance alongside a differentiated population-weighted digital divide

Asia continues to combine strong overall digital-government performance with significant internal disparities. In 2026, 16 countries remain below the global average EGDI, representing approximately 568.7 million people, or 12.03 per cent of the regional population. This is an increase of about 16.1 million people compared with 2024, when 552.6 million people, or 11.69 per cent of the regional population, lived in countries below the global benchmark. The population-weighted divide has therefore widened modestly, with the affected share increasing by approximately 0.34 percentage points. As in the global analysis, this does not indicate an absence of progress in Asia, but rather that strong aggregate advancement has not been sufficiently even across countries to reduce the population living below the rising global benchmark.

Table 2.17 Asia: population-weighted EGDI divide, 2024–2026

Indicator	2024	2026	Change
Population living in countries below global average EGDI	552.6 million	568.7 million	+16.1 million (+2.92%)
Share of regional population below global average EGDI	11.69%	12.03%	+0.34 percentage points

Note : The regional population baseline used for these calculations is consistent with the population source used in the 2024 Survey.

The quartile analysis provides a more differentiated picture of the depth of this divide. Of the 16 countries below the global average, nine are classified in the low or middle digital-divide groups. Together, these countries account for approximately 383.8 million people, or 67.5 per cent of Asia's population living below the global average. More than half of the affected population—300.7 million people—is concentrated in the L-DD group alone, indicating that a substantial share lives in countries comparatively close to the global benchmark. By contrast, the seven countries in the high and very high digital-divide groups account for approximately 185.0 million people, or 32.5 per cent of the affected population, reflecting a smaller but still significant concentration of deeper digital-development gaps.

This distinction has important policy implications. For countries in the low and middle digital-divide groups, targeted improvements in digital public services, infrastructure, skills and institutional capacity may help accelerate convergence towards the global benchmark. Countries in the high and very high groups, however, often face more complex and interrelated constraints, including fragility, conflict, infrastructure limitations and weaker institutional capacity. In some contexts, limited availability or accessibility of digital services and information may also affect the comprehensiveness of EGDI assessment, requiring results to be interpreted with appropriate caution.

Table 2.18 Asia: countries and population by digital divide quartile, 2026

Digital-divide class	Countries	Population	Share of population below global average	Countries
L-DD	4	300.7 million	52.9%	Maldives; Sri Lanka; Nepal; Pakistan
M-DD	5	83.1 million	14.6%	Tajikistan; State of Palestine; Lebanon; Myanmar; Turkmenistan
H-DD	3	94.2 million	16.6%	Iraq; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Afghanistan
VH-DD	4	90.8 million	15.9%	Timor-Leste; Syrian Arab Republic; Yemen; Democratic People's Republic of Korea
L-DD + M-DD	9	383.8 million	67.5%	-
H-DD + VH-DD	7	185.0 million	32.5%	-
Total	16	568.7 million	100%	-

Note : The regional population baseline used for these calculations is consistent with the population source used in the 2024 Survey.

The regional challenge is therefore not only to sustain Asia's strong overall progress, but to translate it into broader convergence across countries with very different starting points and structural conditions. Regional cooperation, knowledge-sharing and capacity development can support countries closer to the global threshold in accelerating progress, while countries facing deeper constraints will require more intensive and context-sensitive support.

2.4.5 Europe: the narrowest population-weighted digital divide

Europe has the narrowest population-weighted digital divide of all regions. In 2026, only two countries remain below the global average EGDI of 0.6675—San Marino and Bosnia and Herzegovina—representing approximately 3.22 million people, or 0.43 per cent of the regional population. This is broadly unchanged from 2024, when approximately 3.185 million people, also about 0.43 per cent of Europe's population, lived in countries below the global benchmark. The increase of around 33,800 people, or 1.06 per cent, is marginal and reflects an essentially stable population-weighted divide at a very low level. Europe's remaining between-country digital divide is therefore highly limited in scale.

Table 2.19 Europe: population-weighted EGDI divide, 2024–2026

Indicator	2024	2026	Change
Countries below the global average EGDI	1	2	+1 country
Population living in countries below the global average EGDI	3.185 million	3.219 million	+33,800 (+1.06%)
Share of regional population below the global average EGDI	0.43%	0.43%	+0.005 percentage points

Note : The regional population baseline used for these calculations is consistent with the population source used in the 2024 Survey.

The quartile analysis confirms that the remaining divide is also shallow in depth. San Marino is classified in the low digital-divide group and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the middle group; no European country falls within the high or very high digital-divide categories. Almost all of the population remaining below the global benchmark—approximately 99 per cent—is concentrated in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Europe's residual country-level divide is therefore confined to a very small number of cases relatively close to the global threshold, rather than reflecting severe digital-government disadvantage.

Table 2.20 Europe: countries and population by digital divide quartile, 2026

Digital-divide class	No. of countries	Population	Share of population below global average	Countries
L-DD	1	33,730	1.05%	San Marino
M-DD	1	31,85,070	98.95%	Bosnia and Herzegovina
H-DD	0	0	0%	-
VH-DD	0	0	0%	-
H-DD + VH-DD	0	0	0%	-
Total	2	32,18,800	100%	-

Note : The shares in the column refer only to the population living in European countries below the 2026 global average EGDI. The digital-divide classes represent relative positions within the group of countries below the global benchmark and are not global EGDI rating categories.

This strong convergence between countries should not, however, be interpreted as evidence that digital exclusion has largely disappeared in Europe. As national-level disparities narrow, the remaining challenge increasingly lies within countries, including inequalities between urban and rural areas, territories and socioeconomic groups. European Union data illustrate this distinction: in 2024, 92 per cent of rural households had Internet access at home compared with 96 per cent of households in

cities, while very high-capacity network coverage reached 62 per cent of rural households compared with 83 per cent of EU households overall.[40] These differences show that connectivity, accessibility and digital capabilities can remain uneven even where national digital-government performance is high.

Europe's 2026 profile therefore reflects a two-level challenge: a between-country divide that is now very limited and shallow, and a continuing within-country inclusion challenge that is not captured by the EGDI proxy alone. Further progress will depend increasingly on ensuring that high national levels of digital-government development translate into meaningful and equitable access to digital public services across territories and population groups.

2.4.6 Oceania: strong progress alongside a persistent SIDS digital divide

Oceania records strong progress in digital-government development in 2026, accompanied by a modest narrowing of its population-weighted divide. Ten countries remain below the global average EGDI, representing approximately 11.85 million people, or 26.67 per cent of the regional population. This is down from about 12.05 million people, or 27.1 per cent, in 2024—a decline of approximately 195,000 people, or 1.62 per cent. The share of the regional population below the global benchmark also falls by about 0.43 percentage points. Unlike several other regions, Oceania therefore combines higher overall EGDI performance with a modest reduction in the population living below the global benchmark.

Table 2.21 Oceania: population-weighted EGDI divide, 2024–2026

Indicator	2024	2026	Change
Population living in countries below global average EGDI	12.047 million	11.852 million	–0.195 million (–1.62%)
Share of regional population below global average EGDI	0.271	0.2667	–0.43 percentage points
Share of Pacific SIDS population below global average EGDI	0.929	0.914	–1.5 percentage points

Note : The regional population baseline used for these calculations is consistent with the population source used in the 2024 Survey.

The regional picture, however, is strongly shaped by the circumstances of Pacific SIDS. Approximately 91.4 per cent of the SIDS population still lives in countries below the global average EGDI, although this represents an improvement from 92.9 per cent in 2024. The remaining divide is therefore highly concentrated geographically, reflecting persistent challenges associated with remoteness, small scale and the structural vulnerability of island economies.

Table 2.22 Oceania: countries and population by digital divide quartile, 2026

Digital-divide class	Countries	Population	Share of population below global average	Countries
L-DD	2	28671	0.2%	Palau; Tonga
M-DD	5	10.778 million	90.9%	Vanuatu; Tuvalu; Marshall Islands; Papua New Guinea; Nauru
H-DD	2	245160	2.1%	Kiribati; Micronesia (Federated States of)
VH-DD	1	800010	6.8%	Solomon Islands
L-DD + M-DD	7	10.807 million	91.1%	-
H-DD + VH-DD	3	1.045 million	8.9%	-
Total	10	11.852 million	100%	-

Note : The shares in the column refer only to the population living in European countries below the 2026 global average EGDI. The digital-divide classes represent relative positions within the group of countries below the global benchmark and are not global EGDI rating categories.

The quartile analysis provides a clearer picture of the depth of this divide. Of the 10 countries below the global average, seven are classified in the low or middle digital-divide groups. Most importantly, approximately 10.78 million people—or 90.9 per cent of the population living in below-average countries—are concentrated in the M-DD group, largely reflecting the demographic weight of Papua New Guinea. By contrast, the high and very high digital-divide groups together account for approximately 1.05 million people, or 8.8 per cent of the affected population. Oceania's population-weighted divide is therefore driven less by a large concentration of people in the deepest categories than by the scale of countries facing a moderate but still significant gap from the global benchmark.

This distinction has important policy implications. The structural constraints affecting Pacific SIDS—including geographic dispersion, high infrastructure and maintenance costs, limited technical capacity, affordability constraints and exposure to natural disasters—can make digital transformation both more expensive and more fragile. At the same time, improvements in submarine cable infrastructure and complementary connectivity are creating better conditions for broadband expansion and digitally enabled public services. [41] [42] [43] [44] [45] [46] [47]

2.5 Key takeaways

The 2026 findings confirm sustained global progress in digital government, while also showing that the pace, foundations and inclusiveness of this progress remain uneven across and within regions. The chapter highlights both the continued expansion of digital-government capacity and the persistence of structural disparities that shape countries' ability to benefit from digital transformation.

Global progress continues, but unevenly. The global average EGDI increased from 0.6382 in 2024 to 0.6675 in 2026, a rise of 4.59 per cent, and every region recorded a higher average EGDI. This broad improvement demonstrates continued advancement in digital-government development worldwide. At the same time, aggregate gains mask substantial differences in digital readiness, institutional capacity, infrastructure, human capital, service quality and the ability to convert technological progress into effective public value.

The 2026 results therefore point to a more differentiated global landscape. Some countries and regions are moving beyond foundational digitalization towards integrated platforms, advanced data governance, AI-enabled services and more mature whole-of-government approaches. Others continue to face constraints in connectivity, affordability, skills, institutional capability and the resilience of digital systems. Progress is thus increasingly shaped not only by access to technology, but also by the capacity to deploy, govern and sustain it effectively.

The findings also underline that improvements in average performance do not automatically translate into narrower digital divides. Differences remain both between countries and within them, and these disparities affect the extent to which people and institutions can access, use and benefit from digital public services.

The next phase of digital transformation will therefore require greater attention to the quality, inclusiveness and sustainability of progress, alongside continued improvements in overall digital-government performance.

Endnotes

1 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations EGovernment Survey 2024 (New York, 2024). Available at https://desapublications.un.org/sites/default/files/publications/2024-09/%28Web%20version%29%20E-Government%20Survey%202024%201392024.pdf.

2 International Energy Agency, Energy and AI (2025). The report notes that global investment in data centres nearly doubled since 2022, reaching around USD 500 billion in 2024, and projects that electricity consumption from data centres could reach approximately 945 TWh by 2030. Available at https://www.iea.org/reports/energy-and-ai/executive-summary (full report: https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/40a4db21-2225-42f0-8a07-addcc2ea86b3/EnergyandAI.pdf).

3 Jones Lang LaSalle Incorporated (JLL), "Global data center sector to nearly double to 200GW amid AI infrastructure boom" (2026). The report estimates that hyperscalers are allocating around USD 1 trillion to datacentre spending between 2024 and 2026 and highlights supply constraints, including electricity availability and gridconnection timelines. Available at https://www.jll.com/en-us/newsroom/global-data-center-sector-to-nearly-double-to-200gw-amid-ai-infrastructure-boom.

4 Luukas Ilves, Manuel Kilian, Simone Maria Parazzoli, Tiago C. Peixoto and Ott Velsberg, The Agentic State: Rethinking Government for the Era of Agentic AI, vision paper launched at the Tallinn Digital Summit, 9 October 2025. The concept is referenced in this chapter as an emerging forwardlooking framework and does not represent an agreed United Nations or intergovernmental position. Available at: https://agenticstate.org/paper.html#whitepaper-reader.

5 United Nations General Assembly, The Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1), 22 September 2024, annex I: Global Digital Compact. Available at https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/79/1; see also https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future/global-digital-compact.

6 Universal Digital Public Infrastructure Safeguards Framework, developed under the stewardship of the Office of the SecretaryGeneral's Envoy on Technology and the United Nations Development Programme (2024). The Framework, released in September 2024 alongside the Global Digital Compact, provides operational guidance for trusted and inclusive DPI and is structured around 18 principles, 13 interrelated risk categories, 5 DPI lifecycle stages and approximately 300 process and practice recommendations. Available at https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2024/03/press-release-digital-p.

7 European Commission, Digital Strategy, "Commission to invest €1.3 billion in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and digital skills", 28 March 2025 (Digital Europe Programme 2025–2027). Available at https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-invest-eu13-billion-artificial-intelligence-cybersecurity-and-digital-skills; see also https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/work-programme-2025-2027-digital-europe-programme-digital.

8 Microsoft, "National IT Academy and Microsoft Launch the First Microsoft Datacenter Academy in the Middle East in Saudi Arabia", 11 February 2025. Available at https://news.microsoft.com/en-xm/2025/02/11/national-it-academy-and-microsoft-launch-the-first-microsoft-datacenter-academy-in-the-middle-east-in-saudi-arabia/.

9 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Building an AIready public workforce: Implications and strategies, policy brief, 19 January 2026. Available at https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/building-an-ai-ready-public-workforce_b89244c7-en.html (PDF: https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2026/01/building-an-ai-ready-public-workforce_5cf188ee/b89244c7-en.pdf).

10 World Bank, Digital Progress and Trends Report 2023; Rwanda Digital Acceleration Project (P173373); Uganda Digital Acceleration Project – GovNet (P171305). Available at https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/582c0d73-d367-423c-831d-0640814a7349/content.

11 World Bank, Rwanda Digital Acceleration Project (P173373). Available at https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/502801626372978386/pdf/Project-Information-Document-Rwanda-Digital-Acceleration-Project-P173373.pdf.

12 World Bank, Uganda Digital Acceleration Project – GovNet (P171305). Available at https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/473041622944887337/pdf/Uganda-Digital-Acceleration-Project.pdf.

13 World Bank, Digital Zambia Acceleration Project (DZAP) (P505094). Available at https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099100625152522349/pdf/BOSIB-9bdae06d-6839-4a90-a698-7a88051f4dfe.pdf.

14 African Union, The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030) (Addis Ababa, 2020), especially pp. 1–2 and 49–52. The Strategy promotes an integrated and inclusive digital society, interoperable systems and the establishment of a secure Digital Single Market by 2030. Available at 38507-doc-dts-english.pdf.

15 African Union, Protocol to the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area on Digital Trade, adopted on 18 February 2024, arts. 2, 46–48; African Union Assembly, Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.911(XXXVIII), 15–16 February 2025, paras. 12–16, adopting the eight annexes; and Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.975(XXXIX), 14–15 February 2026, paras. 5–6, calling on Member States to complete and notify ratifications by the end of 2026. The Protocol provides that it enters into force in accordance with article 23(2) of the AfCFTA Agreement—30 days after deposit of the twenty-second instrument of ratification.

16 African Union, AU Data Policy Framework (Addis Ababa, 2022); African Union, AU Interoperability Framework for Digital ID (2023), especially the recommendations on continental and regional standards and collaboration with UNECA; and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, "Digital ID & Interoperability Experts Agree on Harmonizing Digital Identity Systems," 8 June 2023. AU Data Policy Framework.

17 World Bank, Digital Economy for Africa (DE4A) Initiative. Available at https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/all-africa-digital-transformation.

18 World Bank, Western Africa Regional Digital Integration Program (WARDIP), 2026 update. Available at https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099063026110526624/pdf/P500628-23943776-a9f3-45a4-9a5c-1d251c443346.pdf.

19 United Nations Development Programme, Regional Programme for Africa (2022–2025); UNDP Timbuktoo initiative (2024). Available at https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3952121?ln=en&v=pdf and https://www.undp.org/kenya/timbuktoo-greentech-hub.

20 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, Developing institutional capacities for digital data management and cooperation to advance progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (2022–2025), 22 March 2024. Available at https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/projects/developing-institutional-capacities-digital-data-management-and-cooperation-advance-0.

21 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Africa Digital Identity Landscape Report. Available at https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/DITE-AFRICA/Africa%20Digtial%20ID%20Landscape%20Report%20%282023%29.pdf.

22 International Telecommunication Union, Measuring Digital Development: Africa; UNICEF, Advancing Birth Registration in Africa. Available at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/pages/facts/default.aspx and https://www.unicef.org/wca/reports/every-child-counted-advancing-birth-registration-africa.

23 United Nations, United Nations EGovernment Survey 2024, chapter 3. Available at: https://desapublications.un.org/sites/default/files/publications/2024-09/%28Chapter%203%29%20E-Government%20Survey%202024%201392024.pdf.

24 World Bank, The Gulf's Digital Transformation: A Powerful Engine for Economic Diversification, Gulf Economic Update (Washington, D.C., December 2025), pp. 3–4 and 53–56 and pp. 61–134. https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099703212012571773?utm.

25 Qatar News Agency, "Ministry of Communications and Information Technology Launches Digital Agenda 2030," 27 February 2024. The Agenda comprises six pillars: Digital Infrastructure, Digital Government, Digital Technologies, Digital Innovation, Digital Economy and Digital Society. https://qna.org.qa/en/news/news-details?id=0088-ministry-of-communications-and-information-technology-launches-digital-agenda-2030&date=27/02/2024.

26 Government of Qatar, Qatar Digital Government Strategy (2025), especially pp. 3–4 and 12–22. The Strategy presents digital government as a whole-of-government initiative and prioritizes digital orchestration, seamless services, optimized operations, interoperability, regulatory modernization and continuous service improvement.

27 Kuwait Government Online, "Sahel App"; and Kuwait News Agency, "Sahel App Hits 111 Million Digital Transactions over Four Years," 15 September 2025. By November 2025, Sahel reportedly offered 483 services from 41 government entities, illustrating its continuing expansion.

28 Eurostat, Digitalisation in Europe – 2025 edition; European Commission, Digital Decade 2025: country reports and indicators. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/interactive-publications/digitalisation-2025 and https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/digital-decade-2025-country-reports.

29 European Parliament and Council of the European Union, Decision (EU) 2022/2481 of 14 December 2022 establishing the Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030, Official Journal of the European Union, L323, 19 December 2022, pp. 4–26; see also European Commission, Digital Decade Policy Programme https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2022/2481/oj.

30 European Parliament and Council of the European Union, Regulation (EU) 2024/903 of 13 March 2024 laying down measures for a high level of public sector interoperability across the Union (Interoperable Europe Act), Official Journal of the European Union, 22 March 2024. The Regulation entered into force on 11 April 2024 and has applied generally since 12 July 2024. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/903/oj?utm.

31 World Bank, "Digital Transformation and Public Sector Reform: Western Balkans Progress Toward EU Accession and Economic Growth," 13 November 2025. https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/brief/digital-transformation-and-public-sector-reform-western-balkans-progress-toward-eu-accession-and-economic-growth?utm.

32 European Commission, An Accelerated Digital Transition for the Western Balkans, EU4Digital action document; see also European Commission, "Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans." https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/41beca87-4f88-42eb-9b00-ea5836649549_en and https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/european-commission-launches-digital-agenda-western-balkans-2018-06-25_en?utm.

33 World Bank, Implementation Completion and Results Report: Tonga Digital Government Support Project (P154943),

Report No. ICR00697 (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 25 November 2025), p. 11. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099121825123082981/pdf/BOSIB-4308c57e-4886-4843-af9d-f0334a03ed62.pdf?utm.

34 Government of the Republic of Nauru, Nauru National Digital Transformation Strategy (2025), particularly the initiatives concerning resilient infrastructure, digital identity, digital payments, digital government services and digital literacy, pp. 15–20 and 27–31.

35 Republic of the Marshall Islands, Digital Transformation and Identity Verification Act 2025, Public Law 2025-26, effective 21 April 2025, especially section 907(1), which establishes the objectives of promoting government digital transformation, expanding access to high-quality digital government information and services, enabling data-driven innovation and delivering whole-of-government digital infrastructure. https://rmiparliament.org/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/2025/2025-0026/2025-0026_1.pdf?utm.

36 Australian Government, 2025 Implementation Plan. https://www.dataanddigital.gov.au/implementation-plan/2025?utm.

37 and New Zealand Government, Strategy for a Digital Public Service. https://www.digital.govt.nz/digital-government/strategy/strategy-summary/strategy-for-a-digital-public-service?utm.

38 International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Measuring Digital Development: State of Digital Development and Trends in Asia and the Pacific—Challenges and Opportunities (Geneva: ITU, 2025), p. 3. https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-d/opb/ind/D-IND-SDDT_ASP-2025-PDF-E.pdf?utm.

39 International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Measuring Digital Development: Facts and Figures 2025 (Geneva: ITU, 2025), pp. 3 and 6. See the official ITU report. https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-d/opb/ind/d-ind-ict_mdd-2025-3-pdf-e.pdf?utm.

40 European Commission, Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, Omdia and Point Topic, Broadband Coverage in Europe 2024: Mapping Progress towards the Coverage Objectives of the Digital Decade—Final Report (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2025), DOI: 10.2759/9441597. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2759/9441597.

41 International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Report of the Workshop on Digital Transformation for the Pacific, Nadi, Fiji, 12–14 February 2025, particularly pp. 15 and 18–19. https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/AsiaPacific/Documents/Events/2025/Workshop on Digital Transformation for the Pacific/Report/FINAL_Report Workshop_on_Digital_Transformation_Fiji_12-14_Feb_2025.pdf?utm.

42 World Bank, "Connecting Islands, Creating Opportunity: Digital Transformation Expands Jobs in the Federated States of Micronesia," 7 July 2026, https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2026/07/07/connecting-islands-creating-opportunity-digital-transformation-expands-jobs-in-the?utm.

43 International Telecommunication Union, Addressing the Special Telecommunications/ICT Needs of Pacific Small Island Developing States (2025); UNAPCICT/ESCAP, Digital Trends in Asia and the Pacific 2021. Available at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/AsiaPacific/Documents/Events/2025/Workshop%20on%20Digital%20Transformation%20for%20the%20Pacific/Presentation%20slides/Day%203_Session%208_Atsuko%20Okuda%20and%20Quynh%20Nguyen_Needs%20Assessment%20to%20address%20ICT%20Needs%20of%20PSIDS.pdf and https://www.unapcict.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/Digital%20Trends%20in%20Asia%20Pacific%202021.pdf.

44 World Bank, "Improved Connections and Disaster Response to Benefit Samoans through New World Bank Digital Transformation Initiative", 1 November 2024; Government of Samoa, Digitally Connected and Resilient Samoa Project. Available at https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2024/11/01/improved-connections-and-disaster-response-to-benefit-samoans-through-new-world-bank-digital-transformation-initiative and https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099093024135596945.

45 United Nations in Micronesia, "Tonoas Smart Island Digital Hub Officially Launched, Marking a New Era of Digital Transformation in Micronesia", 11 April 2025. Available at https://micronesia.un.org/en/292676-tonoas-smart-island-digital-hub-officially-launched-marking-new-era-digital-transformation.

46 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Digital Economy Report: Pacific Edition (2022). Available at https://unctad.org/publication/digital-economy-report-pacific-edition-2022.

47 Commonwealth Secretariat, A Sustainable Future for Small States: Pacific 2050 (2019/2024). Available at https://doi.org/10.14217/9781848599574-en.

3. Local E-Government and Cities



AI-generated image: INTERMID

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the state of local e-government, focusing on how cities are leveraging digital technologies to deliver public services and advance sustainable urban development. Using the Local Online Service Index (LOSI) as the main analytical framework, the chapter assesses digital service delivery in the most populous city of each of the United Nations Member States and the State of Palestine and highlights the major trends that are shaping digital transformation at the municipal level. The analysis also draws on insights from the Local Government Questionnaire (LGQ), which provides additional qualitative evidence on municipal priorities, policies and innovations in local digital government.

The chapter first situates local e-government within the broader context of urbanization and sustainable development, explaining why cities have become the primary arena in which digital government is realized in practice, and describes the methodology and scope of the 2026 LOSI assessment. It then presents the current status of local online services, examining performance across the six LOSI criteria and assessing how city-level results relate to national e-government development.

Particular attention is given to countries in special situations—including small island developing States (SIDS), microstates and city-states—where government functions are often highly centralized and digital services are delivered through integrated national platforms. By analysing both overall patterns in city performance and the specific circumstances of these country groups, the chapter provides a clearer understanding of progress, remaining gaps and emerging opportunities in advancing inclusive and sustainable digital government at the local level. The chapter concludes with key findings and recommendations to support local governments in strengthening digital service delivery.

3.1.1 Cities, digital transformation and sustainable development

Urbanization is fundamentally reshaping how public services are delivered and experienced. Cities are where both the population and the demand for services are concentrated, making them the primary arena in which digital government is realized in practice. It is in cities, more than in towns or rural areas, that the largest share of the population encounters public services, and it is through city-level services that national digital strategies are translated into services residents use in their daily lives. According to the latest World Urbanization Prospects 2025[1] report, urbanization has undergone a profound shift over time. In 1950, only about 20 per cent of the world's population lived in cities, with the majority evenly distributed between towns and rural areas. Over the following decades, urban populations grew rapidly, first surpassing rural populations in the

In this chapter:

3.1	Introduction	81
3.1.1	Cities, digital transformation and sustainable development	81
3.1.2	Measuring local digital government: methodology and scope	83
3.1.3	Limitations and caveats	84
3.1.4	Local Government Questionnaire	84
3.2	Current status of local online services	85
3.2.1	Small island developing States and other countries that are small in size and population	89
3.2.2	The impact of population size	89
3.3	Implementation of LOSI indicators in city portals	90
3.3.1	Institutional framework	91
3.3.2	Content provision	92
3.3.3	Service provision	95
3.3.4	Participation and engagement	96
3.3.5	E-government literacy	97
3.3.6	E-government infrastructure	98
3.4	Smart cities for sustainable development	99
3.5	Key findings and recommendations	101
Endnotes		102

mid-1970s and later overtaking towns in the mid-1990s. By 2025, cities accounted for 45 per cent of the global population, compared to 36 per cent in towns and 19 per cent in rural areas, reflecting the continued concentration of people in urban environments and the central role of cities in future population growth. As cities expand in scale and complexity, the demand for efficient, accessible and inclusive public services is rising accordingly. In this context, digital transformation has become a critical tool for managing urban systems and improving the quality of life of residents. The use of digital technologies by local governments is no longer optional; it is central to how cities function, respond to challenges and deliver on sustainable development commitments, particularly those related to Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11) on sustainable cities and communities. SDG 11, one of the 17 SDGs adopted by United Nations Member States in 2015, aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, with targets on housing, transport, participatory planning and urban environmental impact that depend directly on the capacity of local governments to deliver services effectively.

