



BACKGROUND NOTE

e-Government and the Efficiency of Public Service

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e-Government and the Efficiency of Public Service

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In any e-government initiative across the world, it always starts with a stand-alone information technology (IT) project to improve the efficiency of individual government agency automating manual works. Later, each individual government agency attempts to advance their IT systems using more sophisticated technology. And the e-government initiative reaches to a more advanced maturity integrating disparate standalone IT systems across the government. This is the natural evolution of the e-government.

The main driver of this evolution is the increased demand of better public service from citizens. As the citizens feel the values of the digital services from the e-government, their demands are increased in quantity requesting more services, and in quality requesting more sophisticated and integrated services. At this stage, government needs some policies and information infrastructure from the e-government perspective. First, governments need to prepare the key e-government infrastructures for integration and data exchanges for e-government systems. Among many others, national identification (ID) system is one of the key e-government infrastructures for expanding and improving digital services.

For example, India had major problems in identifying beneficiaries for social programs. Without adequate identity records and verification processes, government agencies frequently distributed social welfare benefits to the same people multiple times, or to people who did not qualify. Prior to Aadhaar, India's national identification system, it was estimated that 58% of subsidized food grains and 38% of subsidized kerosene disbursed under government programs did not reach their intended beneficiaries. Aadhaar's unique identification through the biometric information makes it simpler for authorities to verify that subsidized goods are delivered to the right recipients and limits the scope of fraudulent activities.²

In case of the Philippines, there is no unique single identification for person yet although there are other forms of function identification such as passport, driver's license, tax-related transactions, opening of bank accounts, and social welfare benefits, among others. In August 2018, Republic Act 11055 was passed providing the legal basis for Philippine Identification System, also known as Philsys ID which is a valid proof of a person eliminating the need to present other forms of identification when transacting with the government. The mass registration will start by mid-2020, and it is planned to

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² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: *Case Study- Aadhaar in India*. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/innovative-government/India-case-study-UAE-report-2018.pdf>.

complete the enrollment of the entire population by 2022. The first set of target population for PhilSys ID would be beneficiaries of social protection programs in the country.

Second, governments need to prepare the policy on how to share the personal information of the citizen without compromising privacy and security for the digital services. With the security and privacy policies and measures in place, open data can facilitate innovations and create new businesses in digital economy.

In the past, government data has rarely been shared with public. Information sharing was also very difficult even among governments and public agencies working in silos. However, this trend has been changed as the Internet penetrates to our everyday life. It is getting easier and cheaper for citizens to access and share the governments data. From the governance perspective, the idea of the open government becomes popular to take the internet as a powerful communication and information access tool making the government more transparent and accountable. As in the case of Uber and Airbnb, data is now being considered as the most valuable asset in the digital economy. As more and more governments are competing each other to attract more businesses and talents to boost their economies, they are realizing the value of government's data and allow them to be used for businesses and citizens to improve public services. Based on the government's open data policy, digital technology can foster open innovation through crowdsourcing for various public services and engage the citizen in decision making and monitoring public services.

In Singapore, open data sharing is one of the priority areas for Singapore's Smart Nation vision. By releasing data, the government aims to unlock economic value, enable quality research and deepen public participation and engagement. Data.gov.sg was first launched in 2011 as a free and open data portal where anyone can access datasets on Singapore, ranging from education, environment, and health to transport.