Local governments operate at the frontline of service delivery and are responsible for essential functions such as housing, transportation, utilities, public safety and social services, which directly shape daily life in cities. The proximity of local governments to communities places them in a unique position to translate national digital strategies into tangible outcomes that directly affect people's daily lives. Digital technologies—including data platforms, integrated service portals and emerging tools such as artificial intelligence (AI)—enable cities to enhance service efficiency, expand access and strengthen public engagement. As urban populations grow and expectations evolve, residents increasingly demand seamless, user-centric and responsive public services delivered through digital channels.

Patterns of Internet use further reinforce the importance of investing in local digital government. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 85 per cent of urban residents globally use the Internet, compared to 58 per cent in rural areas.[2] This higher level of connectivity in cities increases both the demand for and the potential impact of digital public services. It also reinforces the case for prioritizing investment in local digital government, where digital services can reach a large share of the population and generate immediate improvements in access and efficiency. At the same time, these disparities highlight the need for balanced approaches: while cities represent a critical entry point for digital transformation, rural areas must not be left behind. Addressing gaps in connectivity, affordability and digital skills remains essential to ensuring that digital government contributes to inclusive development across all territories.

Building on the foundations established through successive editions of the United Nations E-Government Survey since 2018, the LOSI provides a systematic assessment of digital service delivery at the municipal level. To maximize population coverage and reflect how digital public services are experienced in practice, the LOSI focuses on assessing the most populous city in each country and territory. This approach allows the analysis to capture the digital interface through which the largest number of people interact with government services. At the same time, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) continues to support the broader application of the LOSI methodology at the national level.[3] Through partnerships with interested institutions, the methodology is increasingly being applied to multiple cities within countries, enabling more granular assessments and supporting capacity development in local digital government.

The evolution of the LOSI over time enables a more comprehensive understanding of how local digital government is developing across different contexts. The 2026 edition places greater emphasis on patterns of change, highlighting how cities are progressing across levels of development, where improvements are occurring most rapidly, and how local performance relates to national digital government systems, including broader e-government development trends.

Despite rapid technological advancement, important challenges remain. Differences in digital skills, institutional capacity and resource availability continue to shape how effectively cities can design and deliver digital services. In addition, the growing complexity of digital systems requires stronger coordination between national and local levels of government, as well as sustained investment in infrastructure and human capital.

Taken together, the 2026 findings suggest that local digital government has entered a more mature phase of development, characterized by the widespread availability of digital platforms but uneven progress in service integration, accessibility and user-centric design. While national frameworks remain an important enabling factor, city-level performance is increasingly shaped by institutional capacity, governance models, and the ability to translate digital strategies into fully functional, end-to-end services. As a result, the central challenge is no longer expanding access to digital interfaces, but improving the quality, inclusiveness and effectiveness of digital public service delivery.

3.1.2 Measuring local digital government: methodology and scope

Assessing local digital government is essential to understanding how public services are delivered in increasingly complex urban environments. As cities expand and digital interactions become the primary interface between residents and government, the performance of local digital platforms plays a critical role in shaping access, efficiency and user experience. The focus is no longer limited to the existence of online portals, but extends to how effectively services are organized, integrated and delivered from the perspective of users. Measuring these dimensions provides valuable insights into how cities are adapting to evolving demands and leveraging technology to improve service delivery.

The LOSI has progressively evolved into a comprehensive benchmarking framework for local digital government. Initially launched as a pilot programme that covered a limited number of cities, the LOSI has expanded in scope and depth over successive editions to provide a globally comparable assessment of digital service delivery at the municipal level. This evolution has enabled the identification of trends over time, as well as a more nuanced understanding of how local digital government systems are developing across different contexts.

The 2026 edition of the LOSI builds on this foundation while introducing targeted methodological refinements. The assessment framework now includes 101 indicators organized across six criteria: institutional framework (5), content provision (31), service provision (38), participation and engagement (10), e-government literacy (10), and e-government infrastructure (7). Together, these criteria provide a comprehensive view of local digital government, capturing not only the availability of services but also their accessibility, usability and integration.

The methodology also takes into account the revised definition of "city" introduced in the World Urbanization Prospects 2025, which defines cities as contiguous urban agglomerations with a minimum population threshold of 50,000 inhabitants and specified density criteria. Based on this revised definition, the large majority of assessed units in the LOSI 2026 dataset fall within the internationally recognized "city" category. However, approximately 20 assessed units—predominantly SIDS, microstates and city-states—fall below the population threshold. In these cases, the LOSI retains the assessed units within the framework as urban settlements in order to preserve global coverage, geographical representativeness and comparability, particularly for countries where government functions are highly centralized and no larger urban agglomeration exists.

While the LOSI continues to assess the most populous city within each country, the 2026 methodology places greater emphasis on how residents actually access digital public services, evaluating official municipal portals and digital service channels from an end-user perspective. However, in countries with relatively small populations or geographic size—such as SIDS, microstates, city-states and similarly structured countries—government functions are often highly centralized and digital services

are delivered through integrated national platforms. In these cases, the assessment applies an adapted approach that considers the full range of relevant official government portals associated with the target city, including national-level platforms, to better reflect actual service delivery arrangements.

This adapted methodology was applied exclusively to clearly defined "special situation" countries, including established groupings such as SIDS, as well as selected microstates and city-states, and small countries with closely aligned characteristics. Examples include Andorra, Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Kuwait, Qatar and San Marino, alongside city-states such as Monaco and Singapore. By adopting this approach, the LOSI ensures that the assessment remains both methodologically consistent and context-sensitive, capturing how digital public services are accessed in different governance structures while maintaining comparability across countries.

The 2026 methodological refinements also have important implications for how results should be interpreted. The criterion previously called technology has been renamed e-government infrastructure in the 2026 LOSI framework to better reflect its focus on the technical features that support access to online public services. At the same time, the adapted treatment of SIDS, microstates and other highly centralized contexts, where national platforms are assessed alongside city portals, improves the representation of how people access services in practice, but requires careful interpretation when comparing results across countries. These adjustments also help explain part of the more significant upward shifts observed in 2026 LOSI scores and rankings compared to previous editions, particularly in countries where digital services are primarily delivered through centralized national platforms rather than stand-alone municipal portals.

As a result, while LOSI scores remain broadly comparable overall, certain dimensions, particularly those related to service provision and integration, may reflect differences in governance structure rather than purely local performance. The primary object of the analysis is how users experience and access public services, regardless of whether they are delivered through municipal or national platforms. These considerations are important for distinguishing structural differences from performance gaps across countries.

3.1.3 Limitations and caveats

As with any global assessment of this scale, several factors should be kept in mind when interpreting the results. First, the LOSI is based on structured desk research of city and, where relevant, national portals conducted at a single point in time; a portal redesign, outage, or URL change shortly before or after data collection could affect a city's score independent of any underlying change in service delivery. Second, the Local Government Questionnaire (LGQ), used to complement and verify the LOSI findings, relies on voluntary self-reporting by municipalities, and response rates vary by region and income group; qualitative insights drawn from the LGQ are therefore illustrative rather than statistically representative. Third, as discussed above, the treatment of national platforms for SIDS, microstates and other highly centralized contexts means that these countries' scores are not always directly comparable to those of countries with stand-alone municipal portals. Finally, the LOSI measures the presence, functionality and accessibility of online services, not their uptake, quality of implementation, or impact on residents' lives — a city with a comprehensive portal is not guaranteed to have high citizen usage or satisfaction. These limitations do not undermine the overall trends reported in this chapter, but they suggest caution in drawing strong conclusions from small year-on-year or city-to-city differences.

3.1.4 Local Government Questionnaire

The Local Government Questionnaire (LGQ) continues to serve as an important complementary instrument supporting the LOSI assessment process. While LGQ responses do not directly affect LOSI scores or rankings, they help assessors identify relevant official portals, verify service arrangements,

and reference current municipal policies, strategies and institutional practices. The 2026 LGQ was streamlined and updated to reflect evolving digital government priorities, including stronger attention to integrated service delivery, data use, innovation, resilience, inclusion, sustainability, and emerging technologies. A total of 85 cities submitted responses in 2026, a significant increase compared with 51 responses in 2024, indicating growing engagement by local governments in the LOSI process and stronger interest in international benchmarking and peer learning.

The 2026 submissions reveal that many municipalities are strengthening governance structures for digital transformation, expanding online and mobile service channels, increasing their use of data analytics, and exploring smart city, climate, and AI-related initiatives. Responses also point to persistent differences in institutional capacity, financing models and local autonomy across regions, with some cities operating sophisticated stand-alone strategies while others rely mainly on national platforms and frameworks. Throughout this chapter, examples and insights drawn from the LGQ are referenced to complement the portal-based LOSI assessment and to provide a richer picture of how cities are advancing digital government implementation.

3.2 Current status of local online services

The 2026 assessment of local digital government evaluates online public service delivery in the most populous city of each of the 193 United Nations Member States and the State of Palestine, based on an expanded framework of 101 indicators. The results show a continued advancement in local digital service delivery. Notably, six cities—Dubai, Madrid, Manama, Riyadh, São Paulo and Vienna—share the highest LOSI score of 1.0000. They are followed closely by cities such as Reykjavik, New York, Tallinn and Singapore, underscoring the high level of convergence among leading performers.

Compared with 2024, the 2026 results reveal a more differentiated pattern of progress across dimensions of local digital government. The most significant improvements are observed in infrastructure, content provision and basic transactional services, reflecting continued expansion and consolidation of digital platforms. More modest gains are evident in participation, engagement and service integration, where progress remains uneven and often constrained by institutional complexity.

The 2026 results show more pronounced increases in LOSI scores and rankings than in previous editions; while these reflect continued progress in local digital government, they are also partially influenced by methodological refinements, particularly the inclusion of national service portals in the assessment of cities in SIDS, microstates and other highly centralized contexts, allowing for a more accurate representation of how users access services in practice. At the same time, certain structural challenges remain persistent. In particular, the limited availability of fully integrated, life-event services and the continued reliance on consultative rather than decision-oriented participation tools indicate that the transition toward more mature, user-centered digital government remains incomplete.

As shown in figure 3.1, the number of cities in the very high LOSI category has increased significantly to 68, up from 42 in 2024 and 38 in 2022. At the same time, the number of cities without an evaluated portal has declined sharply, from 42 in 2024 to 11 in 2026. This reflects both the continued expansion of digital government and, in some cases, methodological refinements.

Figure 3.1 Comparison of LOSI levels for 2022, 2024 and 2026 (Number of cities per category)

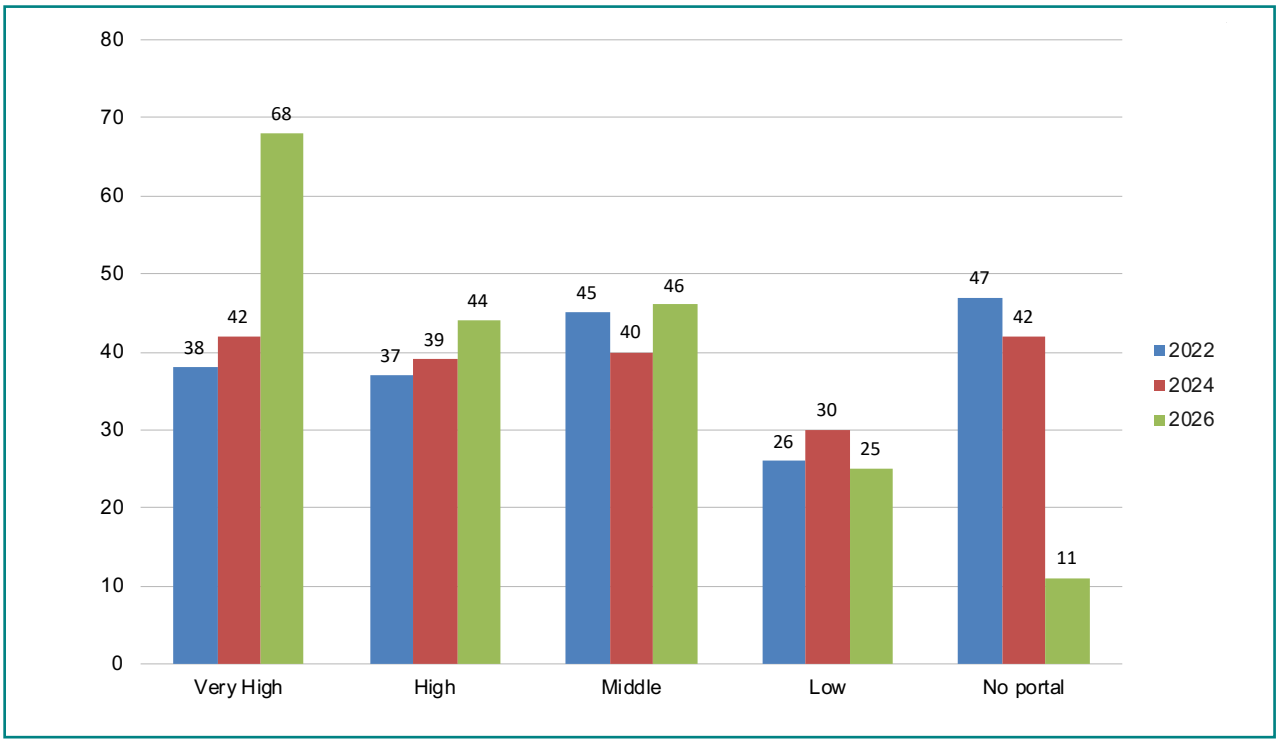


Figure 3.2 illustrates the relationship between local (LOSI) and national Online Services Index (OSI) digital government performance in 2026, showing a clear but moderate positive association. The red diagonal line represents the equality line (LOSI = OSI). Cities in countries with more advanced national digital government systems tend, on average, to achieve higher levels of local online service delivery. At the same time, the wide dispersion of results indicates that national performance alone does not determine city outcomes. In many cases, local scores remain below national levels, suggesting that progress at the national level does not automatically translate into equivalent gains locally. Evidence from the LGQ helps explain part of this variation: cities reporting dedicated digital leadership structures, municipal digital strategies, or more institutionalized information and communications technology funding arrangements often demonstrate stronger local performance, indicating the importance of implementation capacity at the city level. This divergence points to a division of labour: national governments set strategic direction and infrastructure, but effective service delivery depends on local coordination, institutional capacity and resource allocation. Cities that outperform their national context tend to share three traits — greater administrative autonomy, dedicated digital leadership and more flexible implementation mechanisms.

Figure 3.2 LOSI and OSI levels for 2026: convergence and divergence

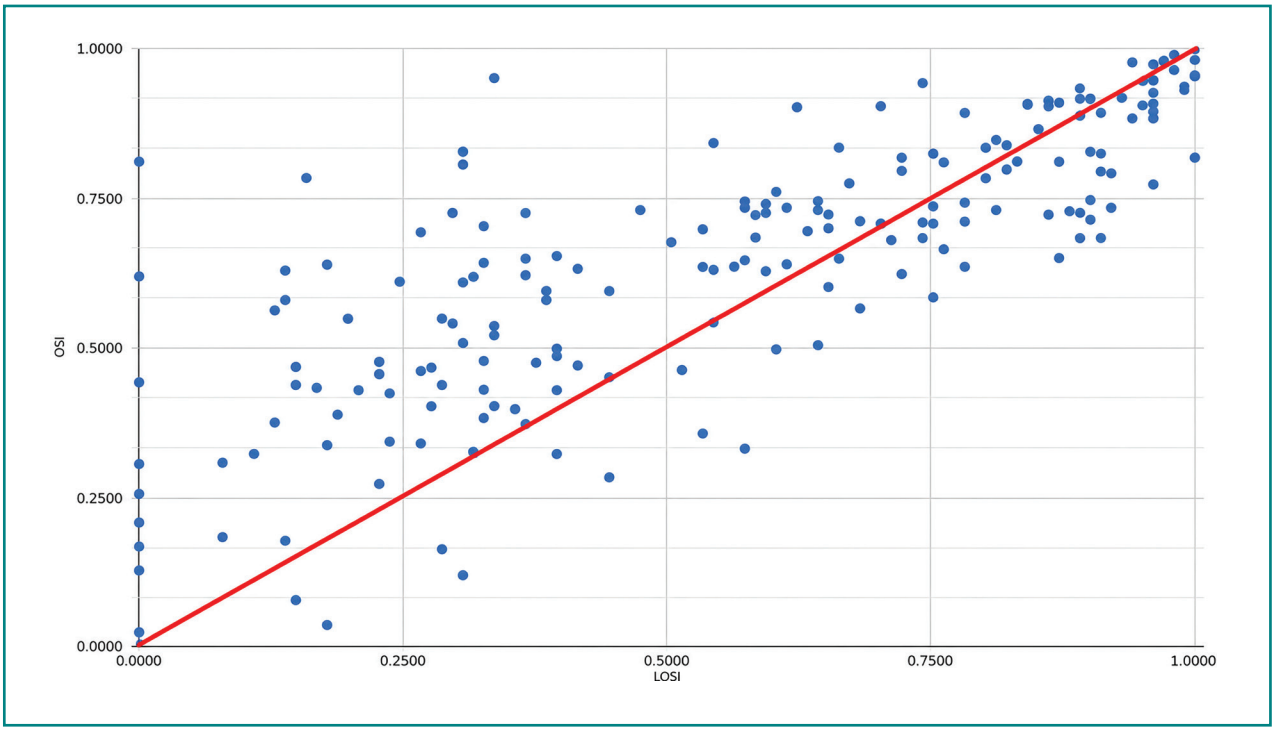


Table 3.1 illustrates the relationship between LOSI levels for the 194 cities assessed and OSI levels for the corresponding national portals in 2026. A large share of cities are clustered at levels broadly consistent with their national context (green-shaded cells), particularly at the higher end, where 51 cities with very high LOSI levels are also associated with very high OSI countries, and a further 17 with high OSI levels. At the same time, a substantial number of cities are positioned below their respective national levels (red-shaded cells), indicating that strong national digital government performance does not consistently translate into equivalent local outcomes. Conversely, 23 cities outperform their national context (blue-shaded cells), demonstrating that local progress can exceed national averages where municipal leadership, institutional capacity and targeted investment are strong. Overall, the findings point to both a persistent gap between national and local digital government performance and significant variation among cities operating within similar national environments.

Table 3.1 LOSI and OSI levels for 2026: convergence and divergence (Number of cities)

	Very high OSI 2026	High OSI 2026	Middle OSI 2026	Low OSI 2026
Very high LOSI 2026	51	17	0	0
High LOSI 2026	9	31	4	0
Middle LOSI 2026	3	20	21	2
Low LOSI 2026	1	6	14	4
No portal 2026	1	1	4	5

Table 3.2 provides an analysis of city-level LOSI performance relative to their national OSI counterparts across the recent United Nations Survey editions in 2022, 2024 and 2026. The data reveal important trends in how cities are performing relative to national digital service levels. The share of cities outperforming their national context shows a clear increase in 2026, reaching 11.86 per cent, compared to 2.59 per cent in 2022 and 2.07 per cent in 2024. While there was a slight dip in 2024, the sharp rise in 2026 highlights the growing potential for cities to drive digital transformation. The share of cities classified in a higher LOSI category than their corresponding national OSI category increased in 2026. This change should be interpreted alongside the methodological adjustments described above. In 2026, 55.15 per cent of cities performed at a level similar to their countries' digital service levels, indicating a strong alignment between local and national digital development. The share of cities performing below national levels demonstrates a fluctuating trend over the observed period. It increased from 31.09 per cent in 2022 to 36.27 per cent in 2024, before declining to 27.32 per cent in 2026. The reduction recorded in 2026 signals a gradual narrowing of the performance gap, pointing to incremental improvements in local digital governance capacity. Interpretation of these results should take into account methodological adjustments applied to SIDS and small States (see section 3.1.2). Cities without an evaluated portal are presented separately. This classification does not necessarily imply that residents have no access to digital public services through national platforms or other channels. This category declined sharply from 24.35 per cent in 2022 to 5.67 per cent in 2026, reflecting rapid progress in digital adoption and inclusion.

Table 3.2 City-level LOSI performance relative to national OSI performance

Year	Cities performing higher than their countries	Cities performing similarly to their countries	Cities performing lower than their countries	Cities with no online presence (no portal)	Total cities
2026	23 (11.86 per cent)	107 (55.15 per cent)	53 (27.32 per cent)	11 (5.67 per cent)	194
2024	4 (2.07 per cent)	77 (39.90 per cent)	70 (36.27 per cent)	42 (21.76 per cent)	193
2022	5 (2.59 per cent)	81 (41.97 per cent)	60 (31.09 per cent)	47 (24.35 per cent)	193

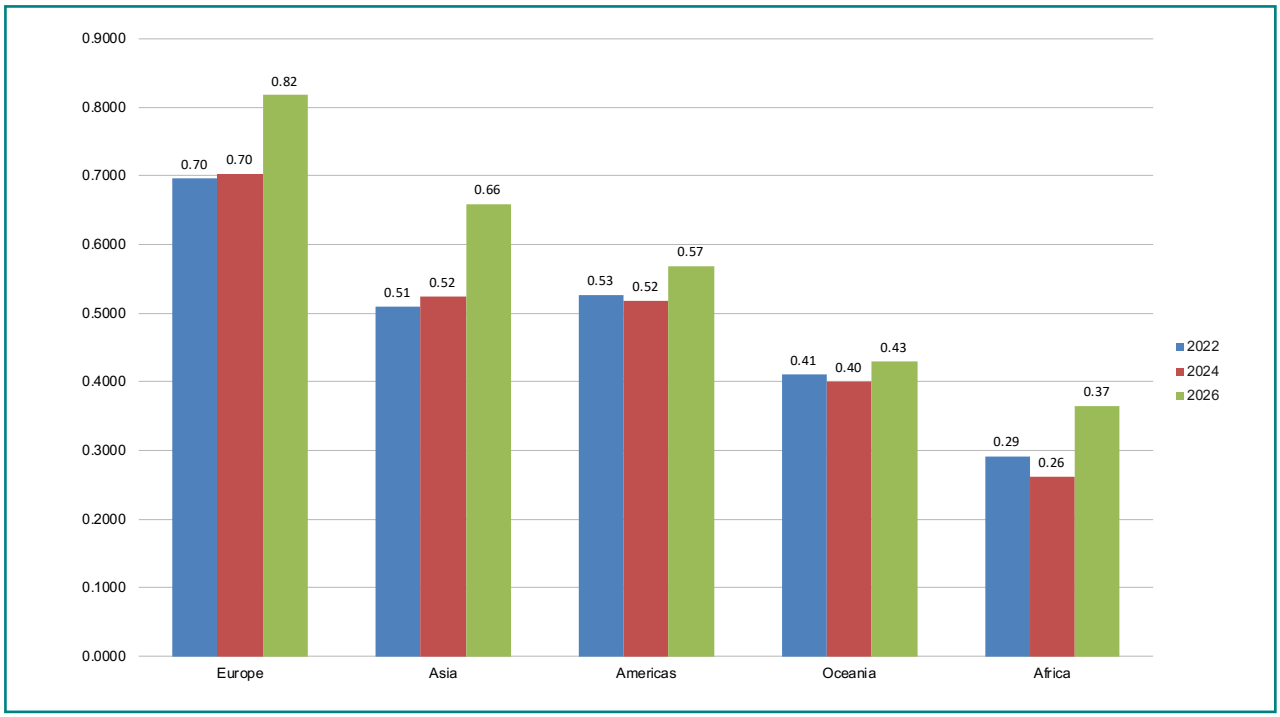
The regional patterns observed in LOSI broadly mirror trends at the national level identified in the 2026 United Nations E-Government Survey, particularly in terms of Europe's relative consistency, Asia's continued advancement, and the persistent structural constraints affecting parts of Africa and SIDS. As shown in figure 3.3, Europe continues to lead with the highest average LOSI score (0.8178), reflecting a high level of maturity and relative consistency in digital public service delivery across many cities. Asia records the most significant improvement, rising to an average of 0.6596, but continues to exhibit considerable variation between cities, pointing to uneven development in infrastructure and service design. The Americas show steady progress, reaching an average of 0.5693, with a growing number of cities advancing into higher LOSI levels. Oceania remains relatively stable at 0.4293, while Africa shows notable improvement, increasing to 0.3657, yet continues to lag behind other regions.

At the same time, these regional averages mask substantial internal variation. Even within high-performing regions such as Europe, levels of digital maturity differ significantly across cities, reflecting variations in institutional capacity, governance models and investment levels. Similarly, in Asia and Latin America, rapid progress in leading cities coexists with slower advancement elsewhere, resulting in uneven development patterns. This suggests that local institutional conditions—rather than regional context alone—play a decisive role in shaping digital government outcomes.

Across regions, the presence of cities without stand-alone municipal portals should also be interpreted with caution. In several cases—particularly in small States and SIDS—services are delivered through

integrated national platforms, and the 2026 methodology accounts for this by assessing the overall user experience across relevant government portals. This reflects a broader shift toward channel-independent service delivery, where accessibility and usability matter more than the administrative level through which services are provided.

Figure 3.3 LOSI regional averages, 2022, 2024 and 2026



3.2.1 Small island developing States and other countries that are small in size and population

SIDS and other countries with relatively small populations or geographic size continue to follow distinct digital service delivery models. In many of these contexts, public services are centralized and accessed through integrated national platforms rather than stand-alone city portals. As a result, a number of cities are assessed based on national portals, reflecting how services are delivered in practice. This approach, supported by inputs from the LGQ, helps capture coordination between national and local levels and ensures a more accurate representation of digital service delivery in these settings.

3.2.2 The impact of population size

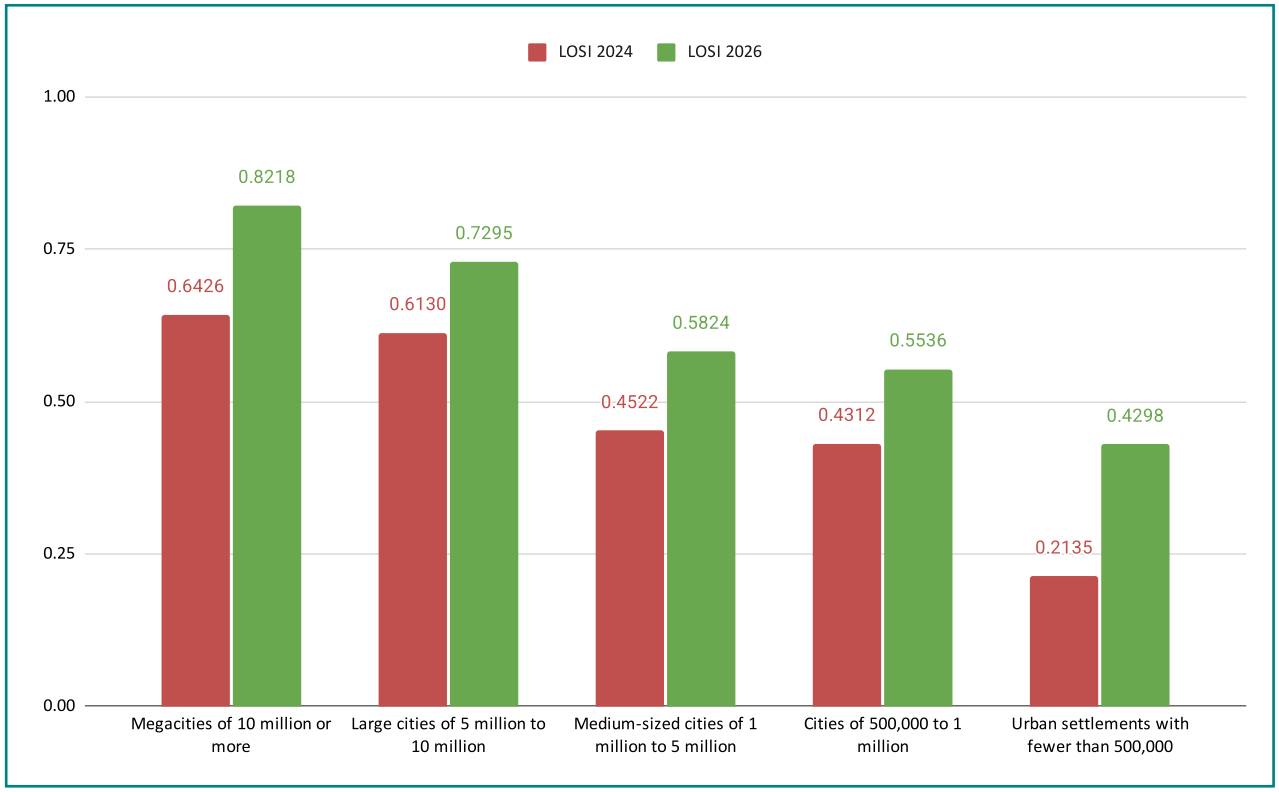
Population size continues to show a strong relationship with local digital government performance in 2026, with improvements observed across all city categories. As illustrated in figure 3.4, megacities and large cities maintain the highest average LOSI values, increasing from 0.6426 to 0.8218 and from 0.6130 to 0.7295, respectively, while medium-sized and smaller cities also recorded notable gains. Despite this overall progress, a clear gradient persists, with urban settlements of fewer than 500,000 inhabitants remaining significantly behind, even though their average scores improved substantially.

This pattern reflects structural advantages associated with scale. Larger cities typically benefit from greater fiscal capacity, more specialized human resources, and stronger demand for digital services, enabling sustained investment and more advanced system development. By contrast, smaller cities

often face constraints in financing, technical expertise and economies of scale, limiting their ability to develop and maintain complex digital systems.

At the same time, population size is not fully determinative. Evidence from the LGQ indicates that some smaller cities achieve comparatively strong results where they are supported by clear digital strategies, dedicated governance structures, or access to shared national platforms. Overall, the findings suggest that while scale remains an important advantage, institutional design and targeted support can help narrow gaps and promote more balanced progress across cities of all sizes.

Figure 3.4 Average LOSI 2024 and 2026 values, by population size



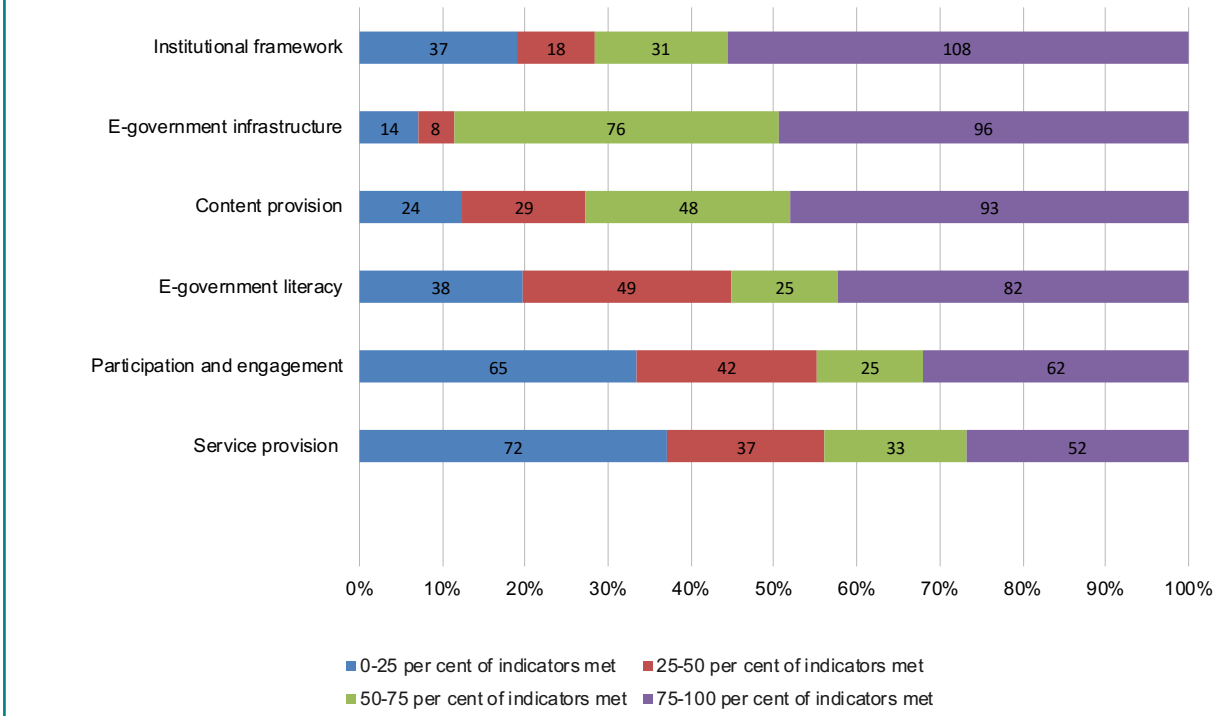
3.3 Implementation of LOSI indicators in city portals

The 2026 LOSI is based on 101 indicators grouped under six criteria: institutional framework, e-government infrastructure, content provision, service provision, participation and engagement, and e-government literacy. The updated framework reflects a more comprehensive view of local digital government, combining the enabling foundations of online service delivery with the quality, accessibility and responsiveness of services offered to users. It also further strengthens the alignment between LOSI and the broader e-government measurement approach used in the Survey.

As shown in figure 3.5, institutional framework remains the area of strongest implementation across city portals, suggesting that many local governments have made steady progress in establishing the basic governance, organizational and accountability features needed to support digital public services. E-government infrastructure and content provision also show comparatively strong results, pointing to broader efforts to improve the technical foundations of portals and expand the information made available online. By contrast, service provision records the weakest overall implementation, indicating that the transition from providing information and digital access points to delivering fully

developed, user-oriented and transactional services continues to be a major challenge for many cities. Participation and engagement and e-government literacy remain mixed, showing that while progress has been made, more attention is still needed to ensure that local digital government is not only available, but also usable, inclusive and responsive.

Figure 3.5 Implementation of LOSI indicators in city e-government portals
(Bars show percentages; numbers show city counts.)



3.3.1 Institutional framework

The 2026 results show a notable improvement in core institutional framework indicators (see figure 3.6). The most commonly met indicators continue to be those that are relatively straightforward to implement, but with significantly higher compliance than in previous editions. A large majority of assessed digital government interfaces provide information on organizational structure (79 per cent), links to government agencies (78 per cent), and names and contact details for department heads (76 per cent). These gains point to strengthened transparency and usability across the broader digital service ecosystem through which residents access local services.

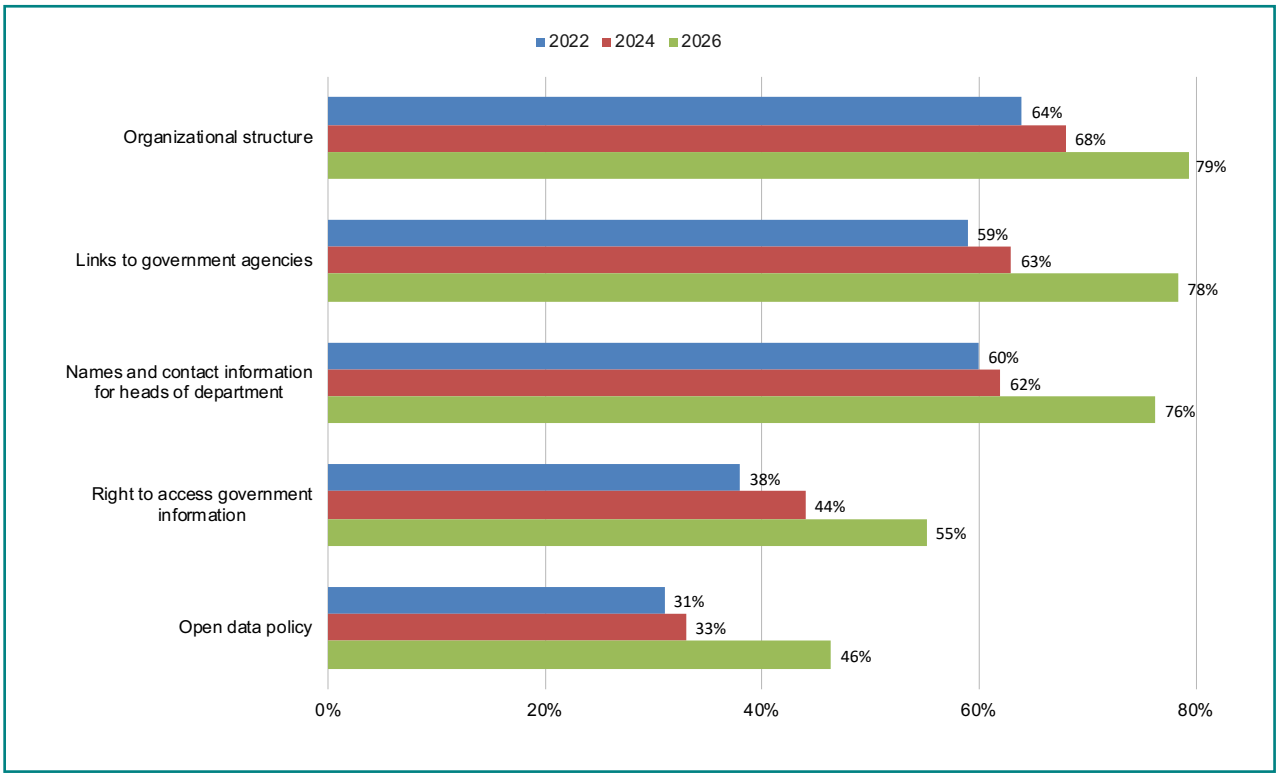
At the same time, progress is also evident in more advanced transparency measures. Data on the right to access government information is available in 55 per cent of cases, up from 44 per cent in 2024, while the availability of open government data policies increased to 46 per cent from 33 per cent. Although these indicators remain less widespread than basic institutional information, the upward trend suggests growing recognition of the importance of data openness, accountability and rights-based access in local digital governance.

Overall, while cities are consolidating basic institutional transparency, further progress is needed to ensure that rights-based information and open data frameworks are consistently accessible across the digital channels used by residents. This accessibility remains essential for advancing accountable,

participatory, and inclusive urban governance in line with SDG 11.

These findings suggest that while foundational governance structures for digital government are increasingly in place, the next phase of development will depend on how effectively these structures translate into improved service delivery, transparency and user outcomes.

Figure 3.6 Implementation of institutional framework indicators in city portals



There remains notable variation in how cities make information on access to government information visible across the digital service ecosystem. While some cities integrate legal provisions and guidance directly into their digital interfaces, others rely on links to national legislation or external platforms. A number of cities demonstrate more advanced, user-oriented approaches. For example, New York City provides access to reports, datasets and service requests through multiple integrated platforms, while Lima combines transparency portals with annual reporting and open data channels. In the Gulf region, Dubai's Bayanat and Dubai Pulse platforms consolidate real-time datasets across sectors, reflecting a more systemic approach to open data governance. In Europe, Reykjavik offers a fully accessible municipal data platform, while Berlin publishes regular monitoring reports linked to its e-government legislation. These examples illustrate that leading cities are moving beyond basic compliance toward integrated transparency ecosystems that combine legal access, open data and service information. At the same time, the variation observed suggests that in many contexts, the challenge is less about the existence of transparency frameworks and more about how clearly and consistently they are presented across the digital channels used by residents.

3.3.2 Content provision

Figure 3.7 shows a marked improvement in the availability of sectoral information across city portals between 2022, 2024 and 2026. Health and environmental information remain the most widely provided, increasing significantly to around 80 per cent and 85 per cent, respectively in 2026,

reflecting the growing prioritization of public health and sustainability agendas at the local level. Social welfare and education content also show notable gains, reaching over 70 per cent, while notable improvements are observed in employment and justice information, both of which rise to roughly two-thirds of cities, narrowing previously observed gaps.

These trends suggest that cities are moving beyond basic informational content toward more balanced and inclusive coverage across sectors that are directly linked to SDG 11 outcomes, particularly in areas related to livelihoods, equity and access to services. At the same time, the convergence of sectoral coverage—now clustering between roughly 65 per cent and 85 per cent—indicates a maturing stage of content provision, though gaps remain in ensuring consistent depth, usability and targeting of vulnerable groups.

Figure 3.7 Implementation of content provision indicators in city portals: sectoral information

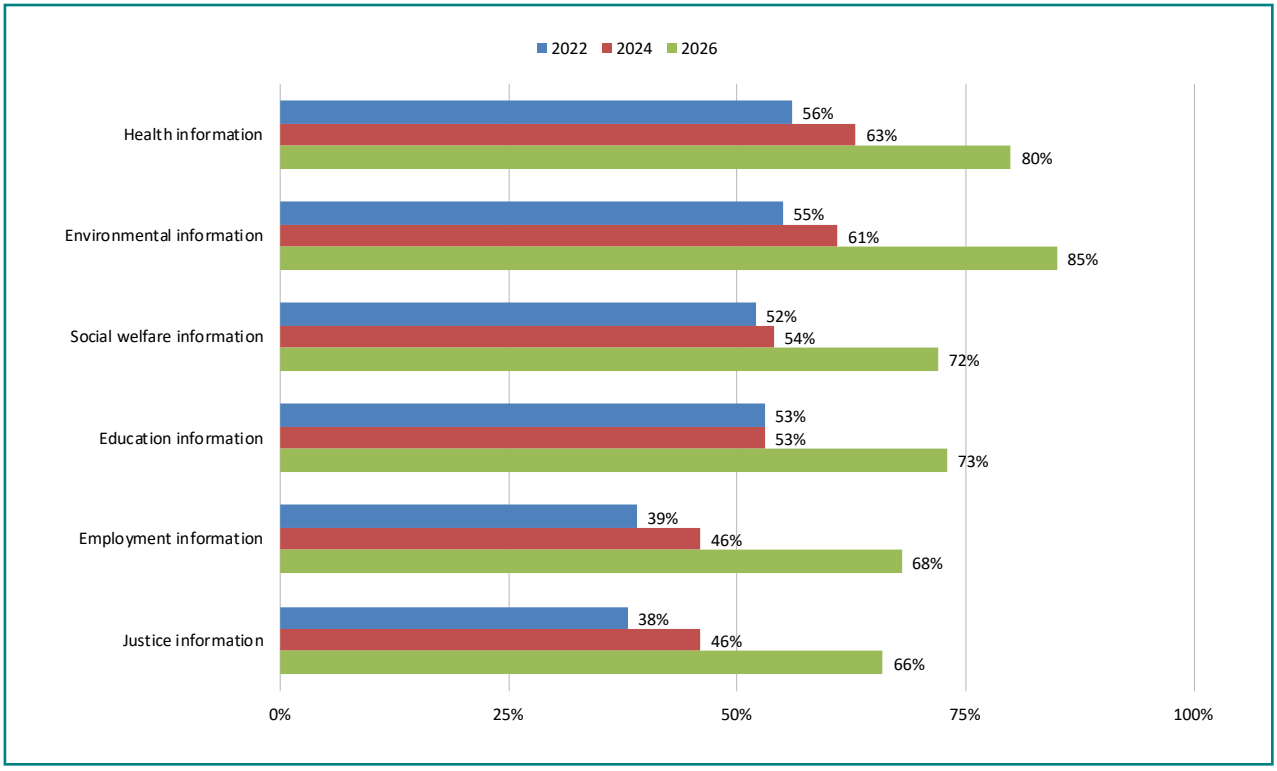
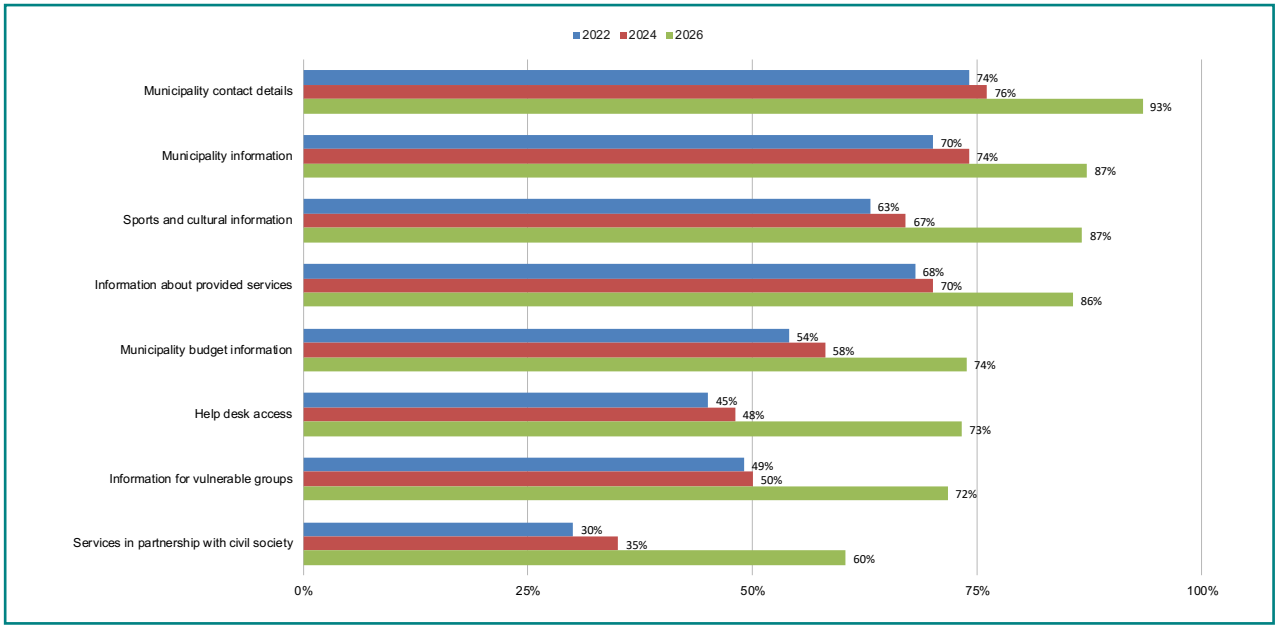


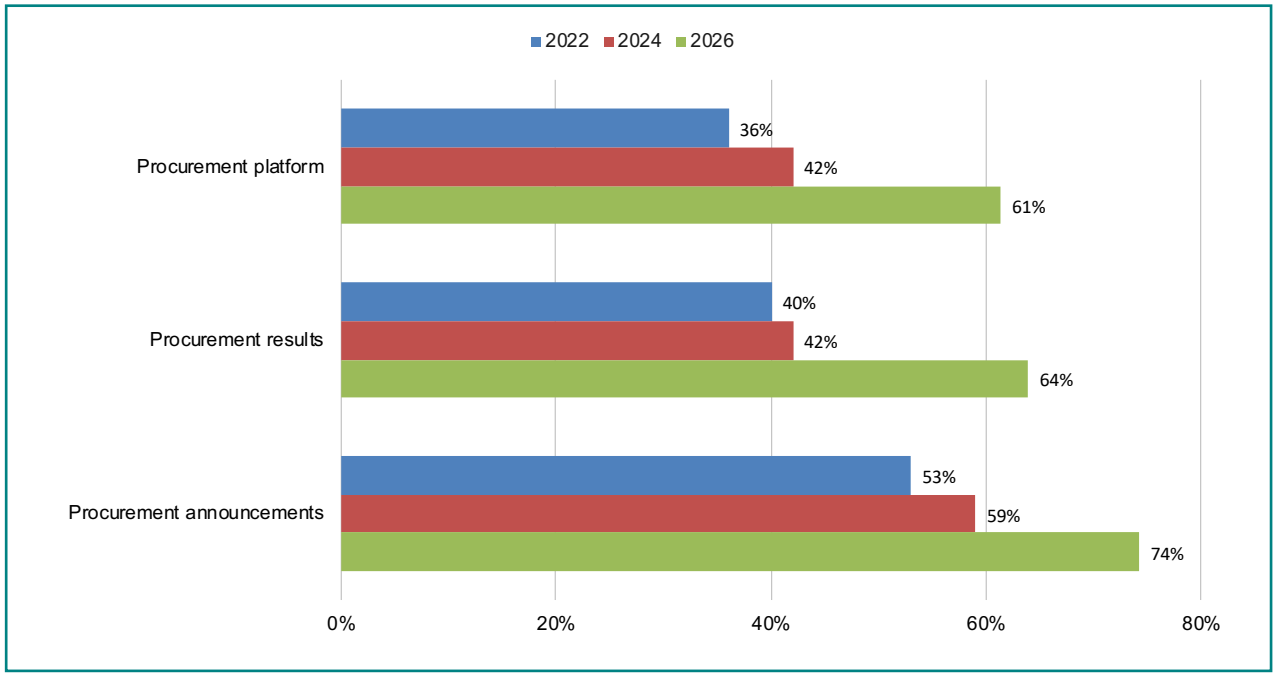
Figure 3.8 indicates continued improvement in the availability of "everyday needs" content on city portals in 2026, with most core information categories—such as municipality contact details, general information and service descriptions—now reaching high levels of coverage. There are also visible gains in areas that were previously lagging, including municipal budget information, help desk access, and information for vulnerable groups, alongside a notable increase in services delivered in partnership with civil society. Overall, while the results point to a more inclusive and user-oriented approach to content provision, gaps remain in ensuring consistent depth, targeting of vulnerable populations and meaningful engagement, highlighting areas for further progress that are in line with SDG 11.

Figure 3.8 Implementation of content provision indicators in city portals: addressing everyday needs



The 2026 results show further improvement in the availability of procurement information on city portals (see figure 3.9), with procurement announcements increasing to around 74 per cent, procurement results to 64 per cent, and access to procurement platforms to just over 60 per cent. While this reflects stronger transparency and the growing use of e-procurement systems, part of the increase is influenced by the inclusion of national platforms—particularly in SIDS and small States—and results should be interpreted with caution. Overall, progress is evident, but gaps remain in ensuring full end-to-end transparency across all procurement stages.

Figure 3.9 Procurement information on city portals



3.3.3 Service provision

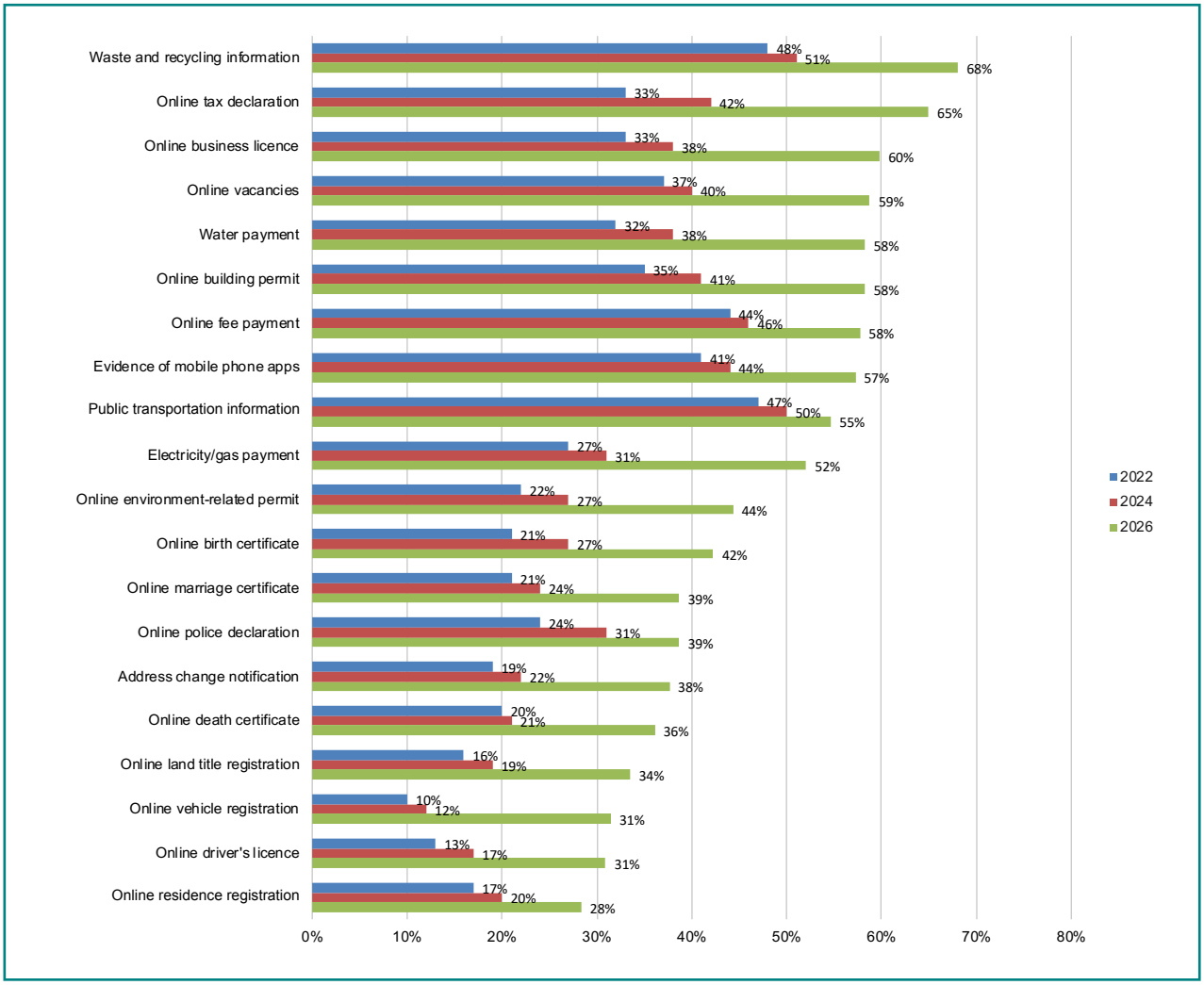
Service provision remains the lowest-performing LOSI criterion, but figure 3.10 shows a clear acceleration between 2024 and 2026. Gains are particularly strong in core administrative and revenue-related services, including online tax declaration (42 per cent to 65 per cent), procurement platforms (42 per cent to 61 per cent), and business licensing (38 per cent to 60 per cent), alongside continued improvements in utility payments and building permits. Environmental and basic information services—such as waste and recycling—remain the most widely available, now reaching close to 70 per cent, reinforcing their role as entry points for digital engagement. More complex services (for example, civil registration, land and vehicle services) continue to lag, though they show gradual progress. This persistent lag can be explained by the inherently higher institutional complexity of these processes, as they typically require coordination across multiple agencies, strong legal validation mechanisms, and fully integrated data systems. Unlike other services, their digitalization depends not only on technological readiness but also on regulatory alignment and inter-agency interoperability, which remain uneven across cities. In addition, many of these services are not exclusively under the mandate of city administrations but are governed at national or shared intergovernmental levels.

These trends suggest a shift from informational to more transactional service delivery, but also highlight persistent capacity and integration challenges—particularly in delivering end-to-end digital services across sectors. Emerging city practices point to integrated platforms and sector-specific systems (such as circular economy portals or smart mobility services) as key drivers of this transition. LGQ submissions illustrate how cities are bridging the transactional gap. Mexico City reports moving from just eight digitized procedures (out of roughly 2,100) to close to 80 per cent of these procedures being conducted online, anchored by a citizen identity platform run by the Digital Agency for Public Innovation. Almaty reports that 95 per cent of its approximately 165 municipal services are available electronically. Kigali, through the national IremboGov platform, makes 248 services across 38 institutions accessible online, with a mobile app and a network of more than 5,000 agents extending reach to citizens without reliable Internet—a multi-channel model with clear relevance for cities in the Global South.

The 2026 LOSI also introduces a set of new service provision indicators designed to capture emerging dimensions of digital transaction delivery through municipal government portals. These indicators assess whether residents can book appointments for healthcare services online, pay for public transportation digitally, apply for temporary event permits and social welfare programmes, reserve public spaces and sports facilities, schedule waste pick-ups, track the progress of submitted applications, and apply for parking permits, among others.

Performance across these newly introduced indicators varies considerably. Of the 194 cities that were assessed, compliance is strongest for digital application tracking dashboards, with 100 cities meeting this indicator, suggesting that real-time service transparency has become a common feature of local digital government. Online payment of public transportation and temporary event permit applications are available in 80 cities, while social welfare programme applications and parking permit requests show comparatively solid results, with availability in 79 and 69 cities, respectively. Public space and facility reservations are available in 62 cities. By contrast, online appointment bookings for healthcare services record the lowest compliance, with only 50 cities offering this functionality, indicating a significant gap in the integration of health service delivery into municipal portals. Waste pick-up scheduling and parking availability information also fall below the average, with availability in 54 and 56 cities, respectively, underscoring that the digitalization of local service delivery remains uneven across cities worldwide.

Figure 3.10 Implementation of service provision indicators in city portals



3.3.4 Participation and engagement

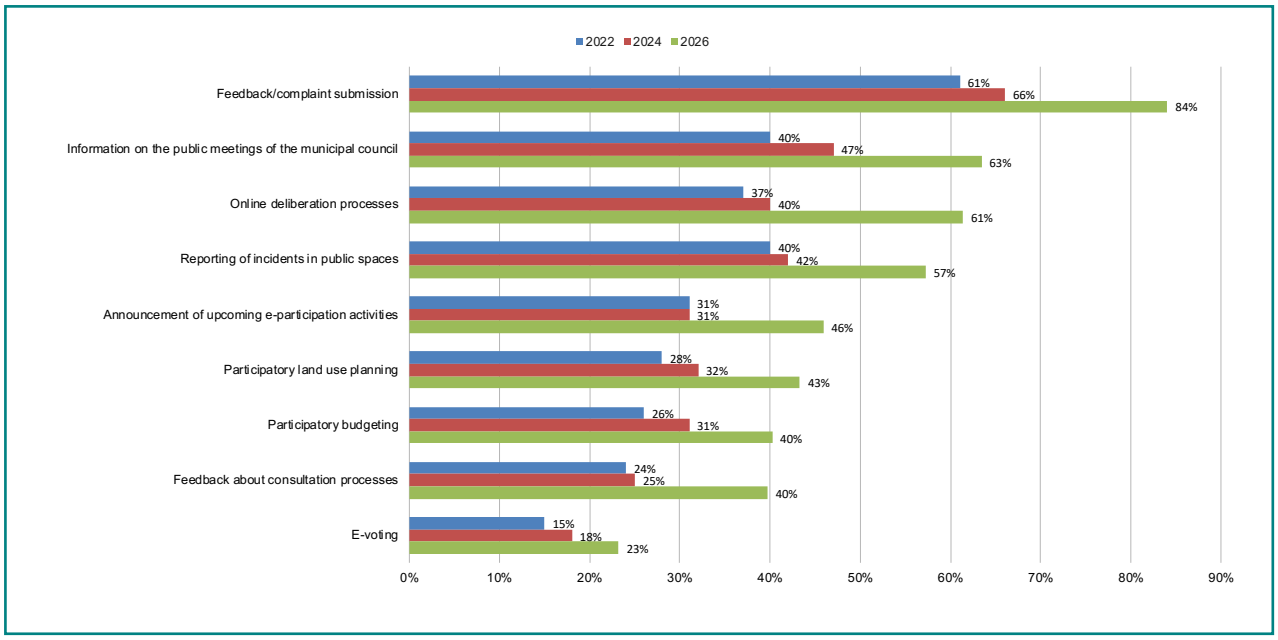
As shown in figure 3.11, participation and engagement indicators continue to improve in 2026, with the most notable gains observed in feedback/complaint submission, which has become a near-standard feature across city portals. There are also meaningful increases in access to information on municipal council meetings, online deliberation processes, and reporting of incidents in public spaces, indicating a gradual shift toward more interactive and responsive governance models. Progress is also visible in participatory budgeting and land-use planning, though at more moderate levels. E-voting remains the least implemented mechanism, despite slight growth, suggesting that while cities are expanding channels for engagement, more advanced progress remains concentrated in low-barrier, low-risk tools, and deeper forms of digital governance involving direct decision-making or more institutionalized deliberative processes are still emerging and unevenly adopted.

These trends align with broader findings from the LGQ, which highlight that cities are increasingly integrating digital tools into participatory governance, though with significant variation in maturity and policy impact across regions. Reported practices span the maturity spectrum: Warsaw operates a Sectoral Social Dialogue Commission on Digitization and runs open-call programmes through which non-governmental organizations co-create city policies; Kuala Lumpur's e-Pandangan platform

allows residents to submit planning objections online, integrating participation into sustainability decisions; Belgrade uses social media explicitly for e-consultation, gathering public opinion in real time; and Athens has joined the Open Government Partnership Local initiative and convenes more than 50 cultural organizations through the Athens Culture Net.

Overall, these trends indicate that while cities are expanding digital engagement tools, participation remains largely consultative rather than decision-oriented. Moving toward more meaningful forms of digital participation will require stronger institutional integration of citizen input into policy processes, as well as greater transparency and accountability in how feedback is used. Without this shift, digital participation risks having a limited impact on decision-making. The limited depth of participation reflects both institutional and political constraints. While digital tools lower the cost of collecting feedback, integrating citizen input into formal decision-making requires changes in governance processes, accountability mechanisms and trust in public institutions. As a result, the indicators show wider availability of participation tools, but do not establish how much influence residents have on decisions.

Figure 3.11 Implementation of participation and engagement indicators in city portals

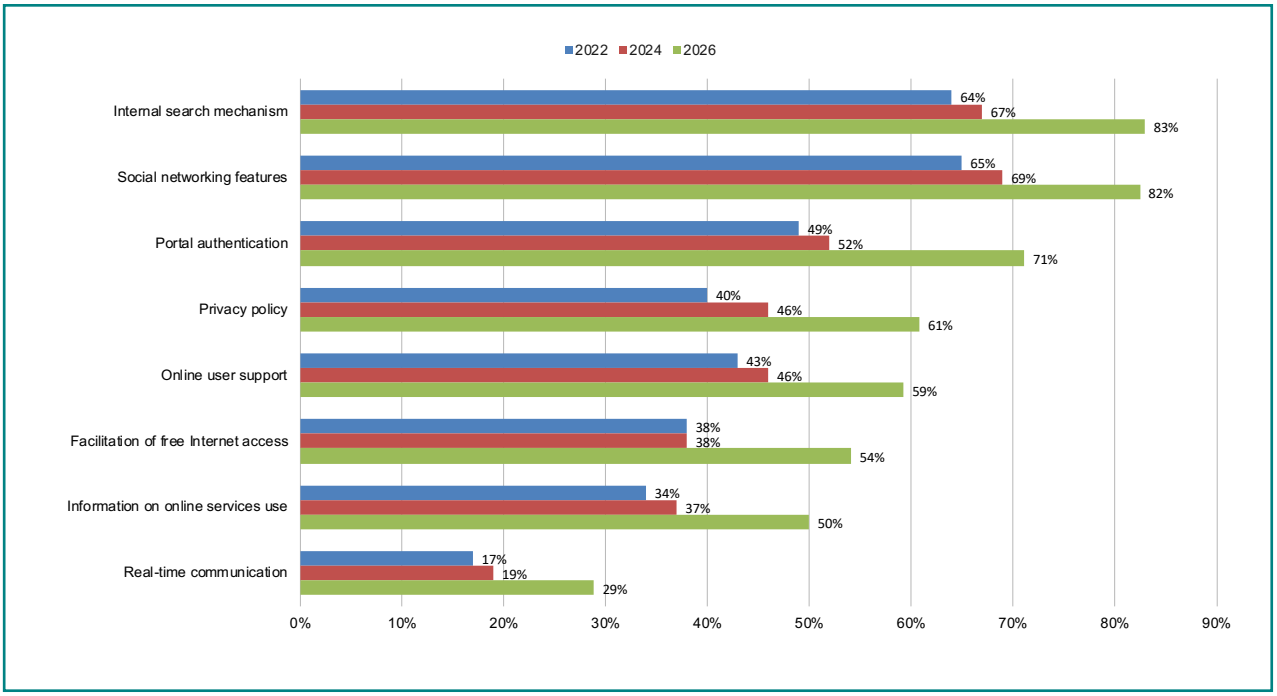


3.3.5 E-government literacy

Figure 3.12 shows clear progress across all e-government literacy indicators between 2024 and 2026. The strongest gains are seen in internal search mechanisms, social networking features, portal authentication, privacy policies, online user support, and information on online service use. These improvements suggest that city portals are becoming easier to navigate, more secure, and more supportive for residents using digital services. At the same time, real-time communication remains the least common feature and is present in fewer than one-third of the assessed portals. The increase in free Internet access is particularly significant from an inclusion perspective, as it supports vulnerable groups and contributes to SDG 11 by helping to ensure that digital urban services are accessible to more residents. The LGQ responses also show that cities are using a mix of approaches, including public Wi-Fi, digital service centres, libraries, mobile applications and social media channels, with more advanced examples linking user support, satisfaction measurement and usage statistics to service improvement. LGQ submissions point to concrete models. Singapore's Whole-of-Government

Analytics Application monitors all government websites and digital services in real time and feeds the annual Digital Services Awards, which evaluate performance with input from citizens including persons with disabilities. Tashkent city portal displays five-star ratings for individual services and refreshes usage statistics four times daily, while its Xalq Nazorati platform publishes weekly and annual citizen-satisfaction reports. Jakarta operates Jaksurvei, a digital survey platform used by more than 30 city agencies that has gathered feedback from close to 4 million respondents between 2019 and 2024, with results published openly through the Satu Data Jakarta portal.

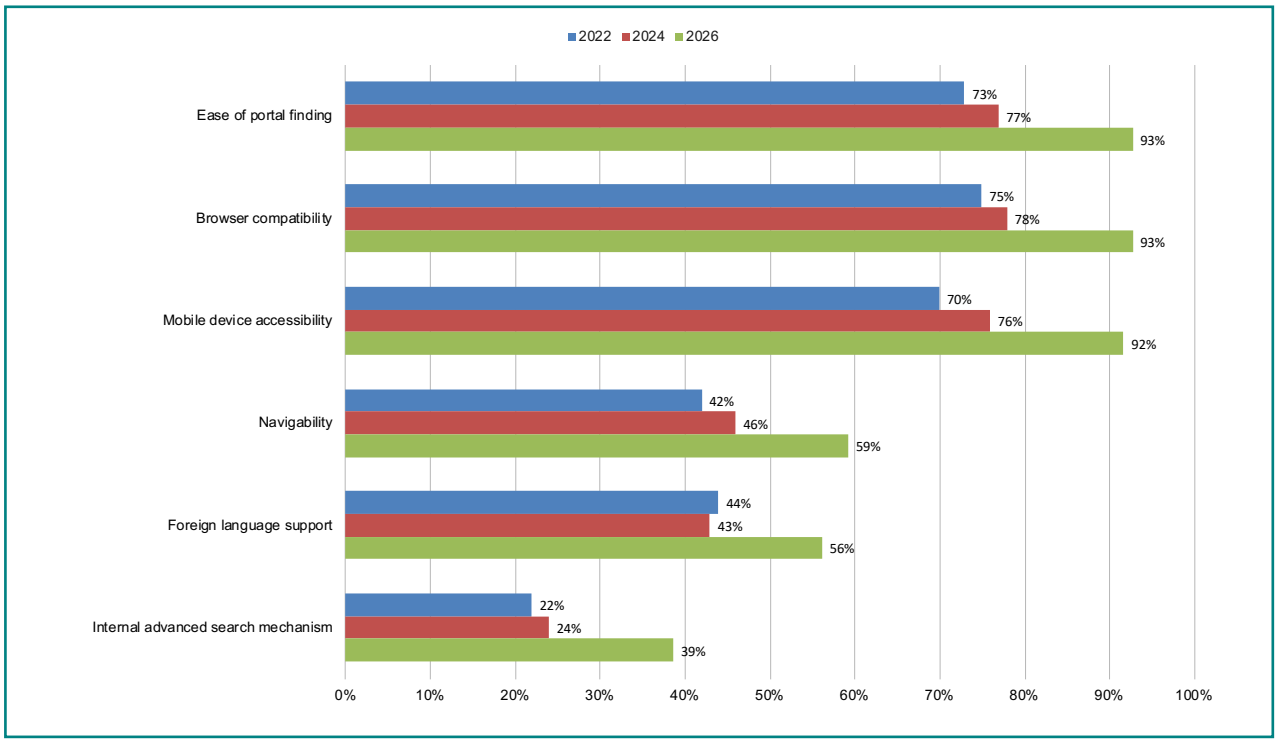
Figure 3.12 Implementation of e-government literacy indicators in city portals



3.3.6 E-government infrastructure

The criterion previously referred to as technology is labelled e-government infrastructure in the 2026 LOSI framework and continues to show steady progress across many cities (see figure 3.13). Strong improvements are visible across all six indicators, particularly in the ease of finding the government portal (rising from 73 per cent in 2022 to 93 per cent in 2026), browser compatibility (75 per cent to 93 per cent), and mobile device accessibility (70 per cent to 92 per cent). Progress was also recorded in navigability (42 per cent to 59 per cent), foreign language support (44 per cent to 56 per cent), and internal advanced search mechanisms (22 per cent to 39 per cent), although the latter two areas remain comparatively less widespread. These results suggest that cities are increasingly prioritizing user-friendly, mobile-accessible, and discoverable digital platforms, reflecting the growing importance of seamless online access to public services. Innovative city practices illustrate this shift. Beijing has introduced senior-friendly portal features such as text-to-speech, large fonts, and simplified service access for older persons and persons with disabilities. Tallinn continues to prioritize mobile-responsive design rather than app proliferation, while Dubai and Singapore have advanced integrated digital identity systems that simplify access across multiple services. As search engines, mobile devices, and AI assistants increasingly shape how people locate and use public services, the usability, interoperability and resilience of city digital infrastructure will become even more important for inclusive local governance and progress toward SDG 11.

Figure 3.13 Implementation of e-government infrastructure indicators in city portals



3.4 Smart cities for sustainable development

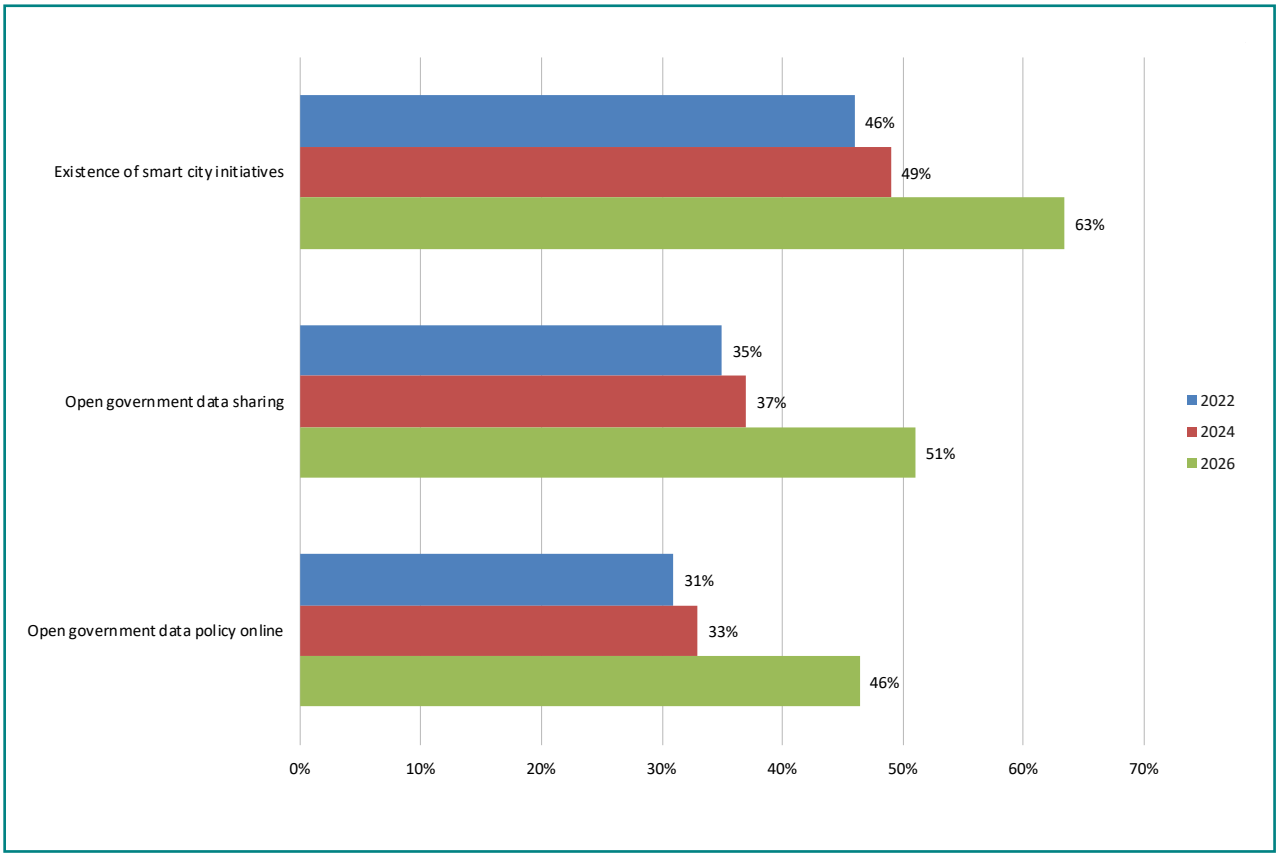
In this context, "smart city" development is understood not simply as the adoption of advanced technologies, but as the effective use of data, digital infrastructure, and integrated platforms to improve service delivery, sustainability and quality of life. As such, progress in smart city initiatives is closely linked to broader digital government maturity, particularly in areas such as interoperability, data governance and user-centric service design.

Figure 3.14 presents selected LOSI indicators that may serve as proxy measures of digital readiness for smart city development. Between 2022 and 2026, progress is visible across most indicators, particularly in the reported existence of smart city initiatives (from 46 per cent to 63 per cent), open government data sharing (from 35 per cent to 51 per cent), and the online publication of open data policies (from 31 per cent to 46 per cent). These trends suggest the growing recognition of the importance of data governance and innovation ecosystems in advancing smarter and more sustainable urban development aligned with SDG 11. While the indicator on emergent technologies was not separately assessed in 2026, earlier results also pointed to gradual uptake. Cities such as Seoul, Dubai, Tallinn and Madrid continue to illustrate how integrated data platforms, AI-enabled urban management and citizen-centred smart initiatives can support more efficient, inclusive and resilient local governance. LGQ responses surface a wider range of approaches grounded in sustainability priorities: Bogotá's Bogotá Circular platform links the fashion, food and waste sectors through a shared web portal, while Costa Rica's ecoins programme uses digital rewards to encourage recycling. Belgrade's AI-driven adaptive traffic-signal system reportedly cuts commute times by 15 to 30 minutes while giving trams priority movement through some 300 key intersections, with priority subsequently extended to the bus subsystem. Jakarta's JakISPU air-quality module is embedded in the JAKI super-app, a one-stop application that brings together services from the local government, the central government and business actors on a single platform that is personalized through a digital ID and

supporting digital payments. The app integrates environmental sensor data into everyday digital life. Monaco, despite its small size, combines a city-wide digital twin (a 3D virtual replica of the Principality that enhances emergency management and response through real-time data and simulations), the GEVIM major-events plan (the Gestion des Evènements Importants, a civil protection framework covering all types of major events and crises, supported by digital tools for incident management and early-warning monitoring) and the YourMonaco citizen app with automated major-risk alerts. Together, these tools serve the single policy objective of risk and emergency management: the digital twin supplies real-time data and simulations, the GEVIM plan translates the data into coordinated operational responses, and the citizen app delivers alerts directly to residents. This alignment of systems around one clearly defined objective underscores that strategic coherence can matter more than scale, enabling a very small administration to build capabilities that many larger cities have yet to establish.

These examples highlight that the effectiveness of smart city initiatives depends less on technological sophistication and more on three related but distinct factors: strategic coherence, where individual tools are designed to work with one another rather than in isolation; integration across sectors, where a single platform connects different policy domains; and alignment with clearly defined public policy objectives, where technology serves a stated policy goal. Cities that successfully link data systems, service delivery and citizen engagement tend to achieve more tangible and scalable outcomes.

Figure 3.14 LOSI indicators as a proxy for progress toward smart city development



Source: UN DESA, LOSI 2022, 2024 and 2026.

Beyond availability: who can actually use these services

The indicators discussed above capture whether a service exists and can technically be accessed, but they reveal less about who is able to use the service in practice. Foreign-language support, available on just 56 per cent of portals in 2026, provides one proxy for linguistic inclusion, but does not capture the quality or adequacy of that support, nor does it capture gender gaps in digital literacy or Internet access that may limit who benefits from online services even when they are available. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals' commitment to "leave no one behind," future assessment cycles could usefully move beyond service availability to consider service usability among residents who are most at risk of digital exclusion, including older persons, persons living in low-income households, persons with disabilities and speakers of underserved languages. Without this broader lens, an increase in online services may not translate into a commensurate increase in access for all residents.

3.5 Key findings and recommendations

- The LOSI 2026 findings continue to show a strong relationship between national and local digital government development. Cities in countries with advanced national online services generally perform better, but gaps remain, confirming the importance of monitoring both national and local levels to support coherent digital transformation. However, successful digital transformation may also depend on a city's ability to allocate resources, translate national frameworks into local implementation, and effectively manage its digital transformation strategy.

- The average LOSI value increased modestly between 2024 and 2026, indicating gradual overall progress. Improvements across many indicators suggest that cities continue to strengthen their digital presence, although significant scope remains for further advancement, particularly in service quality and inclusion.

- Europe remains the highest-performing region on average, with consistently strong results across many cities. At the same time, important progress is visible in Asia, particularly Western Asia and parts of Latin America, while a number of cities in Africa and SIDS still face limited or no dedicated local online presence.

- As in previous editions, larger and more populous cities tend to achieve higher LOSI values, reflecting stronger institutional capacity, greater demand for digital services, and more resources for innovation. However, several smaller cities also demonstrate that strategic planning and targeted investment can produce high performance regardless of size.

- Among the six criteria assessed in 2026, institutional framework indicators continue to record the highest average compliance, highlighting the growing importance of governance structures, strategies, and accountability mechanisms. E-government literacy and infrastructure indicators also perform comparatively strongly, reflecting rising attention to usability and access.

- A notable share of assessed cities still do not provide evidence of an operational stand-alone municipal portal. In some cases, this reflects capacity constraints; in others, especially in small States and highly centralized systems, residents rely primarily on integrated national platforms. Future local digital strategies should prioritize the user experience rather than administrative boundaries.

- Lower compliance rates remain evident in some technical areas, including accessibility standards, standards-based design, and advanced transactional functionality. Addressing these gaps is essential to ensure inclusive access for persons with disabilities, older persons and users with limited digital skills.

- Service provision shows continued progress, particularly in the availability of online applications, payments and requests for municipal services, although more integrated and seamless digital service delivery remains uneven across cities.
- Participation and engagement continue to improve, particularly in low-barrier tools such as feedback systems, complaint mechanisms, and access to municipal information, while more advanced tools like e-voting and structured citizen consultation remain limited, indicating gradual but still shallow progress toward deeper participatory governance.
- Cities should continue investing in mobile-first design, multilingual services, secure digital identity, open data and participatory tools. Greater use of analytics, user satisfaction measurement, and emerging technologies such as AI can further improve responsiveness, resilience, and progress toward more inclusive and sustainable cities under SDG 11.

Moving forward, efforts to strengthen local digital government should focus on a set of interrelated priorities. First, advancing the integration of digital services across institutions is essential to enable seamless, end-to-end user experiences, particularly for complex life-event services. Second, strengthening local institutional capacity, including digital leadership, financing mechanisms, and technical expertise, remains critical to translating national frameworks into effective local implementation. Third, greater emphasis is needed on inclusiveness, including accessibility for persons with disabilities, multilingual service provision, and support for users with limited digital skills. Fourth, cities should expand the systematic use of data, analytics, and user feedback to continuously improve service design and responsiveness. Finally, adopting flexible, multi-channel service delivery models—including mobile, offline and intermediary-supported access—will be essential to ensure that digital government remains accessible and effective across diverse urban contexts.

Beyond the indicators tracked in this edition, a growing number of cities are piloting AI-enabled service delivery, including chatbots for resident inquiries, predictive maintenance for infrastructure, automated permitting and licensing decisions, and personalized service recommendations. These tools offer the potential to extend service reach and responsiveness without proportional increases in municipal staffing, which is particularly valuable for lower-capacity local governments. At the same time, their use raises new questions that this chapter's current indicators do not yet capture: algorithmic bias in automated decisions, transparency in AI-assisted government processes, and data privacy protections for residents interacting with these systems. As local e-government continues to evolve, future editions of the LOSI will expand beyond measuring the presence of digital services toward assessing the governance and accountability frameworks that shape how those services, which are increasingly AI-enabled, are delivered.

Endnotes

1 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, World Urbanization Prospects 2025: Summary of Results (New York, 2025). Available at https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/wup-2025-summary-results.

2 International Telecommunication Union, Measuring Digital Development: Global Connectivity Report 2025 (Geneva, 2025). Available at https://www.itu.int/hub/publication/d-ind-ict_mdd-gcr-2025

3 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Application of LOSI methodology in countries", E-Government Knowledgebase. Available at https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/About/E-Government-at-Local-Level/Application-of-LOSI-methodology-in-countries (accessed 5 August 2026)

4. The Artificial Intelligence Evolution of Public Services: Exploring the Shift toward Agentic Government



AI-generated image: INTERMID

In this chapter:

4.1 From digital transformation to AI-enabled public administration 103

4.2 Toward outcome-oriented and AI-enabled public administration 107

4.2.1 Increased autonomy and reallocation of human judgment 108

4.2.2 Embedded intelligence in government structure 108

4.2.3 Faster, evidence-based policy adjustment 108

4.2.4 Improving accessibility and equity: leaving no one behind in practice 108

4.2.5 Robust data governance as institutional foundation 109

4.3 Digital and data sovereignty as foundations for Agentic Government 109

4.4 From AI readiness indices to measuring Agentic Government 111

4.4.1 Government AI Readiness Index 111

4.4.2 Stanford AI Index Report 112

4.4.3 Global AI Index 112

4.4.4 Towards an Agentic Government Index 112

4.5 From the digital divide to the AI divide: readiness, capacity and global governance 113

4.6 The United Nations response to the AI divide: governance, capacity and system-wide coordination 115

4.7 International, regional and national AI cooperation hubs: building shared capacity for responsible public-sector transformation 116

4.8 Towards a United Nations Platform for Digital Government Cooperation, Innovation and R&D 118

4.9 Conclusion and key recommendations 120

Endnotes 122

4.1 From digital transformation to AI-enabled public administration

Digital government continues to follow a clear upward trajectory across regions, as highlighted in Chapter 2, that is supported by sustained investment in digital infrastructure, cloud computing, broadband expansion, secure data-sharing architectures and increasingly sophisticated uses of emerging technologies. This evolution is no longer limited to the digitization of public services or the modernization of government portals. It is increasingly shaped by the integration of data, digital identity, interoperability frameworks, cloud infrastructure, artificial intelligence (AI) and institutional capabilities that allow governments to operate in more connected, predictive and responsive ways.

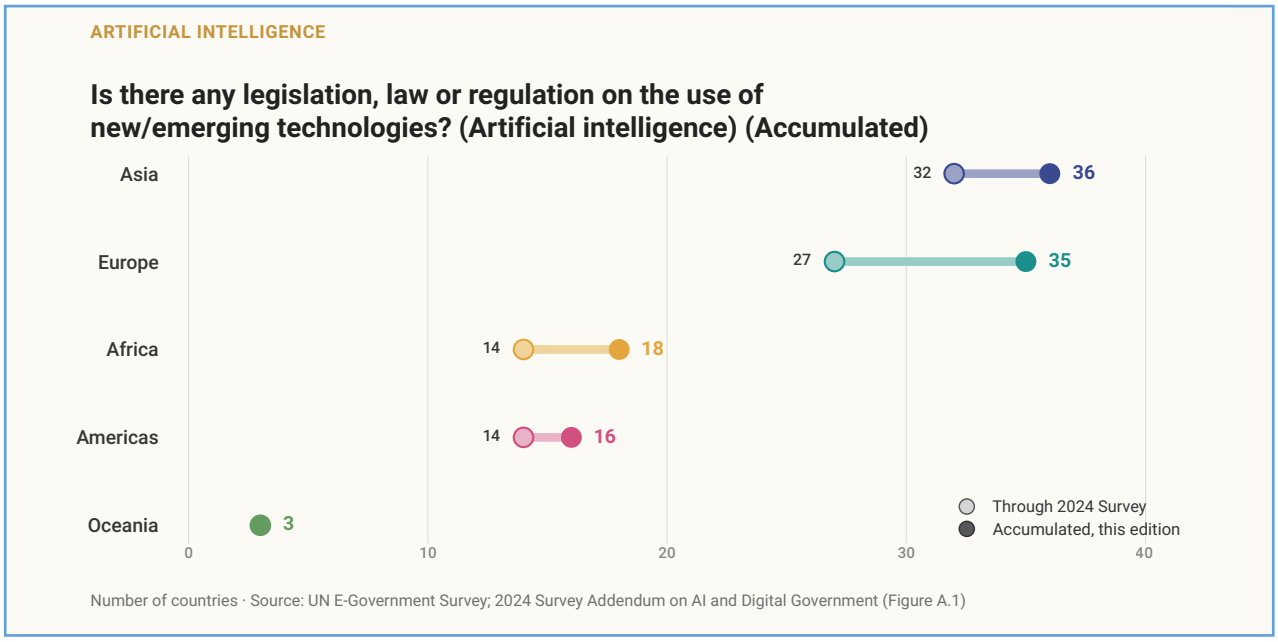
As the digital transformation continues to evolve, the emergence of AI raises analogous, and arguably more consequential, governance questions: what can AI offer to the next phase of the digital State, and what challenges does it pose for public administration, public trust, institutional accountability and inclusion? Following the release of advanced large language models (LLMs) in late 2022 and the rapid commercialization of LLMs and generative AI, the global AI market has expanded at an unprecedented pace, from approximately USD 189 billion in 2023 to a projected USD 4.8 trillion by 2033, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). This growth is not limited to commercial applications.Grand View Research estimated the global AI-in-government-and-public-services market at USD 22.41 billion in 2024 and projected it to reach USD 98.13 billion by 2033, indicating that AI is rapidly becoming embedded in the core infrastructure of state functions.

Evidence from the Member States Questionnaire[i] confirms that governments are moving rapidly to integrate emerging technologies into their digital government frameworks. Across the accumulated[ii] Survey data from 2022, 2024 and 2026, the number of countries with legislation, laws or regulations governing the use of new and emerging technologies—including AI, robotics, blockchain, 5G and the Internet of Things—has risen from 90 to 108, out of the 159 countries that responded to this question. Regionally, this includes 36 countries in Asia, 35 in Europe, 18 in Africa, 16 in the Americas and 3 in Oceania, as shown in figure 4.1.

[i] Administered by UN DESA as part of the UN E-Government Survey, 2026, the Member State Questionnaire gathers self-reported data from national governments on digital government strategies, institutional frameworks, and the adoption of emerging technologies.

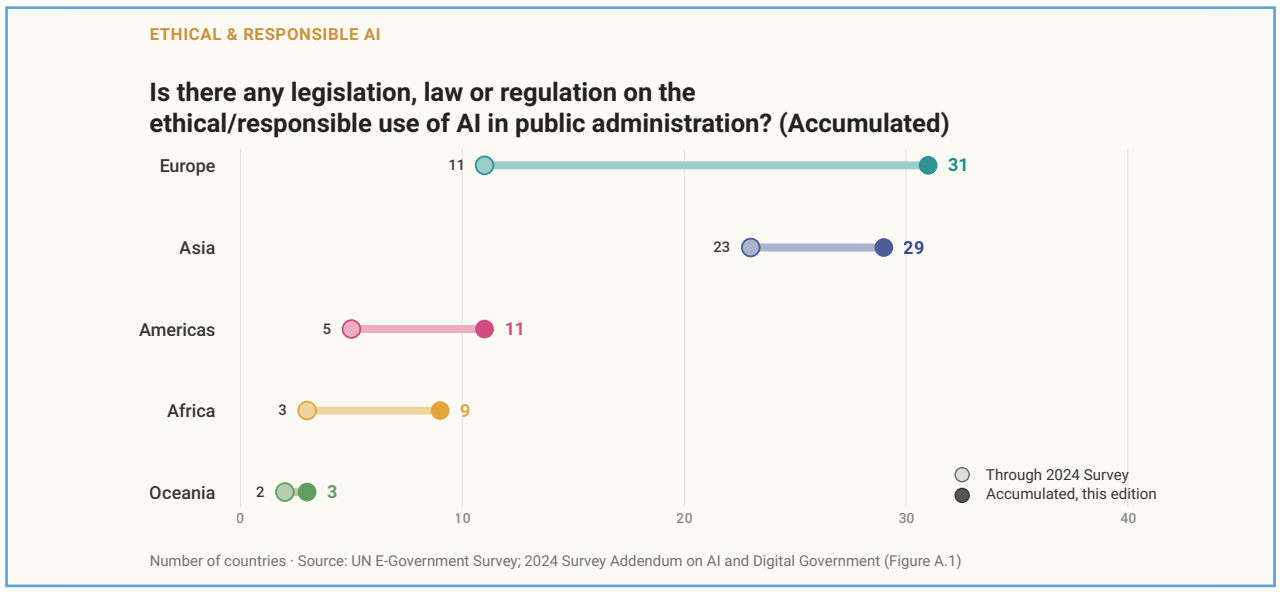
[ii] Non-respondents' values were carried forward from their most recent prior MSQ submission (2024 or 2022).

Figure 4.1 Results by region on the survey question: Is there any legislation, law or regulation on the use of new/emerging technologies? (Artificial Intelligence).



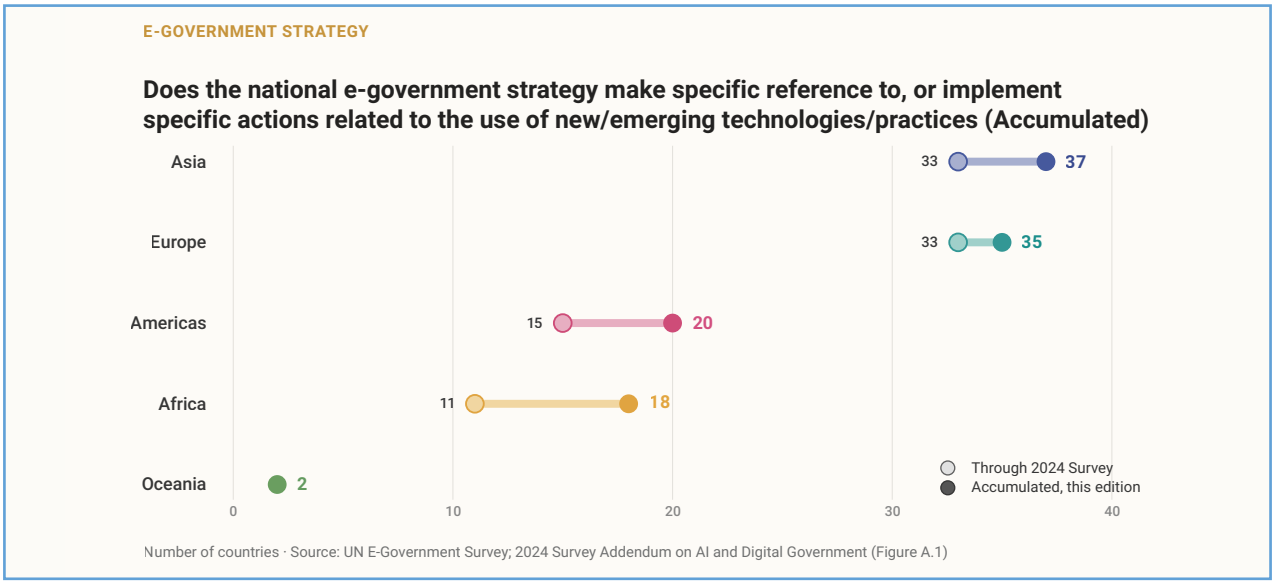
The institutionalization of AI governance is even more visible in relation to ethical and responsible AI in public administration. The accumulated number of countries with legislation, laws or regulations specifically addressing the ethical and responsible use of AI in public administration has nearly doubled, in 2026 compared to the survey result in 2024 rising from 44 to 83 countries out of the 139 countries that responded to this question. As reflected in figure 4.2, Europe and Asia lead with 31 countries and 29 countries, respectively, followed by the Americas with 11, Africa with 9 and Oceania with 3. This trend suggests that AI is no longer treated only as a matter of technological innovation, but increasingly as a matter of public-sector governance, ethics, accountability and institutional readiness.

Figure 4.2 Results by region on the survey question: Is there any legislation, law or regulation on the ethical/responsible use of AI in public administration?



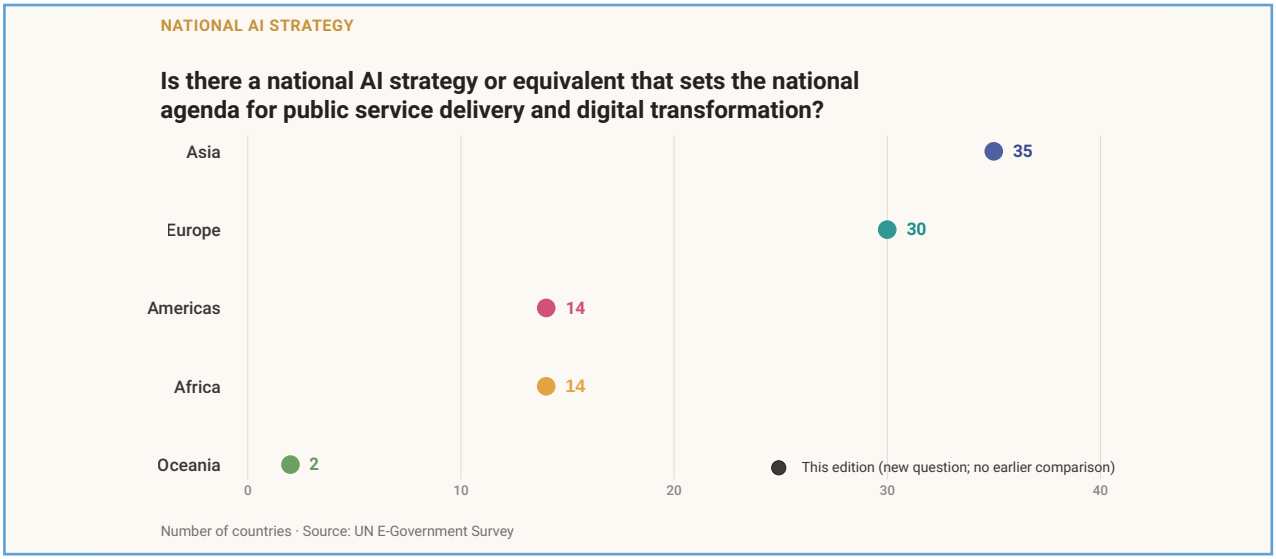
A similar pattern emerges in national digital government strategies. The number of countries whose national e-government strategy makes specific reference to AI has increased in 2026 from 94 to 112 countries out of the 162 countries that responded to this question. Figure 4.3 shows that this trend is particularly strong in Asia, with 37 countries, followed by Europe with 35, the Americas with 20, Africa with 18, and Oceania with 2.

Figure 4.3 Results by region on the survey question: Does the national e-government strategy make specific reference to, or implement specific actions related to the use of new/emerging technologies/ practices.



In parallel, 95 countries now maintain a national AI strategy or equivalent framework that sets the national agenda for public service delivery and digital transformation. As shown in figure 4.4, Asia leads with 35 countries, followed by Europe with 30, Africa and Americas with 14 and Oceania with 2.

Figure 4.4 Results by region on the survey question: Is there a national AI strategy or equivalent that sets the national agenda for public service delivery and digital transformation?



Taken together, these indicators suggest that more countries are establishing legal and strategic frameworks relevant to AI and emerging technologies in public administration. These indicators primarily capture government and public-sector readiness: whether countries have laws or regulations on emerging technologies, frameworks for the ethical and responsible use of AI in public administration, references to AI in national e-government strategies, and national AI strategies linked to public service delivery and digital transformation. They should therefore not be read as a direct measure of the full AI economy, private-sector innovation, frontier model development or compute capacity. Rather, they show how far AI is being institutionalized within the machinery of government.

The regional distribution of these frameworks reveals also an uneven geography of public-sector AI readiness, but it should be interpreted with caution. Each region includes countries at very different levels of income, digital maturity, infrastructure capacity and institutional readiness. Asia, for example, includes some of the world's most advanced AI and digital government ecosystems, but also includes countries that are still strengthening their foundational digital infrastructure. The Americas include the United States, one of the global centres of frontier AI development, alongside countries with more limited institutional and technological capacity. Developing countries in Oceania, including small island developing States (SIDS), face structural constraints related to scale, connectivity, human resources and infrastructure. Regional aggregates should therefore be interpreted with caution, as they may mask significant differences in levels of digital development and capacity among countries within the region.

This public-sector picture should also be distinguished from the broader geography of AI transformation, which remains highly concentrated in a limited number of countries and technology ecosystems. The United States continues to dominate private AI investment, reaching USD 109.1 billion in 2024, nearly 12 times China's USD 9.3 billion and 24 times the United Kingdom's USD 4.5 billion.[1] China, however, remains a central AI power and is rapidly narrowing the performance gap in advanced AI systems, while also leading in AI publications, patents and industrial robotics.[2] Beyond the United States and China, AI capabilities are distributed across a wider range of countries. However, leadership in AI research and innovation, government readiness, governance and infrastructure investment varies by the dimension measured, and no single country ranking captures all these strengths.

Patent data further confirms this concentration. The World Intellectual Property Organization's Generative AI Patent Landscape Report shows that China, the United States, the Republic of Korea, Japan and India are the top five inventor locations for generative AI patents, with China-based inventors accounting for a particularly large share of global filings.[3] This ranking confirms that the geography of frontier AI innovation is much narrower than the broader geography of public-sector AI adoption and policy readiness.

In this context, AI should not be understood merely as another technological layer added to existing digital government systems. Rather, it marks a deeper shift in how governments may design policies, organize institutions, deliver services, manage data, allocate resources, anticipate risks and respond to citizens' needs. Digital government has traditionally focused on making public services more accessible, integrated, transparent and user-centred through digital channels and interoperable systems. AI-enabled public administration builds on these foundations but introduces new capacities for analysis, automation, personalization, prediction and, increasingly, autonomous coordination through agentic AI systems.

4.2 Toward outcome-oriented and AI-enabled public administration

Building on the transition from digital government to AI-enabled public administration, a further conceptual frontier is now emerging around the use of AI systems that do not merely support individual administrative tasks but can pursue defined objectives across complex governmental workflows. This shift should first be understood through the concept of agentic AI. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), AI agents are systems that can perceive and act upon their environment with a degree of autonomy, using tools to achieve specific goals and adapt to changing inputs and contexts. Agentic AI, in turn, generally refers to systems that are composed of multiple coordinated AI agents that can break down tasks, collaborate and pursue complex objectives autonomously over extended periods, often in open-ended and less predictable environments with limited human supervision.

Applied to government, this evolution points to a model of public administration in which goal-oriented AI systems are integrated into governmental operations under defined human oversight. What distinguishes this model from earlier digital government paradigms is not the use of AI technologies per se, but the nature of that use. Rather than passively supporting operational functions, these systems may interpret objectives, select among possible courses of action, interact with other systems and data environments, and adapt their behavior as conditions change. In multi-agent configurations, individual agents may collaborate, delegate or coordinate tasks across broader ecosystems, enabling governmental functions to be performed at a scale and level of complexity that traditional administrative processes alone may not sustain.

For the purposes of this chapter, this model can be defined as Agentic Government: a model of public administration in which AI-agent systems, operating within human-defined mandates, legal safeguards, public-interest objectives and auditable governance arrangements, can autonomously plan, coordinate, execute and adapt end-to-end workflows across government functions, while public officials retain responsibility for strategic direction, political accountability, ethical oversight, legal compliance, redress and final outcomes. In dialogue with the Agentic State vision of the Tallinn Digital Summit 2025, this concept is advanced as a heuristic rather than a settled normative framework, centred on the conditions of mandate, legality and accountability that govern delegated machine agency.

In this sense, Agentic Government may be understood as a possible next stage in the evolution of digital government. While digital governments have reconfigured their functions and how these functions are delivered, they have predominantly focused on digitizing services, modernizing administrative processes and improving access, transparency and efficiency. Agentic Government would go further by reconfiguring how government functions are coordinated, executed and supervised on a large scale. The central transformation is therefore not simply from paper to digital, or from offline to online. Traditional digital government has largely focused on digitizing and improving administrative procedures, while AI creates the potential for digital systems to contribute more directly to the achievement of defined public objectives. In this sense, AI may enable a shift from digital systems that primarily support the execution of established procedures toward systems that also support outcome-oriented public administration.

A closely related concept has been advanced under the notion of the Agentic State, which gained prominence during the Tallinn Digital Summit 2025. The corresponding vision paper frames the Agentic State as a comprehensive transformation of public administration, not merely the deployment of individual AI agents within existing structures. It analyses this transformation through multiple functional layers, including implementation layers where agentic AI may deliver value in public service design, government workflows, policymaking, regulatory compliance, crisis response and procurement, as well as enablement layers addressing the structural conditions required for responsible deployment, including agent governance, data infrastructure, cybersecurity, public finance and organizational culture. Several characteristics can distinguish Agentic Government from earlier models of digital government.

4.2.1 Increased autonomy and reallocation of human judgment

The first characteristic is the variable autonomy of AI agents and the reallocation of human judgment. In traditional digital government, systems generally execute predetermined procedures designed by human administrators. In Agentic Government, AI agents may pursue assigned objectives, perceive changing conditions, reason across data environments, select among possible actions and operate with different degrees of human oversight.[4] [5] This does not mean that human judgment disappears. Rather, it must be deliberately reallocated. Routine and procedurally well-defined tasks may be delegated to lower-autonomy systems, while human officials should remain responsible for strategic direction, legal interpretation, ethical trade-offs, discretionary decisions, exceptions and final accountability. The central governance challenge is therefore not automation itself but ensuring that accountability remains clear when operational action becomes increasingly distributed across human and machine systems.

4.2.2 Embedded intelligence in government structure

A second characteristic is the emergence of embedded intelligence within the structure of government. Agentic systems can make public administration more adaptive only if their decision criteria are explicit, auditable and contestable. In this sense, Agentic Government may contribute to a new form of algorithmic-level bureaucracy: one in which routine cases can be processed within defined parameters, while exceptional, ambiguous or rights-sensitive cases are identified and escalated for human review.[6] This differs both from traditional street-level bureaucracy,[7] where discretion was exercised mainly by frontline officials, and from system-level bureaucracy, where discretion was increasingly exercised through the design of software systems and predefined decision rules. While conventional systems can also flag exceptional cases based on predetermined criteria, the added value of an agentic model lies in its ability to assess cases more contextually and provide explanations for why a case was treated as routine or exceptional.[8] This can support a more dynamic feedback structure, enabling human intervention where the system's logic is incomplete, biased or insufficient.[9]

4.2.3 Faster, evidence-based policy adjustment

A third characteristic is the potential for faster and more evidence-based policy adjustment. Because agentic systems can systematically identify unresolved, exceptional or recurrent cases, they can generate evidence on where existing policies are failing to reach specific groups or address emerging needs. This can support a more precise and responsive policy cycle. However, this should not be confused with constant regulatory change. Stability remains essential for public trust and institutional legitimacy. The objective is not regulatory instability, but policy precision: the ability to improve rules and implementation mechanisms over time by learning from cases where the current framework falls short.[10] [11]

4.2.4 Improving accessibility and equity: leaving no one behind in practice

A fourth characteristic is the capacity to strengthen accessibility, inclusion and equity. Many digital government systems remain reactive and pull-based: citizens must know which service exists, understand eligibility rules, navigate administrative portals and initiate the interaction themselves. This can leave behind those with lower digital skills, limited time, language barriers, disabilities, weak connectivity or limited knowledge of their entitlements. Agentic systems could support a more proactive model by identifying eligible but unenrolled populations, detecting service gaps and delivering personalized information or notifications to citizens before they need to navigate complex administrative processes. In this sense, Agentic Government could help operationalize the principle of leaving no one behind,[12] and advance social equity[13] provided that safeguards are in place to prevent bias, exclusion, surveillance risks or unequal treatment.

4.2.5 Robust data governance as institutional foundation

A fifth and foundational characteristic is the dependence of Agentic Government on robust data governance. Agentic systems require accurate, integrated, interoperable and well-governed data to function responsibly. Without strong data governance, these systems may reproduce poor-quality data, reinforce existing inequalities, undermine privacy or generate decisions that are difficult to audit or contest. Data governance is therefore not merely a preparatory or technical issue; it is a constitutional condition for Agentic Government. It determines whether AI-enabled public administration can be trusted, accountable and aligned with public values. This includes clear rules for data stewardship, interoperability, privacy protection, cybersecurity, access rights, data quality, institutional responsibility and redress.

Taken together, these characteristics show that Agentic Government is not primarily a technological model, but an institutional transformation. Its promise lies in making government more proactive, adaptive, evidence-based and inclusive. Its risks lie in opacity, automation bias, fragmented accountability, weak data foundations, cybersecurity vulnerabilities and the possible erosion of public trust. The policy challenge is therefore to ensure that agentic systems remain embedded within democratic governance, legal safeguards, human oversight and public-interest objectives. In this sense, the future of Agentic Government will depend less on the sophistication of AI agents and more on the capacity of public institutions to govern them responsibly.

4.3 Digital and data sovereignty as foundations for Agentic Government

As governments move from AI-enabled public administration toward more integrated and agentic forms of governance, sovereignty over data, compute and digital infrastructure becomes a strategic condition of institutional autonomy. Agentic systems depend on large-scale data flows, cloud environments, computational capacity, secure identity systems and interoperable architectures. For this reason, the question is no longer only whether governments can adopt AI, but whether they can govern the infrastructures, data environments and technological dependencies on which AI-enabled public administration increasingly relies.

The growing importance of AI is reshaping the meaning of digital and data sovereignty. Many countries and regional blocs are investing in national or regional large language models, data centres, sovereign cloud arrangements, high-performance computing and AI infrastructure in order to strengthen their capacity to develop, deploy and govern AI systems according to their own legal, institutional, linguistic and cultural priorities. The European Union, for example, is developing AI Factories and AI Gigafactories to expand access to supercomputing capacity and support the development of trustworthy generative AI models. India's IndiaAI mission is expanding national compute capacity and supporting indigenous foundation models. Saudi Arabia's HUMAIN initiative aims to build a full AI stack (controlling every layer of the AI value chain rather than specialising in one), including data centres, cloud infrastructure, advanced AI models and Arabic large language models, while the United Arab Emirates has invested in open-source models, such as Falcon. The Republic of Korea is also expanding national AI computing infrastructure through sovereign clouds, AI factories and high-performance Graphics Processing Units (GPUs). These examples illustrate a broader trend: AI transformation is increasingly understood not only as a matter of software innovation, but also as a question of strategic control over data, compute, infrastructure and institutional capability.

At the same time, sovereignty in the AI era cannot be reduced to the localization of data centres or national ownership of infrastructure. Modern digital infrastructures are distributed, cloud-based and globally interconnected. Data is generated, stored, processed and reused across multiple locations, often through complex transnational supply chains involving cloud providers, data centres, AI models, semiconductor systems, connectivity networks and application layers. This interdependency creates new tensions for governments seeking to protect data, ensure jurisdictional control and preserve

public-sector autonomy. It also raises a particular challenge for developing countries: sovereignty models based exclusively on domestic physical infrastructure may be financially burdensome or even exclusionary, particularly where countries face resource constraints, given the substantial energy, water and land requirements associated with developing and operating data centres.

Against this background, the concept of virtual sovereignty can help complement more traditional understandings of digital, data and cloud sovereignty. Virtual sovereignty may be understood as a governance model in which authority over data is secured not only through territorial control of infrastructure, but also through technological architecture, governance frameworks and interoperable protocols. Under this approach, data may be stored or processed across distributed infrastructures and different jurisdictions, while the rules governing its access, use, sharing and management remain under the authority of the State, institution or individual that defines them. Sovereignty is therefore embedded in the design of the digital ecosystem itself, rather than being exercised only through the physical location of servers or data centres. At the same time, these technological arrangements should be understood as enabling mechanisms rather than guarantees, as their effectiveness may depend on how they are implemented and governed, as well as on the legal and jurisdictional context in which they operate.

Box 4.1 Definition of digital sovereignty.

Definitions of digital sovereignty vary across the literature. Following Floridi,[14] it is understood here as control over the data, software, standards, processes, hardware, services, and infrastructures that constitute the digital domain, where such control may be exercised by States, corporations, and individuals. From this perspective, digital sovereignty complements rather than replaces the territorially bounded sovereignty of the modern State, which remains necessary but is increasingly insufficient in a domain where digital resources frequently transcend territorial boundaries.

This shift from territorial control to architectural control is particularly relevant for the possible evolution toward Agentic Government. AI-agent systems require access to distributed data and compute environments in order to operate across public services, administrative workflows and policy functions. For such systems to be legitimate and trustworthy, governments must be able to define and enforce the rules under which data is accessed, processed, shared and audited, even when the underlying infrastructure is distributed or partly provided by external actors. Virtual sovereignty therefore expands the sovereignty debate beyond geopolitical borders and reframes it as a question of governable architecture: who defines the rules, who controls access, who can audit use, who bears responsibility, and how rights, security and public accountability are preserved across distributed systems.

The implementation of virtual sovereignty depends on an advanced distributed technology stack — a set of interoperating technical layers that function across multiple systems, providers and jurisdictions rather than within a single centralized platform. This includes secure digital identity systems for trusted authentication and authorization; programmable governance layers that embed regulatory and compliance logic directly into infrastructure; encryption frameworks that preserve confidentiality and integrity regardless of data location; consent and data-control mechanisms that ensure transparency, traceability and accountability; federated cloud arrangements capable of operating across jurisdictions under trusted governance; and privacy-preserving or federated AI analytics that allow algorithms to operate on distributed datasets without requiring the centralization of sensitive information. Through such architectures, governments may strengthen resilience, reduce dependence on single providers or centralized infrastructures, access global computational resources, and support responsible cross-border data collaboration while preserving sovereign control over the

rules of use. This offers a more feasible path to development than national-scale physical build-out, especially for middle- and low-income countries.

This approach is also consistent with emerging international policy frameworks. The Global Digital Compact, under its fourth objective, commits Member States to advancing responsible, equitable and interoperable data governance approaches, including at national, regional and international levels. The Data Free Flow with Trust framework, endorsed by G20 leaders at the Osaka Summit, emphasizes the importance of trusted, interoperable and rights-respecting data flows across borders. These instruments expose a familiar tension between data sovereignty and free cross-border flow. Virtual sovereignty offers a way to hold the two together through a combination of territorial safeguards, trusted infrastructure, interoperable governance and technical architectures that allow data to flow where appropriate while remaining subject to clear rules, accountability and public-interest safeguards.

In this sense, digital, data and virtual sovereignty should be understood as foundational conditions for Agentic Government. A government cannot responsibly delegate complex administrative functions to AI-agent systems if it lacks control over the data, infrastructure, governance rules and accountability mechanisms that make those systems operate. The path toward an Agentic Government therefore requires more than AI adoption. It requires sovereign and trusted digital foundations: resilient compute, secure cloud ecosystems, interoperable data governance, auditable architectures, cyber resilience and institutional capacity to govern distributed AI systems in the public interest.

4.4 From AI readiness indices to measuring Agentic Government

The discussion of Agentic Government raises an important measurement question. As some governments explore a shift from online service delivery towards more outcome-oriented, AI-enabled and partially autonomous public administration, governments and international organizations will need tools capable of assessing not only whether countries are "ready" for AI, but also how AI is actually being used in the public sector, under what safeguards, and with what implications for public value, accountability, inclusion and trust.

The measurement challenge is therefore becoming more complex. It is no longer sufficient to assess the existence of digital infrastructure, online services or national AI strategies alone; it is also necessary to understand whether AI-enabled systems are being responsibly deployed in public administration and whether they improve the quality, accessibility and responsiveness of government.

Building on the digital government era, several pioneering institutions have developed indices and analytical instruments to measure AI technology maturity, AI capacity and AI governance development. Among the most widely consulted are the Government AI Readiness Index, published by Oxford Insights; the AI Index Report, published by the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence; and the Global AI Index, published by Tortoise Media. These instruments are valuable, but they differ significantly in scope, purpose and methodological orientation. The Oxford Insights index is the most directly relevant for a United Nations E-Government Survey readership because it focuses specifically on the readiness of governments to harness AI for the benefit of the public.

4.4.1 Government AI Readiness Index

Oxford Insights' Government AI Readiness Index is currently the most cited global benchmark for assessing the capacity of governments to adopt, enable and govern AI. The 2025 edition assesses 195 governments and explicitly reframes the core question from a narrower focus on implementing AI in public services to the broader question of the extent to which a government can harness AI to benefit the public. This shift is important because it recognizes that governments are not only users of AI, but also buyers, regulators, enablers and guardians of AI ecosystems.

The 2025 methodology also represents a significant evolution from earlier editions. The index moves from the previous three-pillar structure—Government, Technology Sector, and Data and Infrastructure—to a broader framework organized around six pillars: Policy Capacity, Governance, AI Infrastructure, Public Sector Adoption, Development and Diffusion, and Resilience. The index also expands the measurement architecture to 14 dimensions and 69 indicators. This makes the index more suitable for capturing the institutional, infrastructural and governance conditions that shape whether AI can be used responsibly and effectively for public benefit.

4.4.2 Stanford AI Index Report

The Stanford AI Index Report, published annually by the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence since 2017, is not an index in the conventional ranking sense. Rather, it is one of the most comprehensive data-driven reports on the global state of AI. Its purpose is to track, collate, distil and visualize data on AI in order to provide policymakers, researchers, business leaders, journalists and the wider public with rigorous evidence on AI's technical progress, economic influence and societal impact.

The 2026 edition is particularly relevant for this chapter because it documents the acceleration of AI capabilities, the closing performance gap between the leading United States and Chinese AI models, the concentration of AI infrastructure and model production, and the widening gap between AI capabilities and responsible AI measurement. Its chapter structure covers Research and Development, Technical Performance, Responsible AI, Economy, Science, Medicine, Education, Policy and Governance, and Public Opinion. While it is not focused specifically on government service delivery, it provides an essential evidence base for understanding the wider technological, economic and governance environment in which AI-enabled public administration is emerging.

4.4.3 Global AI Index

The Tortoise Global AI Index offers a complementary perspective by ranking countries according to their overall AI capacity. It is designed to benchmark national AI ecosystems across three main pillars: Implementation, Innovation and Investment. These pillars are further divided into seven sub-pillars: talent, infrastructure, operating environment, research, development, government strategy and commercial ecosystem. The 2024 edition covers 83 countries and is based on 122 indicators drawn from 24 public and private data sources.

For the purposes of this chapter, the Global AI Index is useful because it helps contextualize public-sector AI readiness within the broader geography of AI capacity. It captures the wider ecosystem conditions—including talent, infrastructure, commercial activity, research and government strategy—that influence whether countries can develop, deploy and sustain AI systems. However, its main analytical focus is broader national AI capacity rather than the specific performance of government institutions in using AI for public service delivery or administrative transformation.

4.4.4 Towards an Agentic Government Index

Taken together, these indices and instruments provide valuable snapshots of AI readiness, AI capacity and AI governance maturity. However, they were not designed to measure how governments are actually performing in the responsible use of AI to deliver public services, coordinate administrative workflows or support outcome-oriented public administration. This measurement gap is becoming more important as governments move beyond isolated AI pilots towards more integrated, cross-agency and increasingly autonomous applications.

In the absence of impact-oriented measurement frameworks, AI adoption in the public sector risks remaining fragmented and experimental. Governments may launch pilot projects without a clear way to assess whether they improve service quality, reduce administrative burdens, strengthen inclusion,

enhance accountability or generate public value. This can create risks in both directions. Potentially valuable applications may remain underdeveloped where their benefits cannot be demonstrated, while governments may also overinvest in AI applications where alternative policy or digital solutions could deliver better outcomes or greater value for money.

To help address this gap, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) is currently researching how the tradition of the United Nations E-Government Survey could be extended to better understand how AI is being used in the public sector, the institutional and governance conditions surrounding its use, and the outcomes associated with it. As part of this research, initial pilots have been conducted to explore possible approaches and indicators, with the results expected to inform further research and future editions of the Survey. The aim is not to replace existing AI indices, but to complement them by focusing more directly on the public administration dimension: how AI is deployed in government functions, how it affects service delivery, and what safeguards are in place to ensure accountability, transparency, inclusion, human oversight and public trust. The purpose would not be to reward greater AI adoption or to assume that more AI use is inherently preferable, but to identify patterns of use, institutional strengths and gaps, and areas where AI-enabled approaches may generate public value.

The conceptual basis of the proposed framework rests on two propositions. First, the E-Government Survey and the EGDI have demonstrated over more than two decades that a globally comparable and methodologically transparent measurement instrument can support benchmarking and inform digital transformation strategies. A similar approach could help governments understand the emerging use of AI in public administration. Second, any such instrument should examine three interrelated dimensions: the extent and depth of AI deployment in service delivery and administrative functions; and the safeguards, governance arrangements and accountability mechanisms surrounding that deployment; and the outcomes generated for people and public institutions, including service quality, accessibility, administrative efficiency and inclusion.

These dimensions are closely interrelated. Measurement should therefore examine whether AI use is consistent with applicable legal and administrative frameworks and with principles of due process and equal treatment. It should also capture whether AI use is transparent, auditable, inclusive, secure, explainable where appropriate, subject to human oversight, and supported by mechanisms for appeal, redress and institutional accountability. At the same time, safeguards alone are not sufficient: measurement should also consider whether AI-enabled systems produce demonstrable improvements in outcomes for people and public institutions.

At this stage, the Agentic Government Index remains at the research and consultation phase. The objective is not to present a finalized index in this edition of the Survey, but to set out the conceptual basis for future collaboration with Member States, partner organizations, academic institutions and the broader research community. A first version could then be considered in a subsequent edition of the Survey, once the methodology has been tested, refined and aligned with the broader United Nations approach to responsible, inclusive and human-centred AI governance.

4.5 From the digital divide to the AI divide: readiness, capacity and global governance

As identified in Chapter 2, the continued progress of digital government has not automatically translated into a narrowing of the digital divide. Using the global EGDI average as a proxy, the digital divide has widened since 2024, with an additional 53 million people of a total of approximately 1,950 million people now residing in countries falling below this benchmark. This is particularly urgent in the most digitally vulnerable regions. In Oceania, 26.7 per cent of the population lives in countries below the global EGDI average, a figure that rises sharply to 91.4 per cent when the analysis is narrowed to SIDS. Africa exhibits an even more pronounced disparity, with 86.99 per cent

of its population residing in countries below the global EGDI average. This is especially significant because both Oceania and Africa have also recorded some of the strongest regional improvements in this edition of the E-Government Survey. The evidence therefore shows that progress in digital government, while essential, does not automatically or evenly close the digital divide and may, in some cases, coexist with its widening.

This divide is evident not only between countries, but also within them. In many contexts, it remains most acute in rural areas and among marginalized or underserved groups, including women, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous communities and populations with limited access to connectivity, digital skills or public services. Successive editions of the United Nations E-Government Survey have shown that digital divides do not close automatically as technology advances. Rather, new digital capabilities often generate higher returns for countries and communities that already possess mature infrastructure, regulatory capacity, institutional coordination and human capital. This is consistent with the broader literature on absorptive capacity, which suggests that the benefits of innovation tend to accrue more rapidly to those already able to absorb, adapt and deploy new technologies effectively.

The emergence of AI introduces a further dimension to this already complex picture. The evidence suggests that AI readiness in government is becoming broader, as more countries develop strategies, laws, ethical frameworks and institutional arrangements for the use of AI in public administration. However, frontier AI capacity remains highly concentrated. High-income countries and advanced digital economies are competing to capture leadership in frontier AI, compute infrastructure, cloud capacity, data-centre investment, specialized talent and AI-enabled public-sector innovation. Many developing countries, by contrast, continue to face structural constraints in establishing the basic foundations required to participate meaningfully in this transformation, including resilient connectivity, trusted or sovereign cloud capacity, data governance frameworks, cybersecurity capabilities, specialized skills and access to compute.

This emerging imbalance is extending the global digital divide into what may increasingly be understood as an AI divide. Unlike earlier phases of digital transformation, the AI divide is not only about access to connectivity, online services or digital platforms. It also concerns access to compute capacity, trusted cloud infrastructure, high-quality and representative data, including persistent challenges with data accuracy, completeness and consistency, particularly in developing countries, cybersecurity capabilities, procurement capacity, public-sector AI skills, domestic innovation ecosystems and the ability to shape, regulate and govern AI systems. At the same time, financial constraints further increases these challenges as governments must secure resources not only for initial AI investments but also for the ongoing costs of maintaining, updating and overseeing these systems.[15]

Without targeted policy intervention, some countries may become producers, standard-setters and exporters of AI technologies, while others remain primarily users of systems, standards and infrastructures developed elsewhere.

The implications of this divide go beyond uneven access to technological benefits. AI creates a form of dual exposure for countries that are not adequately prepared: they may miss productivity gains while still bearing a disproportionate share of disruption. Recent International Labour Organization and World Bank analyses suggest that many developing countries may experience the disruptive effects of generative AI before they are able to capture its productivity dividends, particularly where gaps in digital infrastructure limit the ability of workers and firms to benefit from augmentation. This risk is especially relevant for economies that depend highly on labor-intensive sectors, limited digital infrastructure, informal employment and constrained reskilling capacity, with potential implications for tax revenues and public service financing.

The implications of the AI divide are also transnational. Advances in AI do not remain confined to the jurisdictions that develop or deploy them. They can generate benefits across borders, but they can also create systemic risks that transcend national sovereignty. Frontier AI systems are already raising new concerns related to cybersecurity, critical infrastructure protection, model misuse,

dependency on a small number of providers and the adequacy of existing governance frameworks. Initiatives such as Anthropic's Project Glasswing illustrate how rapidly evolving AI capabilities may require new approaches to cyber resilience.[16] These developments show that AI cannot be treated only as a domestic technology-policy issue; it is also a transnational governance challenge linked to sovereignty, institutional resilience, market concentration, public trust and global inequality.

The central question is therefore not whether AI will affect governments, but how governments can shape AI in ways that advance public value while managing risks. As the preceding discussion illustrates, this challenge is not only technological; it is also institutional and closely connected to existing disparities in infrastructure, skills, governance capacity and access to digital resources. At stake is not simply the modernization of public services, but the capacity of governments to preserve public trust, protect rights, strengthen inclusion and ensure that AI contributes to sustainable and equitable development rather than deepening existing asymmetries.

4.6 The United Nations response to the AI divide: governance, capacity and system-wide coordination

In response to these challenges, the United Nations has advanced a progressively structured multilateral framework for digital and AI governance. Building on General Assembly resolutions A/RES/78/265 on safe, secure and trustworthy AI systems for sustainable development and A/RES/78/311 on international cooperation for AI capacity-building, both adopted in 2024, the United Nations has sought to frame AI not only as a technological opportunity, but also as a development, human rights, security and capacity-building challenge. These resolutions were further complemented by the adoption of the Pact for the Future and its annex, the Global Digital Compact, through A/RES/79/1, which articulated a shared international commitment to an inclusive, open, safe, secure, sustainable and human-centred digital future.

This emerging architecture was further operationalized through the adoption of A/RES/79/325 in August 2025, which established the terms of reference and modalities for two complementary mechanisms: the Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance. The Scientific Panel is intended to provide independent, evidence-based and policy-relevant assessments of AI's opportunities, risks and broader societal implications, while the Global Dialogue serves as an inclusive United Nations platform for Member States and stakeholders to deliberate on international AI governance, share experiences and promote coordination. Together, these mechanisms respond directly to the governance challenges created by the AI divide: they seek to reduce asymmetries in knowledge, strengthen evidence-based policymaking and ensure that countries at different levels of technological development can participate meaningfully in shaping global AI governance.

These efforts were reinforced by the adoption of General Assembly resolution A/RES/80/173 on 17 December 2025, which concluded the twentieth review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20). The WSIS+20 outcome reaffirmed the vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society, while recognizing that persistent digital divides continue to constrain equitable digital transformation. It also confirmed the Internet Governance Forum as a permanent forum of the United Nations and called for stronger coherence between the WSIS outcomes and the Global Digital Compact. Importantly, the resolution requested the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Artificial Intelligence, in consultation with WSIS Action Line facilitators, to map existing system-wide AI capacity-building initiatives, identify and address gaps, including through an AI capacity-building fellowship and research programmes, with a particular focus on developing countries.

Taken together, these initiatives show that the United Nations response to AI governance is moving from principles toward institutional follow-up, capacity-building, evidence-based dialogue and system-wide coordination. The initiatives also reinforce the central message of this section: the AI divide cannot be addressed solely through national strategies or domestic regulation. It requires international cooperation, scientific assessment, capacity development, inclusive participation,

multistakeholder dialogue and stronger coherence across digital governance processes. In this sense, the Global Digital Compact, the Global Dialogue on AI Governance, the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, the WSIS+20 outcomes and the permanent mandate of the Internet Governance Forum provide complementary instruments, mechanisms and forums that can support efforts to ensure that AI-enabled transformation remains human-centred, rights-based, inclusive, safe, secure and accountable.

4.7 International, regional and national AI cooperation hubs: building shared capacity for responsible public-sector transformation

Within this emerging multilateral architecture, international, regional and national AI cooperation hubs are becoming an important operational layer, helping to translate global governance principles into concrete capacity-building, knowledge-sharing, experimentation and public-sector implementation support.

The World Bank Group has recently strengthened its global digital and AI support architecture through the launch of the Korea–World Bank Global Digital Knowledge Center, hosted in the Republic of Korea. The Center is a World Bank platform, supported by Korea as host and strategic partner. Its purpose is to help low- and middle-income countries accelerate digital transformation and harness AI for inclusive growth, job creation, trusted public services and development impact. The Center combines Korea's experience in digital transformation with the World Bank's international presence to provide practical support to developing countries, including technical guidance, capacity-building, innovation grants, South–South learning and support for digital and data infrastructure, digital public services and inclusive digital economies. The World Bank continues to advance its digital public infrastructure and GovTech work through initiatives such as the GovTech Global Partnership.

This World Bank initiative is part of a wider landscape of international efforts aimed at supporting developing countries in the AI transition. The Global Digital Compact calls for international partnerships on AI capacity-building, including education and training, access to open AI models, systems, data and capacity in high-performance computing and related skills.[17] It also requests the Secretary-General to develop innovative voluntary financing options for AI capacity-building, considering the recommendations of the High-level Advisory Body on AI on a Global Fund on AI. In parallel, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) launched an AI Skills Coalition in 2025 with the aim of equipping at least 10,000 individuals with AI skills by the end of that year; ITU reported in February 2026 that the initiative had reached 20,000 learners.[19] The OECD provides comparative AI policy infrastructure through the OECD.AI Policy Observatory and the OECD.AI Network of Experts, which supports policy work on trustworthy AI.[18]

More recently, the Government of the Republic of Korea announced a complementary Global AI Hub vision under the theme "AI for All, AI to Solve Global Challenges.[19] Unlike the World Bank Center, this initiative is being promoted by Korea as a broader international cooperation platform to bring together United Nations system entities and other international organizations, governments, academia, research institutions, civil society and multilateral development banks around AI-based solutions for global challenges such as health, climate change, migration, labour, disaster response, food security and refugees. The initiative reportedly involves nine international organizations, including the International Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration, ITU, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Food Program and the World Health Organization, as well as five multilateral development banks, including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration.

The added value of the Korean Global AI Hub lies in its proposed role as a connector between international organizations that identify development needs, multilateral development banks that can

support financing and project scale-up, and Korea's digital and AI ecosystem, which can contribute infrastructure, technical expertise and implementation experience. Korean authorities have indicated that the Hub could provide shared AI infrastructure, including computing, data and cloud systems, while supporting joint projects, standards, guidelines, proof-of-concept testing and AI solutions for developing countries.

This emerging architecture is not limited to Korea. Across different regions, governments are establishing AI hubs, safety institutes, sovereign compute programmes, data and AI agencies, and public-sector AI frameworks to strengthen their capacity to govern, deploy and benefit from AI. In the United States, this institutional ecosystem combines strategic direction, standards capacity and shared research infrastructure: America's AI Action Plan is structured around accelerating innovation, building AI infrastructure and leading international diplomacy and security,[20] while the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Center for AI Standards and Innovation serves as a federal point of contact for AI testing, standards and collaborative research, and the National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource provides shared access to computational, data, model and training resources for researchers and educators.[21]

Similar efforts are visible in other advanced and emerging digital economies. The United Arab Emirates' National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence 2031 seeks to improve government performance and position the country as an AI hub, while the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has built a strong institutional architecture for digital government, data and AI through several complementary entities and initiatives. The Saudi Data and AI Authority (SDAIA) and its National Center for AI provide a centralized national framework for data and AI policy and implementation, while the HUMAIN has been established to develop a full AI stack, including next-generation data centres, cloud infrastructure and Arabic large language models. In parallel, the Digital Government Authority's Innovation Hub in Riyadh serves as a public-sector innovation platform for emerging technologies, supporting government entities in exploring, testing and adopting advanced digital solutions. The Digital Government Authority describes the Innovation Hub as a national catalyst for adopting innovation and emerging technologies in the government sector, with specialized platforms and laboratories designed to strengthen intelligent digital solutions and integration across public entities.

Kazakhstan is developing Alem.ai as an international AI centre for education, research, startups and applied AI solutions,[22] while Uzbekistan's Center for the Development of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Economy is advancing pilot programmes, public- and private-sector AI applications, innovation competitions and research and development cooperation.[23] Singapore combines AI Singapore, its National AI Strategy 2.0 and the recently established National AI Council to coordinate AI for the public good,[24] while Japan has launched the Japan AI Safety Institute to examine AI safety evaluation methods in cooperation with relevant national ministries and agencies.[25] Australia is establishing an AI Safety Institute,[26] New Zealand has adopted a Public Service AI Framework within its National AI Strategy,[27] and Canada has launched both the Canadian AI Safety Institute and a Sovereign AI Compute Strategy to expand access to domestic AI computing infrastructure.[28]

In Europe, the institutional response is taking shape through both regulatory and infrastructure channels. The European AI Office supports implementation of the AI Act, with a particular role in relation to general-purpose AI models,[29] while European High-Performance Computing (Euro HPC) AI Factories are intended to use European supercomputing capacity to support the development of trustworthy generative AI models and strengthen Europe's AI ecosystem.[30] The United Kingdom has also reoriented its AI Safety Institute into the AI Security Institute, with a stronger focus on understanding advanced AI risks and developing mitigation infrastructure.[31]

Importantly, AI hubs and centres are also emerging across Africa, although often from a different starting point and with a stronger emphasis on capacity-building, local innovation, data governance and applied development needs. Rwanda's Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution focuses primarily on AI and data policy, bringing together government, industry, civil society and academia to co-design and test governance frameworks for emerging technologies.[32] Nigeria's National Centre

for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics positions itself as a hub for AI, robotics and Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies, with priorities including innovation, collaboration, entrepreneurship, cloud-enabled pilot projects and the development of Nigeria's open-source multilingual and multimodal large language model, N-ATLaS.[33] South Africa has established the Artificial Intelligence Institute of South Africa and a network of AI hubs linked to universities and sectoral priorities,[34] while Egypt's Applied Innovation Center, established by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, focuses on using advanced technologies, including AI, to address national challenges and develop human capital. Ghana has also launched a national AI strategy with the stated ambition of positioning the country as an AI hub in Africa.[35]

4.8 Towards a United Nations Platform for Digital Government Cooperation, Innovation and R&D

The proliferation of international, regional and national AI cooperation hubs shows that the global response to AI-enabled transformation is increasingly moving from policy principles to institutional platforms, technical cooperation and implementation support. Yet this emerging ecosystem remains fragmented and unevenly accessible, particularly for developing countries and countries in special situations. The next challenge is to connect existing knowledge, tested solutions, regulatory tools, digital government transformation sandboxes and capacity-building efforts through a neutral, inclusive and public-purpose platform capable of linking global expertise with practical experimentation, applied research and country-level implementation.

Against this background, UN DESA is advancing the development of a new United Nations platform for digital government cooperation, innovation and research and development. The platform is being conceived not as another stand-alone AI or innovation initiative, but as a new model for strategic partnerships, applied R&D, knowledge exchange and collaborative experimentation across the global digital government ecosystem. Its purpose would be to connect existing expertise, institutions and innovation capacities within a trusted United Nations framework, while supporting Member States in addressing emerging digital government challenges.

When established, the platform would provide a global framework for cooperation on digital government, digital transformation and the responsible use of emerging technologies in the public sector. It could bring together governments, research institutions, academia, technology partners, international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders around shared public-sector challenges. Its areas of work could include policy research and analysis, capacity development, advisory support, knowledge exchange, innovation laboratories, digital government transformation sandboxes and multistakeholder partnerships.

A particular emphasis would be placed on applied R&D and responsible experimentation, enabling emerging technologies, governance approaches and innovative public-sector solutions to be tested, assessed and adapted before broader application. In this way, the platform could help connect frontier research with practical implementation, while facilitating the sharing and adaptation of knowledge and tested approaches across different institutional and development contexts.

The platform would also support research and practical applications of AI and other emerging technologies in public administration, contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Global Digital Compact, the WSIS+20 outcomes and the broader United Nations agenda on digital cooperation.

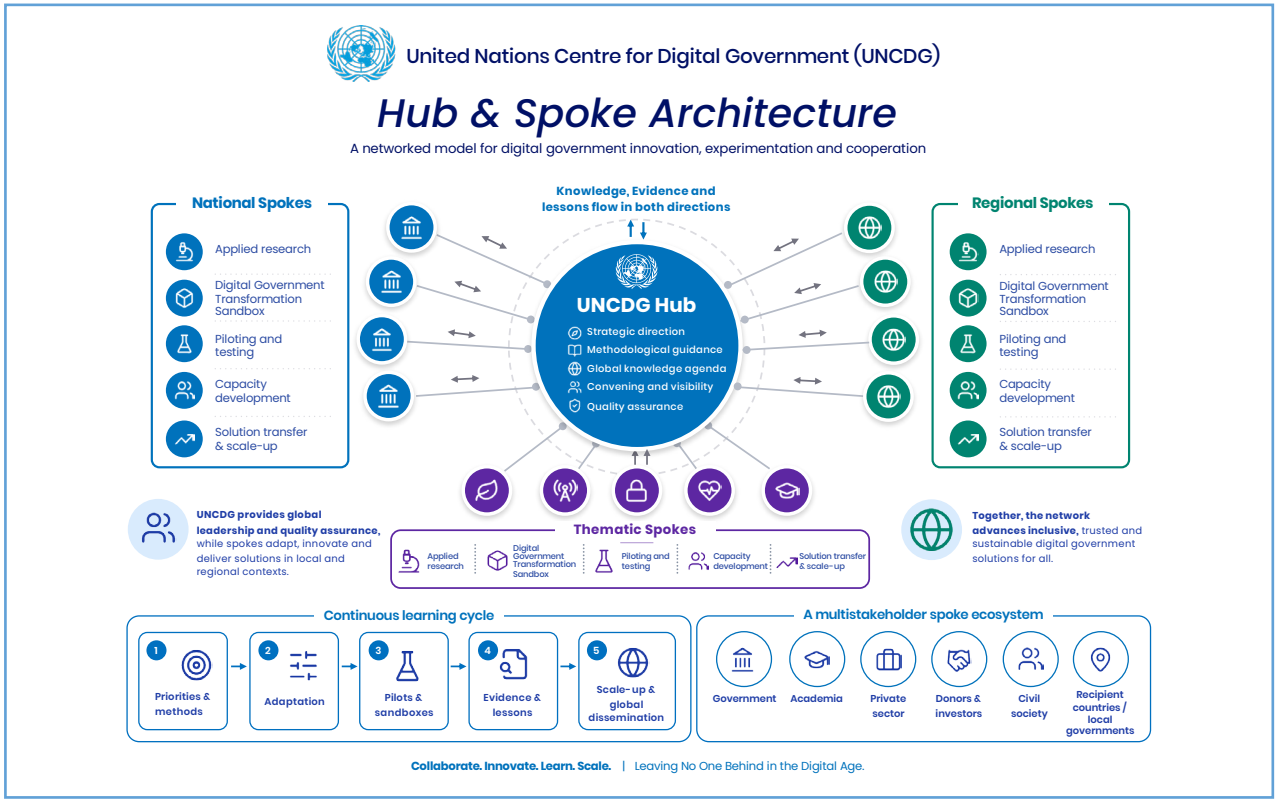
UN DESA is already engaging with potential donors and strategic partners to explore the institutional, financial and partnership arrangements required for the establishment and future development of the platform. Within this broader effort, discussions are under way with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on a strategic partnership through which the country could host the platform's global hub.

This cooperation builds on the interest expressed by Saudi Arabia's Digital Government Authority in strengthening collaboration with the United Nations on digital government, public-sector innovation and emerging technologies, and on the Memorandum of Intention signed at United Nations Headquarters in May 2026.

A central feature of the model under consideration is a Hub-and-Spoke architecture that would combine global strategic coordination with distributed expertise, experimentation and implementation capacity. This approach is inspired by the experience of networks such as the World Economic Forum's Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution Network, which demonstrated the potential of combining a central platform with distributed centres, expert communities and multistakeholder collaboration. Within a United Nations context, however, such an architecture would be adapted to a distinctly public-purpose and development-oriented mandate. Regional and thematic spokes could build on existing institutions and centres of excellence rather than duplicate them, connecting their expertise, research capabilities, test environments and innovations to a wider global network.

In this sense, the initiative represents more than the possible creation of a new institutional entity. It offers a model for a new generation of United Nations strategic partnerships in digital government—one in which policy research, applied R&D, capacity development, experimentation and implementation are connected within a common global architecture. Such a model could strengthen institutions, expand access to knowledge and innovation, reduce digital divides and help governments responsibly harness AI, data and other emerging technologies for public value, while allowing innovations and lessons developed in one region or thematic area to be shared, adapted and scaled across others.

Figure 4.5 Tentative structure of United Nations Centre for Digital Government (UNCDG)



Within this emerging Centre, the Hub-and-Spoke approach would provide a way to combine global strategic direction with distributed research, experimentation and implementation. The Hub would

help define common priorities, methodologies and knowledge frameworks, while regional or thematic Spokes could connect existing institutions and centres of excellence to practical experimentation and country-level needs. Rather than creating parallel structures, the model would seek to build on and connect existing capacities, networks and innovation ecosystems.

Such a model could be particularly valuable for developing countries and countries in special situations. It could provide access to shared knowledge, tested approaches and collaborative experimentation without requiring every country to develop these capacities independently. At the same time, solutions could be adapted and tested in different institutional, socioeconomic and technological environments, helping ensure that digital and AI innovation responds not only to advanced digital ecosystems but also to the realities and priorities of the Global South.

In this way, the proposed United Nations Centre for Digital Government could offer an innovative platform for strategic partnerships and collaborative R&D, helping Member States access, adapt and scale responsible digital and AI-enabled approaches, with particular attention to the needs and capacities of developing countries and the Global South, while advancing inclusion, institutional resilience and sustainable development.

4.9 Conclusion and key recommendations

As evidenced throughout this chapter, digital government is entering a pivotal new phase. Governments are moving beyond the digitization of existing processes toward the deeper integration of AI into public administration, with the potential to transform how policies are designed, services are delivered and institutions respond to citizens' needs. The emergence of agentic AI and the possible evolution toward Agentic Government may create opportunities to make public administration more proactive, responsive, evidence-based and inclusive, including by helping governments identify challenges and opportunities and improve the accessibility and responsiveness of public services. At the same time, this transition is neither automatic nor without risk. The chapter has shown that AI readiness in government is broadening, but frontier AI capacity remains highly concentrated; the digital divide has not closed and risks evolving into a more complex AI divide; and the responsible use of AI in government will depend on robust data governance, human oversight, institutional accountability, digital and data sovereignty, cybersecurity, measurement and international cooperation.

The central policy message is therefore clear: AI-enabled and agentic forms of public administration should not be pursued as technological modernization alone. They must be treated as an institutional transformation requiring legal safeguards, public-sector capacity, trusted data foundations, inclusive design, auditable systems, mechanisms for redress and sustained multilateral cooperation. The objective is not to replace public officials or automate governance beyond accountability, but to use AI to support public administration while retaining human responsibility for strategic direction, ethical and legal judgment, discretionary decisions, exceptions, appeals and final accountability. If properly governed, AI can help governments improve service quality, reduce administrative burdens, identify unmet needs, support policy precision and advance the principle of leaving no one behind. If poorly governed, AI may deepen exclusion, concentrate dependency, weaken accountability and erode public trust. This potential transformation also underscores the importance of designing and implementing innovative, flexible and sustainable operating models—such as the proposed United Nations Centre for Digital Government and its Hub-and-Spoke architecture—that can mobilize partnerships, connect existing ecosystems, support capacity development and help Member States, especially those in the Global South bridge the digital and AI divides while advancing meaningful digital inclusion.

4.9.1 Key recommendations

1 Place equity, inclusion and human accountability at the centre of AI-enabled public administration.

Member States should pursue the integration of AI and agentic systems in public administration with equity, inclusion and accountability as core design principles. AI-enabled public services should be developed with the explicit objective of expanding access, improving service quality, reducing administrative burdens and reaching populations that existing systems have often failed to serve, including rural communities, women, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and other underserved groups. At the same time, AI should relocate human judgment rather than displace it. As routine and procedurally defined tasks are increasingly supported by automated or semi-autonomous systems, public officials should retain responsibility for strategic direction, ethical trade-offs, legal interpretation, discretionary decisions, exceptions, appeals and final accountability. People and other stakeholders, including technology providers, civil society, academia and oversight institutions, should help ensure that these systems remain transparent, contestable, inclusive and aligned with public values.

2 Strengthen trusted data governance, digital sovereignty and interoperable infrastructure as foundations for responsible AI.

Member States should treat data governance, digital sovereignty and trusted infrastructure as foundational conditions for AI-enabled and agentic forms of government. AI systems depend on accurate, interoperable, secure and well-governed data environments, as well as resilient cloud ecosystems, compute capacity, cybersecurity, digital identity and auditable architectures. Governments should therefore avoid pursuing AI adoption while deferring foundational reforms in data stewardship, privacy protection, interoperability, access rights, data quality, institutional responsibility and redress. At the same time, the development of sovereign approaches that combine territorial safeguards with trusted, distributed and interoperable governance models is increasingly important, including forms of virtual sovereignty that allow public authorities to retain control over data access, use, sharing and accountability even when infrastructure is distributed across jurisdictions. Development partners and technology providers should support these efforts in ways that reduce dependency, strengthen resilience and enable countries to participate meaningfully in AI transformation.

3 Move from fragmented experimentation to whole-of-government readiness and coherent multilateral coordination.

Member States should move beyond isolated AI pilot programmes and develop whole-of-government approaches that connect legal and regulatory frameworks, ethical safeguards, procurement capacity, public-sector skills, data governance, cybersecurity, institutional coordination, and accountability. Safe digital government transformation sandboxes and proof-of-concept environments should be used to test AI applications, regulatory tools and governance models before they are scaled across sensitive public functions. At the international level, United Nations entities, regional organizations, development banks, standard-setting bodies, civil society, academia and the private sector should strengthen coordination around shared principles, evidence-based dialogue, scientific assessment and capacity development. The Global Digital Compact, the Global Dialogue on AI Governance, the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, WSIS+20 and the permanent mandate of the Internet Governance Forum provide complementary instruments, mechanisms and forums that can support efforts to ensure that AI-enabled transformation remains human-centred, rights-based, safe, secure, inclusive and accountable.

4 Prioritize capacity-building for the Global South through flexible cooperation models, including the United Nations Centre for Digital Government.

The AI divide cannot be addressed through market diffusion, national strategies or bilateral initiatives alone. Member States, United Nations entities, development partners, regional organizations, development banks, academic institutions, private-sector actors and civil society should prioritize capacity-building for developing countries, particularly least developed countries, SIDS and countries in special situations. This support should focus on strengthening absorptive capacity, public-sector skills, regulatory readiness, data governance, digital public infrastructure, cybersecurity, AI governance and access to tested tools and policy models. In this context, the proposed United Nations Centre for Digital Government should be advanced as a UN DESA contribution to bridging the gap between global principles and local implementation. Through its Hub-and-Spoke architecture, the Centre could connect existing AI and digital government hubs, national innovation agencies, development partners, research institutions and public administrations within a trusted United Nations framework. By supporting research and development, safe digital government transformation sandboxes, policy experimentation, regulatory templates, capacity development and solution transfer, the Centre could help countries in the Global South access, adapt and scale tested approaches without bearing the full cost of independent experimentation, while ensuring that AI-enabled transformation advances digital inclusion, institutional resilience, public trust and sustainable development.

Endnotes

1 Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence. (2025). The 2025 AI index report. Stanford University. https://hai.stanford.edu/ai-index/2025-ai-index-report

2 Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI). (2026). The AI Index 2026 Annual Report. Stanford University. https://hai.stanford.edu/ai-index/2026-ai-index-report

3 World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). (2024). Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI): Patent landscape report. World Intellectual Property Organization. https://tind.wipo.int/record/49740?v=pdf

4 U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2025). Science & tech spotlight: AI agents (GAO-25-108519).

5 Ilves, L., Kilian, M., Parazzoli, S. M., Peixoto, T. C., & Velsberg, O. (2025). The agentic state: Rethinking government for the era of agentic AI [Vision paper]. Global Government Technology Centre Berlin & World Bank. https://agenticstate.org/paper.html

6 Bovens, M., & Zouridis, S. (2002). From street-level to system-level bureaucracies: How information and communication technology is transforming administrative discretion and constitutional control. Public Administration Review, 62(2), 174–184. https://doi.org/10.1111/0033-3352.00168

7 Lipsky, M. (2010). Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public service (30th anniversary expanded ed.). Russell Sage Foundation.

8 Busuioc, M. (2021). Accountable artificial intelligence: Holding algorithms to account. Public Administration Review, 81(5), 825–836. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13293

9 Alon-Barkat, S., & Busuioc, M. (2023). Human–AI interactions in public sector decision making: "Automation bias" and "selective adherence" to algorithmic advice. Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 33(1), 153–169. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muac007

10 Margetts, H., & Dorobantu, C. (2019). Rethink government with AI. Nature, 568(7751), 163–165. https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-01099-5

11 Margetts, H., Dorobantu, C., & Bright, J. (2024). How to build progressive public services with data science and artificial intelligence. The Political Quarterly, 95(4), 653–662. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.13448

12 United Nations General Assembly. (2015). Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1). https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/70/1

13 Frederickson, H. G. (1980). New public administration. University of Alabama Press.

14 Floridi, L. (2020). The fight for digital sovereignty: What it is, and why it matters, especially for the EU. Philosophy & Technology, 33(3), 369–378. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-020-00423-6

15 International Telecommunication Union (ITU). (2025). Connecting humanity action blueprint: Advancing sustainable, affordable and innovative solutions. International Telecommunication Union.

16 Anthropic. (2026, April 7). Project Glasswing: Securing critical software for the AI era. https://www.anthropic.com/glasswing

17 United Nations General Assembly. (2024). Global Digital Compact (A/RES/79/1, Annex I). https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/79/1

18 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (n.d.). OECD.AI Policy Observatory. Retrieved July 29, 2026, from https://oecd.ai/en/

19 International Organization for Migration. (2026, May 21). IOM chief commits to shared vision for global AI hub in the Republic of Korea. https://www.iom.int/news/iom-chief-commits-shared-vision-global-ai-hub-republic-korea

20 The White House. (2025, July). Winning the race: America's AI action plan. Executive Office of the President. https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Americas-AI-Action-Plan.pdf

21 National Science Foundation. (n.d.). National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource (NAIRR). Retrieved May 30, 2026, from https://nsf.gov/focus-areas/ai/nairr

22 Astana Hub. (2025). A new international artificial intelligence center to open in Astana. https://astanahub.com/en/article/v-astane-zarabotaet-mezhdunarodnyi-tsentr-iskusstvennogo-intellekta

23 OECD.AI Policy Observatory. (2025). Digital Uzbekistan – 2030. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. https://oecd.ai/en/dashboards/policy-initiatives/digital-uzbekistan-2030-3968

24 Smart Nation Singapore. (2026). National AI strategy. https://www.smartnation.gov.sg/initiatives/national-ai-strategy/

25 AI Safety Institute Japan. (2024). About the AI Safety Institute. Information-technology Promotion Agency. https://aisi.go.jp/

26 Department of Industry, Science and Resources. (2025, November 25). Establishment of Australian AI Safety Institute [Media release]. Australian Government. https://www.minister.industry.gov.au/ministers/timayres/media-releases/establishment-australian-ai-safety-institute

27 Department of Internal Affairs. (2025). Public service artificial intelligence framework. New Zealand Government. https://www.digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/technology-and-architecture/artificial-intelligence/public-service-artificial-intelligence-framework

28 Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. (2024, December 5). Canadian sovereign AI compute strategy. Government of Canada. https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/ised/en/canadian-sovereign-ai-compute-strategy

29 European Commission. (2024). European AI Office. Shaping Europe's Digital Future. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-office

30 European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking. (2025). AI factories. European Commission, Shaping Europe's Digital Future. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-factories

31 Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. (2025, February 14). Tackling AI security risks to unleash growth and deliver Plan for Change. GOV.UK. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tackling-ai-security-risks-to-unleash-growth-and-deliver-plan-for-change

32 World Economic Forum. (2022, March 31). Rwanda launches Centre for Fourth Industrial Revolution, joins global network [Press release]. https://www.weforum.org/press/2022/03/rwanda-launches-centre-for-fourth-industrial-revolution-joins-global-network/

33 National Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics. (2025). N-ATLAS: Nigeria's open-source, multilingual and multimodal large language model. https://ncair.nitda.gov.ng/llm/

34 University of Johannesburg. (2022, November 30). UJ, TUT and Department of Communications and Digital Technologies launch AI Institute of South Africa. UJ News. https://news.uj.ac.za/news/uj-tut-and-department-of-communications-and-digital-technologies-launch-ai-institute-of-south-africa-2/

35 Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations. (2026, April 24). Ghana launches national AI strategy to drive digital transformation and economic growth. Government of Ghana. https://moc.gov.gh/2026/04/24/ghana-launches-national-ai-strategy-to-drive-digital-transformation-and-economic-growth/

ANNEX

Table E-Government Development Index (EGDI) 2026 by countries

Country	Region	Sub-Region	City	EGDI Group	Rating Class	EGDI Rank	LOSI Rank	EGDI 2026	OSI	LOSI	TII	HCI	PE 2026	Level of Income
Afghanistan	Asia	Southern Asia	Kabul	Middle EGDI	M2	172	111	0.3559	0.4618	0.5149	0.2959	0.3101	0.6552	LIC
Albania	Europe	Southern Europe	Tirana	Very High EGDI	V2	53	65	0.8285	0.8236	0.7525	0.7537	0.9082	0.7931	UMC
Algeria	Africa	Northern Africa	Algiers	High EGDI	H3	117	173	0.6317	0.4363	0.1485	0.7863	0.6724	0.1034	UMC
Andorra	Europe	Southern Europe	Andorra La Vella	Very High EGDI	V2	63	65	0.8009	0.7071	0.7525	0.9040	0.7915	0.5172	HIC
Angola	Africa	Middle Africa	Luanda	Middle EGDI	M3	166	160	0.4025	0.4224	0.2376	0.4054	0.3798	0.1379	LMC
Antigua and Barbuda	Americas	Caribbean	St. John	High EGDI	H2	129	131	0.5837	0.3938	0.3564	0.6384	0.7189	0.0690	HIC
Argentina	Americas	South America	Buenos Aires	Very High EGDI	V3	25	31	0.9093	0.9061	0.9010	0.8821	0.9396	1.0000	UMC
Armenia	Asia	Western Asia	Yerevan	Very High EGDI	V2	55	53	0.8240	0.7980	0.8218	0.8808	0.7932	0.9310	UMC
Australia	Oceania	Australia and New Zealand	Sydney	Very High EGDI	VH	10	46	0.9513	0.9109	0.8614	0.9429	1.0000	0.9655	HIC
Austria	Europe	Western Europe	Vienna	Very High EGDI	V3	27	1	0.9015	0.8174	1.0000	0.9713	0.9157	1.0000	HIC
Azerbaijan	Asia	Western Asia	Baku	Very High EGDI	V3	38	133	0.8847	0.9501	0.3366	0.8975	0.8067	0.9655	UMC
Bahamas	Americas	Caribbean	Nassau	High EGDI	HV	100	166	0.6825	0.5474	0.1980	0.7987	0.7015	0.3103	HIC
Bahrain	Asia	Western Asia	Manama	Very High EGDI	VH	14	1	0.9420	0.9552	1.0000	0.9980	0.8727	1.0000	HIC
Bangladesh	Asia	Southern Asia	Dhaka	High EGDI	HV	97	72	0.6893	0.8168	0.7228	0.6997	0.5515	0.7931	LMC
Barbados	Americas	Caribbean	Bridgetown	High EGDI	H3	114	179	0.6517	0.5618	0.1287	0.6961	0.6971	0.3103	HIC
Belarus	Europe	Eastern Europe	Minsk	Very High EGDI	V1	84	124	0.7518	0.5804	0.3861	0.9348	0.7401	0.3793	UMC
Belgium	Europe	Western Europe	Brussels	Very High EGDI	V2	57	37	0.8112	0.7263	0.8911	0.8212	0.8861	0.4828	HIC
Belize	Americas	Central America	Belize City	High EGDI	H1	151	117	0.5074	0.4700	0.4158	0.5198	0.5322	0.3793	UMC
Benin	Africa	Western Africa	Cotonou	High EGDI	H1	142	113	0.5594	0.7304	0.4752	0.5587	0.3892	0.8621	LMC
Bhutan	Asia	Southern Asia	Thimphu Thromde	High EGDI	HV	93	86	0.7213	0.7447	0.6436	0.8607	0.5587	0.8276	LMC
Bolivia	Americas	South America	Santa Cruz (de la Sierra)	High EGDI	HV	86	86	0.7446	0.7305	0.6436	0.7608	0.7423	0.6897	LMC
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Europe	Southern Europe	Sarajevo	High EGDI	H2	129	154	0.5837	0.4014	0.2772	0.7056	0.6441	0.2759	UMC
Botswana	Africa	Southern Africa	Gaborone	Middle EGDI	MH	160	144	0.4533	0.1201	0.3069	0.6847	0.5550	0.0000	UMC
Brazil	Americas	South America	Sao Paulo	Very High EGDI	V3	39	1	0.8831	0.9517	1.0000	0.8596	0.8381	1.0000	UMC
Brunei Darussalam	Asia	South-Eastern Asia	Bandar Seri Begawan	High EGDI	HV	90	83	0.7251	0.6010	0.6535	0.9125	0.6620	0.3793	HIC
Bulgaria	Europe	Eastern Europe	Sofia	Very High EGDI	V2	62	37	0.8034	0.6829	0.8911	0.9346	0.7927	0.3103	HIC

Table *(continued)*

Country	Region	Sub-Region	City	EGDI Group	Rating Class	EGDI Rank	LOSI Rank	EGDI 2026	OSI	LOSI	TII	HCI	PE 2026	Level of Income
Burkina Faso	Africa	Western Africa	Ouagadougou	Middle EGDI	M2	176	173	0.3335	0.4671	0.1485	0.3911	0.1423	0.3448	LIC
Burundi	Africa	Eastern Africa	Bujumbura	Middle EGDI	M2	169	168	0.3896	0.6026	0.1782	0.2180	0.3481	0.5517	LIC
Cabo Verde	Africa	Western Africa	Praia	High EGDI	H3	108	159	0.6624	0.6097	0.2475	0.7693	0.6082	0.2414	UMC
Cambodia	Asia	South-Eastern Asia	Phnom Penh	High EGDI	HV	85	144	0.7454	0.8275	0.3069	0.8448	0.5638	0.8621	LMC
Cameroon	Africa	Middle Africa	Yaounde	High EGDI	H2	125	93	0.5986	0.7587	0.6040	0.5164	0.5209	0.7241	LMC
Canada	Americas	Northern America	Toronto	Very High EGDI	V3	35	24	0.8861	0.9164	0.9307	0.8333	0.9087	1.0000	HIC
Central African Republic	Africa	Middle Africa	Bangui	Low EGDI	L1	194	184	0.0996	0.2070	0.0000	0.0000	0.0919	0.1724	LIC
Chad	Africa	Middle Africa	N'Djamena	Low EGDI	L2	191	184	0.1981	0.2551	0.0000	0.2388	0.1003	0.2414	LIC
Chile	Americas	South America	Santiago	Very High EGDI	V3	30	76	0.8960	0.9028	0.7030	0.8953	0.8898	0.7931	HIC
China	Asia	Eastern Asia	Shanghai	Very High EGDI	V3	41	12	0.8743	0.8830	0.9604	0.9810	0.7590	0.9655	UMC
Colombia	Americas	South America	Bogota	Very High EGDI	V1	65	27	0.7982	0.7947	0.9109	0.8358	0.7641	0.7931	UMC
Comoros	Africa	Eastern Africa	Moroni	Middle EGDI	M1	178	173	0.3232	0.0774	0.1485	0.5266	0.3657	0.0345	LMC
Congo	Africa	Middle Africa	Brazzaville	Middle EGDI	MH	156	119	0.4784	0.4859	0.3960	0.4749	0.4742	0.2414	LMC
Costa Rica	Americas	Central America	San Jose	Very High EGDI	V1	69	83	0.7804	0.7224	0.6535	0.8433	0.7755	0.5517	HIC
Côte d'Ivoire	Africa	Western Africa	Abidjan	High EGDI	H2	120	137	0.6095	0.7034	0.3267	0.7345	0.3908	0.8966	HIC
Croatia	Europe	Southern Europe	Zagreb	Very High EGDI	V2	47	57	0.8615	0.8342	0.8020	0.9008	0.8495	0.7241	UMC
Cuba	Americas	Caribbean	Havana	High EGDI	H1	135	108	0.5725	0.6355	0.5347	0.3673	0.7146	0.9655	HIC
Cyprus	Asia	Western Asia	Nicosia	Very High EGDI	V3	34	90	0.8870	0.9000	0.6238	0.8622	0.8988	0.6207	HIC
Czech Republic	Europe	Eastern Europe	Prague	Very High EGDI	V2	56	42	0.8126	0.7289	0.8812	0.8888	0.8200	0.7241	LMC
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Asia	Eastern Asia	Pyongyang	Low EGDI	L2	190	184	0.2166	0.0237	0.0000	0.1718	0.4543	0.0000	LIC
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Africa	Middle Africa	Kinshasa	Middle EGDI	M1	181	182	0.3060	0.3073	0.0792	0.2222	0.3883	0.1379	LIC
Denmark	Europe	Northern Europe	Copenhagen	Very High EGDI	VH	2	12	0.9777	0.9725	0.9604	0.9995	0.9611	0.9310	HIC
Djibouti	Africa	Eastern Africa	Djibouti	Middle EGDI	M1	180	179	0.3146	0.3737	0.1287	0.3632	0.2070	0.2069	LMC
Dominica	Americas	Caribbean	Roseau	High EGDI	H1	136	133	0.5677	0.4020	0.3366	0.7056	0.5957	0.0690	UMC
Dominican Republic	Americas	Caribbean	Santo Domingo	Very High EGDI	V1	79	80	0.7612	0.7745	0.6733	0.7647	0.7443	0.7586	UMC
Ecuador	Americas	South America	Guayaquil	Very High EGDI	V1	74	72	0.7659	0.7955	0.7228	0.7268	0.7753	0.8621	UMC
Egypt	Africa	Northern Africa	Cairo	High EGDI	H3	109	91	0.6584	0.6401	0.6139	0.7151	0.6200	0.3793	LMC
El Salvador	Americas	Central America	San Salvador	High EGDI	H2	124	184	0.5994	0.6183	0.0000	0.7132	0.4666	0.3448	UMC
Equatorial Guinea	Africa	Middle Africa	Bata	Middle EGDI	M1	184	184	0.2590	0.1663	0.0000	0.2025	0.4082	0.0000	UMC
Eritrea	Africa	Eastern Africa	Asmara	Low EGDI	L1	192	184	0.1689	0.0000	0.0000	0.2551	0.2516	0.0000	LIC

Table *(continued)*

Country	Region	Sub-Region	City	EGDI Group	Rating Class	EGDI Rank	LOSI Rank	EGDI 2026	OSI	LOSI	TII	HCI	PE 2026	Level of Income
Estonia	Europe	Northern Europe	Tallinn	Very High EGDI	VH	8	9	0.9542	0.9624	0.9802	0.9720	0.9281	0.9655	HIC
Eswatini	Africa	Southern Africa	Mbabane	High EGDI	H2	127	119	0.5979	0.4283	0.3960	0.7542	0.6111	0.2414	LMC
Ethiopia	Africa	Eastern Africa	Addis Ababa	Middle EGDI	MH	159	95	0.4710	0.6285	0.5941	0.4375	0.3469	0.4828	LIC
Fiji	Oceania	Melanesia	Suva	Very High EGDI	V1	66	149	0.7972	0.7257	0.2970	0.8082	0.8575	0.7931	UMC
Finland	Europe	Northern Europe	Helsinki	Very High EGDI	VH	9	31	0.9534	0.9099	0.9010	0.9651	0.9854	0.8966	HIC
France	Europe	Western Europe	Paris	Very High EGDI	V2	45	31	0.8655	0.8269	0.9010	0.8910	0.8785	0.5172	HIC
Gabon	Africa	Middle Africa	Libreville	High EGDI	H1	150	168	0.5175	0.3368	0.1782	0.6545	0.5614	0.1724	UMC
Gambia	Africa	Western Africa	Banjul	Middle EGDI	M2	170	142	0.3895	0.3264	0.3168	0.5671	0.2750	0.1724	LIC
Georgia	Asia	Western Asia	Tbilisi	Very High EGDI	V2	58	27	0.8066	0.6844	0.9109	0.9184	0.8171	0.6207	UMC
Germany	Europe	Western Europe	Berlin	Very High EGDI	VH	18	20	0.9278	0.9038	0.9505	0.9144	0.9652	0.9655	HIC
Ghana	Africa	Western Africa	Kumasi	High EGDI	H3	115	142	0.6337	0.6190	0.3168	0.7505	0.5315	0.5517	LMC
Greece	Europe	Southern Europe	Athens	Very High EGDI	V3	36	63	0.8856	0.8090	0.7624	0.8921	0.9558	0.6552	HIC
Grenada	Americas	Caribbean	St. George's	High EGDI	H3	113	149	0.6526	0.5400	0.2970	0.6405	0.7773	0.5172	UMC
Guatemala	Americas	Central America	Ciudad De Guatemala	High EGDI	H2	122	100	0.6041	0.6467	0.5743	0.7446	0.4211	0.3448	UMC
Guinea	Africa	Western Africa	Conakry	Middle EGDI	M3	163	144	0.4330	0.5080	0.3069	0.5330	0.2579	0.6207	LMC
Guinea-Bissau	Africa	Western Africa	Bissau	Low EGDI	LM	187	168	0.2444	0.0359	0.1782	0.3908	0.3065	0.0000	LIC
Guyana	Americas	South America	Georgetown	High EGDI	H1	141	133	0.5603	0.5203	0.3366	0.6185	0.5422	0.3448	HIC
Haiti	Americas	Caribbean	Port-Au-Prince	Low EGDI	LM	186	182	0.2462	0.1824	0.0792	0.2915	0.2646	0.0345	LMC
Honduras	Americas	Central America	Tegucigalpa	Middle EGDI	MH	157	119	0.4771	0.4974	0.3960	0.4688	0.4650	0.1379	LMC
Hungary	Europe	Eastern Europe	Budapest	Very High EGDI	V1	64	59	0.7985	0.7426	0.7822	0.8098	0.8432	0.3793	HIC
Iceland	Europe	Northern Europe	Reykjavik	Very High EGDI	VH	6	7	0.9557	0.9355	0.9901	0.9748	0.9568	1.0000	HIC
India	Asia	Southern Asia	Mumbai	Very High EGDI	V1	80	69	0.7592	0.9407	0.7426	0.7251	0.6118	0.9310	LMC
Indonesia	Asia	South-Eastern Asia	Jakarta	Very High EGDI	V1	75	31	0.7645	0.7147	0.9010	0.8662	0.7125	0.6552	UMC
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Asia	Southern Asia	Tehran	High EGDI	HV	87	65	0.7427	0.5845	0.7525	0.9564	0.6872	0.3448	UMC
Iraq	Asia	Western Asia	Baghdad	Middle EGDI	MH	158	137	0.4718	0.3818	0.3267	0.5851	0.4486	0.1034	UMC
Ireland	Europe	Northern Europe	Dublin	Very High EGDI	VH	19	59	0.9196	0.8922	0.7822	0.9147	0.9517	0.8966	HIC
Israel	Asia	Western Asia	Tel Aviv	Very High EGDI	V3	24	12	0.9116	0.9250	0.9604	0.9319	0.8777	0.9655	HIC
Italy	Europe	Southern Europe	Rome	Very High EGDI	V2	44	27	0.8687	0.8231	0.9109	0.9188	0.8641	0.7586	HIC
Jamaica	Americas	Caribbean	Kingston	High EGDI	HV	98	137	0.6866	0.6413	0.3267	0.7119	0.7066	0.4828	UMC
Japan	Asia	Eastern Asia	Tokyo	Very High EGDI	V3	29	12	0.8968	0.8940	0.9604	0.9051	0.8914	1.0000	HIC
Jordan	Asia	Western Asia	Amman	High EGDI	HV	94	95	0.7177	0.7392	0.5941	0.7267	0.6871	0.4138	UMC

Table *(continued)*

Country	Region	Sub-Region	City	EGDI Group	Rating Class	EGDI Rank	LOSI Rank	EGDI 2026	OSI	LOSI	TII	HCI	PE 2026	Level of Income
Kazakhstan	Asia	Central Asia	Almaty	Very High EGDI	VH	16	12	0.9363	0.9444	0.9604	0.9720	0.8924	0.8966	UMC
Kenya	Africa	Eastern Africa	Nairobi	High EGDI	H3	102	69	0.6760	0.6832	0.7426	0.6957	0.6490	0.6552	LMC
Kiribati	Oceania	Micronesia	South Tarawa	Middle EGDI	MH	152	108	0.4975	0.3551	0.5347	0.4927	0.6447	0.2759	LMC
Kuwait	Asia	Western Asia	Kuwait City	Very High EGDI	V1	82	81	0.7572	0.6487	0.6634	0.9586	0.6644	0.1379	HIC
Kyrgyzstan	Asia	Central Asia	Bishkek	Very High EGDI	V1	83	55	0.7534	0.7311	0.8119	0.8216	0.7073	0.6897	LMC
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Asia	South-Eastern Asia	Vientiane	Middle EGDI	M3	165	181	0.4071	0.3221	0.1089	0.5327	0.3665	0.2069	LMC
Latvia	Europe	Northern Europe	Riga	Very High EGDI	V3	26	49	0.9052	0.8648	0.8515	0.9524	0.8983	1.0000	HIC
Lebanon	Asia	Western Asia	Beirut	High EGDI	H1	137	184	0.5645	0.4416	0.0000	0.6776	0.5742	0.5517	LMC
Lesotho	Africa	Southern Africa	Maseru	Middle EGDI	M3	167	184	0.4019	0.3049	0.0000	0.4138	0.4870	0.1724	LMC
Liberia	Africa	Western Africa	Monrovia	Middle EGDI	M1	177	165	0.3241	0.4280	0.2079	0.1567	0.3876	0.4828	LIC
Libya	Africa	Northern Africa	Tripoli	High EGDI	H1	138	160	0.5644	0.3415	0.2376	0.8040	0.5476	0.0345	UMC
Liechtenstein	Europe	Western Europe	Vaduz	Very High EGDI	V1	67	95	0.7938	0.7252	0.5941	0.8822	0.7739	0.4483	HIC
Lithuania	Europe	Northern Europe	Vilnius	Very High EGDI	V3	23	37	0.9134	0.9319	0.8911	0.9342	0.8742	0.8966	HIC
Luxembourg	Europe	Western Europe	Luxembourg-Ville	Very High EGDI	V2	51	52	0.8426	0.8124	0.8317	0.9133	0.8021	0.7931	HIC
Madagascar	Africa	Eastern Africa	Antananarivo	Middle EGDI	M2	171	137	0.3873	0.4773	0.3267	0.2803	0.4042	0.5172	LIC
Malawi	Africa	Eastern Africa	Lilongwe	Middle EGDI	M3	164	126	0.4082	0.4738	0.3762	0.3132	0.4377	0.5517	LIC
Malaysia	Asia	South-Eastern Asia	Kuala Lumpur	Very High EGDI	V1	71	75	0.7748	0.6794	0.7129	0.9709	0.6740	0.4138	UMC
Maldives	Asia	Southern Asia	Male	High EGDI	H3	107	104	0.6660	0.6363	0.5644	0.7544	0.6072	0.2414	UMC
Mali	Africa	Western Africa	Bamako	Middle EGDI	M3	162	127	0.4352	0.6487	0.3663	0.4968	0.1602	0.7931	LIC
Malta	Europe	Southern Europe	St. Paul's Bay/San Pawl il-Banar	Very High EGDI	V3	40	184	0.8799	0.8100	0.0000	0.9862	0.8434	0.7931	HIC
Marshall Islands	Oceania	Micronesia	Majuro	High EGDI	H1	147	162	0.5350	0.4753	0.2277	0.4368	0.6930	0.4828	UMC
Mauritania	Africa	Western Africa	Nouakchott	Middle EGDI	MH	153	127	0.4972	0.6209	0.3663	0.5590	0.3118	0.6552	LMC
Mauritius	Africa	Eastern Africa	Port Louis	High EGDI	HV	92	72	0.7226	0.6239	0.7228	0.8465	0.6975	0.3448	UMC
Mexico	Americas	Central America	Mexico City	High EGDI	HV	88	63	0.7411	0.6648	0.7624	0.8572	0.7012	0.4828	UMC
Micronesia (Federated States of)	Oceania	Micronesia	Palikir	Middle EGDI	M3	168	131	0.4012	0.3968	0.3564	0.2091	0.5977	0.2069	UMC
Monaco	Europe	Western Europe	Monaco	Very High EGDI	V2	43	25	0.8703	0.7340	0.9208	0.9089	0.9679	0.4828	HIC
Mongolia	Asia	Eastern Asia	Ulaanbaatar	Very High EGDI	V3	42	55	0.8710	0.8469	0.8119	0.9500	0.8161	0.5172	UMC
Montenegro	Europe	Southern Europe	Podgorica	Very High EGDI	V1	76	105	0.7643	0.6311	0.5446	0.8595	0.8024	0.7931	UMC
Morocco	Africa	Northern Africa	Casablanca	High EGDI	HV	89	98	0.7350	0.6850	0.5842	0.8770	0.6430	0.4483	LMC
Mozambique	Africa	Eastern Africa	Maputo	Middle EGDI	M1	183	114	0.2812	0.2829	0.4455	0.1995	0.3611	0.1034	LIC

Table *(continued)*

Country	Region	Sub-Region	City	EGDI Group	Rating Class	EGDI Rank	LOSI Rank	EGDI 2026	OSI	LOSI	TII	HCI	PE 2026	Level of Income
Myanmar	Asia	South-Eastern Asia	Yangon	High EGDI	H1	140	114	0.5612	0.4496	0.4455	0.6621	0.5719	0.2759	LMC
Namibia	Africa	Southern Africa	Windhoek	High EGDI	HV	101	112	0.6817	0.6767	0.5050	0.6509	0.7174	0.7931	LMC
Nauru	Oceania	Micronesia	Yaren	High EGDI	H1	149	156	0.5274	0.4606	0.2673	0.5606	0.5609	0.4483	HIC
Nepal	Asia	Southern Asia	Kathmandu	High EGDI	H3	112	89	0.6554	0.6950	0.6337	0.7103	0.5608	0.8966	LMC
Netherlands	Europe	Western Europe	Amsterdam	Very High EGDI	VH	15	43	0.9392	0.9082	0.8713	0.9725	0.9368	0.9655	HIC
New Zealand	Oceania	Australia and New Zealand	Auckland	Very High EGDI	VH	20	46	0.9181	0.9019	0.8614	0.9348	0.9177	0.9310	HIC
Nicaragua	Americas	Central America	Managua	High EGDI	H2	128	105	0.5887	0.5419	0.5446	0.6190	0.6050	0.1034	LMC
Niger	Africa	Western Africa	Niamey	Middle EGDI	M1	179	176	0.3178	0.6277	0.1386	0.2020	0.1237	0.7586	LIC
Nigeria	Africa	Western Africa	Lagos	High EGDI	H2	134	65	0.5747	0.7359	0.7525	0.4966	0.4916	0.8621	LMC
North Macedonia	Europe	Southern Europe	Skopje	Very High EGDI	V1	68	100	0.7841	0.7432	0.5743	0.8171	0.7921	0.6552	UMC
Norway	Europe	Northern Europe	Oslo	Very High EGDI	VH	12	37	0.9474	0.9147	0.8911	0.9584	0.9691	0.7586	HIC
Oman	Asia	Western Asia	Muscat	Very High EGDI	V3	33	50	0.8875	0.9078	0.8416	0.9434	0.8112	0.7931	HIC
Pakistan	Asia	Southern Asia	Karachi	High EGDI	H2	119	105	0.6264	0.8422	0.5446	0.6590	0.3778	0.9655	LMC
Palau	Oceania	Micronesia	Koror	High EGDI	H3	118	167	0.6308	0.3870	0.1881	0.7471	0.7583	0.1034	HIC
Panama	Americas	Central America	Panama City	High EGDI	H3	105	78	0.6716	0.5675	0.6832	0.7769	0.6705	0.4828	HIC
Papua New Guinea	Oceania	Melanesia	Port Moresby	High EGDI	H1	148	127	0.5330	0.7245	0.3663	0.3098	0.5647	0.9655	LMC
Paraguay	Americas	South America	Asuncion	High EGDI	HV	91	78	0.7244	0.7122	0.6832	0.7927	0.6683	0.5172	UMC
Peru	Americas	South America	Lima	Very High EGDI	V1	78	91	0.7638	0.7353	0.6139	0.8415	0.7145	0.5172	UMC
Philippines	Asia	South-Eastern Asia	Quezon	Very High EGDI	V2	54	50	0.8241	0.9035	0.8416	0.7827	0.7860	0.9655	UMC
Poland	Europe	Eastern Europe	Warsaw	Very High EGDI	VH	21	22	0.9165	0.8824	0.9406	0.9639	0.9032	0.9310	HIC
Portugal	Europe	Southern Europe	Lisbon	Very High EGDI	V2	59	43	0.8051	0.6512	0.8713	0.9336	0.8306	0.2759	HIC
Qatar	Asia	Western Asia	Doha	Very High EGDI	V2	60	31	0.8051	0.7457	0.9010	0.9832	0.6863	0.4138	HIC
Republic of Korea	Asia	Eastern Asia	Seoul	Very High EGDI	VH	1	22	0.9794	0.9966	0.9406	0.9953	0.9465	0.9655	HIC
Republic of Moldova	Europe	Eastern Europe	Chisinau (Kishinev)	Very High EGDI	V2	61	100	0.8039	0.7342	0.5743	0.8437	0.8338	0.8621	UMC
Romania	Europe	Eastern Europe	Bucharest	Very High EGDI	V1	73	59	0.7678	0.7110	0.7822	0.8742	0.7181	0.9310	HIC
Russian Federation	Europe	Eastern Europe	Moscow	Very High EGDI	V2	50	12	0.8440	0.7728	0.9604	0.9459	0.8133	0.5172	HIC
Rwanda	Africa	Eastern Africa	Kigali	High EGDI	H3	104	81	0.6725	0.8347	0.6634	0.5857	0.5971	0.6897	LIC
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Americas	Caribbean	Basseterre	Very High EGDI	V1	81	59	0.7582	0.6351	0.7822	0.7985	0.8411	0.5172	HIC
Saint Lucia	Americas	Caribbean	Castries	High EGDI	H3	106	83	0.6668	0.7007	0.6535	0.6507	0.6489	0.7586	UMC
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Americas	Caribbean	Kingstown	High EGDI	H3	116	151	0.6319	0.5480	0.2871	0.6303	0.7175	0.4138	UMC

Table *(continued)*

Country	Region	Sub-Region	City	EGDI Group	Rating Class	EGDI Rank	LOSI Rank	EGDI 2026	OSI	LOSI	TII	HCI	PE 2026	Level of Income
Samoa	Oceania	Polynesia	Apia	High EGDI	H3	103	69	0.6746	0.7096	0.7426	0.5990	0.7151	0.8276	UMC
San Marino	Europe	Southern Europe	San Marino	High EGDI	H3	111	86	0.6561	0.5032	0.6436	0.8387	0.6264	0.0690	HIC
Sao Tome and Principe	Africa	Middle Africa	Sao Tome	Middle EGDI	M3	161	156	0.4382	0.3384	0.2673	0.4127	0.5635	0.1034	LMC
Saudi Arabia	Asia	Western Asia	Riyadh	Very High EGDI	VH	4	1	0.9721	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	0.9163	1.0000	HIC
Senegal	Africa	Western Africa	Dakar	High EGDI	H1	144	144	0.5567	0.6085	0.3069	0.7686	0.2929	0.4483	LMC
Serbia	Europe	Southern Europe	Belgrade	Very High EGDI	V3	22	20	0.9156	0.9435	0.9505	0.9553	0.8480	1.0000	UMC
Seychelles	Africa	Eastern Africa	Victoria	High EGDI	H2	123	171	0.6010	0.4322	0.1683	0.7482	0.6225	0.3793	HIC
Sierra Leone	Africa	Western Africa	Freetown	Middle EGDI	M1	182	119	0.2939	0.3225	0.3960	0.3618	0.1973	0.2069	LIC
Singapore	Asia	South-Eastern Asia	Singapore	Very High EGDI	VH	3	9	0.9722	1.0000	0.9802	0.9874	0.9291	1.0000	HIC
Slovakia	Europe	Eastern Europe	Bratislava	Very High EGDI	V2	46	43	0.8645	0.8109	0.8713	0.9291	0.8535	0.8966	HIC
Slovenia	Europe	Southern Europe	Ljubljana	Very High EGDI	V3	31	12	0.8951	0.9073	0.9604	0.9042	0.8738	1.0000	HIC
Solomon Islands	Oceania	Melanesia	Honiara	Middle EGDI	M2	173	93	0.3502	0.4969	0.6040	0.1730	0.3807	0.5862	LMC
Somalia	Africa	Eastern Africa	Mogadishu	Low EGDI	L1	193	162	0.1570	0.2708	0.2277	0.2002	0.0000	0.4138	LIC
South Africa	Africa	Southern Africa	Johannesburg	Very High EGDI	V2	52	53	0.8379	0.8386	0.8218	0.8978	0.7773	1.0000	UMC
South Sudan	Africa	Eastern Africa	Juba	Low EGDI	L3	188	127	0.2213	0.3726	0.3663	0.1760	0.1152	0.2759	LIC
Spain	Europe	Southern Europe	Madrid	Very High EGDI	VH	11	1	0.9497	0.9801	1.0000	0.9731	0.8959	0.9655	HIC
Sri Lanka	Asia	Southern Asia	Colombo	High EGDI	H3	110	114	0.6577	0.5949	0.4455	0.7219	0.6564	0.3448	UMC
State of Palestine	Asia	Western Asia	Ramallah	High EGDI	H2	133	162	0.5749	0.4555	0.2277	0.5885	0.6806	0.4828	LMC
Sudan	Africa	Northern Africa	Khartoum	Low EGDI	L3	189	184	0.2212	0.1256	0.0000	0.3058	0.2324	0.2069	LIC
Suriname	Americas	South America	Paramaribo	High EGDI	HV	95	76	0.7105	0.7082	0.7030	0.8151	0.6082	0.9655	UMC
Sweden	Europe	Northern Europe	Stockholm	Very High EGDI	VH	17	27	0.9306	0.8924	0.9109	0.9591	0.9404	0.9310	HIC
Switzerland	Europe	Western Europe	Zurich	Very High EGDI	V2	48	25	0.8561	0.7916	0.9208	0.9022	0.8746	0.7241	HIC
Syrian Arab Republic	Asia	Western Asia	Damascus	Middle EGDI	M2	175	151	0.3410	0.1627	0.2871	0.4554	0.4048	0.0345	LIC
Tajikistan	Asia	Central Asia	Dushanbe	High EGDI	H2	131	133	0.5782	0.5362	0.3366	0.5452	0.6533	0.2414	LMC
Thailand	Asia	South-Eastern Asia	Bangkok	Very High EGDI	V1	72	108	0.7732	0.6977	0.5347	0.9026	0.7193	0.4138	UMC
Timor-Leste	Asia	South-Eastern Asia	Dili	Middle EGDI	M2	174	176	0.3427	0.1765	0.1386	0.3857	0.4658	0.0345	LMC
Togo	Africa	Western Africa	Lome	High EGDI	H1	143	156	0.5578	0.6926	0.2673	0.4082	0.5727	0.6552	LMC
Tonga	Oceania	Polynesia	Nuku'Alofa	High EGDI	H2	126	154	0.5984	0.4661	0.2772	0.5172	0.8117	0.4483	UMC
Trinidad and Tobago	Americas	Caribbean	Port-Of-Spain	Very High EGDI	V1	70	172	0.7784	0.7844	0.1584	0.7429	0.8080	0.8966	HIC
Tunisia	Africa	Northern Africa	Tunis	High EGDI	HV	96	117	0.7086	0.6320	0.4158	0.8186	0.6754	0.4483	LMC
Türkiye	Asia	Western Asia	Istanbul	Very High EGDI	V3	37	31	0.8855	0.9153	0.9010	0.8884	0.8528	0.9310	UMC

Table *(continued)*

Country	Region	Sub-Region	City	EGDI Group	Rating Class	EGDI Rank	LOSI Rank	EGDI 2026	OSI	LOSI	TII	HCI	PE 2026	Level of Income
Turkmenistan	Asia	Central Asia	Ashkhabad	High EGDI	H1	146	137	0.5388	0.4287	0.3267	0.4968	0.6910	0.2414	UMC
Tuvalu	Oceania	Polynesia	Funafuti	High EGDI	H1	139	151	0.5618	0.4368	0.2871	0.6338	0.6148	0.5172	UMC
Uganda	Africa	Eastern Africa	Kampala	High EGDI	H1	145	98	0.5513	0.7226	0.5842	0.3886	0.5428	0.7931	LIC
Ukraine	Europe	Eastern Europe	Kyiv	Very High EGDI	V3	28	11	0.8982	0.9788	0.9703	0.8832	0.8327	1.0000	UMC
United Arab Emirates	Asia	Western Asia	Dubai	Very High EGDI	VH	5	1	0.9711	0.9977	1.0000	1.0000	0.9155	1.0000	HIC
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Europe	Northern Europe	London	Very High EGDI	VH	7	12	0.9553	0.9459	0.9604	0.9691	0.9507	0.9655	HIC
United Republic of Tanzania	Africa	Eastern Africa	Dar Es Salaam	Middle EGDI	MH	154	124	0.4915	0.5951	0.3861	0.4954	0.3840	0.3448	LMC
United States of America	Americas	Northern America	New York	Very High EGDI	VH	13	7	0.9440	0.9293	0.9901	0.9712	0.9316	1.0000	HIC
Uruguay	Americas	South America	Montevideo	Very High EGDI	V2	49	57	0.8494	0.7826	0.8020	0.9131	0.8525	0.5862	HIC
Uzbekistan	Asia	Central Asia	Tashkent	Very High EGDI	V3	32	37	0.8930	0.8885	0.8911	0.9213	0.8692	0.8276	LMC
Vanuatu	Oceania	Melanesia	Port Vila	High EGDI	H2	131	176	0.5782	0.5793	0.1386	0.6296	0.5258	0.5862	LMC
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Americas	South America	Caracas	Middle EGDI	MH	155	100	0.4788	0.3299	0.5743	0.5095	0.5971	0.0345	LMC
Viet Nam	Asia	South-Eastern Asia	Ho Chi Minh City	Very High EGDI	V1	77	46	0.7640	0.7228	0.8614	0.8433	0.7259	0.3793	UMC
Yemen	Asia	Western Asia	Sana'a	Low EGDI	LM	185	184	0.2473	0.2562	0.0000	0.2476	0.2379	0.2414	LIC
Zambia	Africa	Eastern Africa	Lusaka	High EGDI	HV	99	144	0.6853	0.8062	0.3069	0.6544	0.5952	0.9310	LMC
Zimbabwe	Africa	Eastern Africa	Harare	High EGDI	H2	121	119	0.6081	0.6534	0.3960	0.5358	0.6350	0.8966	LMC

This fourteenth edition of the United Nations E-Government Survey marks twenty-five years of global assessment and covers 193 Member States and, for the first time, the State of Palestine. It records continued progress: 151 of the 194 countries assessed now have high or very high E-Government Development Index (EGDI) values, driven principally by expanding online services.

Progress, however, remains uneven. Approximately 1.95 billion people—24.3 per cent of the world's population—live in countries with EGDI values below the global average. Gaps in affordability, connectivity, human capital and institutional capacity particularly affect countries in special situations, requiring differentiated financing, capacity development and technical cooperation.

The Local Online Service Index (LOSI) shows broader and more mature local digital government. Yet disparities persist across and within regions, and improvements in municipal infrastructure and online information have not always translated into accessible, participatory and seamless end-to-end services.

This edition introduces targeted methodological refinements while preserving continuity and comparability. It strengthens the assessment of life-event services, participation and engagement, government digital infrastructure and e-government literacy, providing a fuller picture of the foundations for digital transformation.

The Survey also examines the transition towards AI-enabled and potentially agentic public administration. It highlights opportunities for more proactive and responsive services, while stressing that trusted data, resilient infrastructure, human oversight and clear accountability are essential to ensure AI serves the public interest and does not transform existing digital disparities into a deeper AI divide.

ISBN 978-92-1-15528-05

