



Connected Government

PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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WORLD BANK GROUP

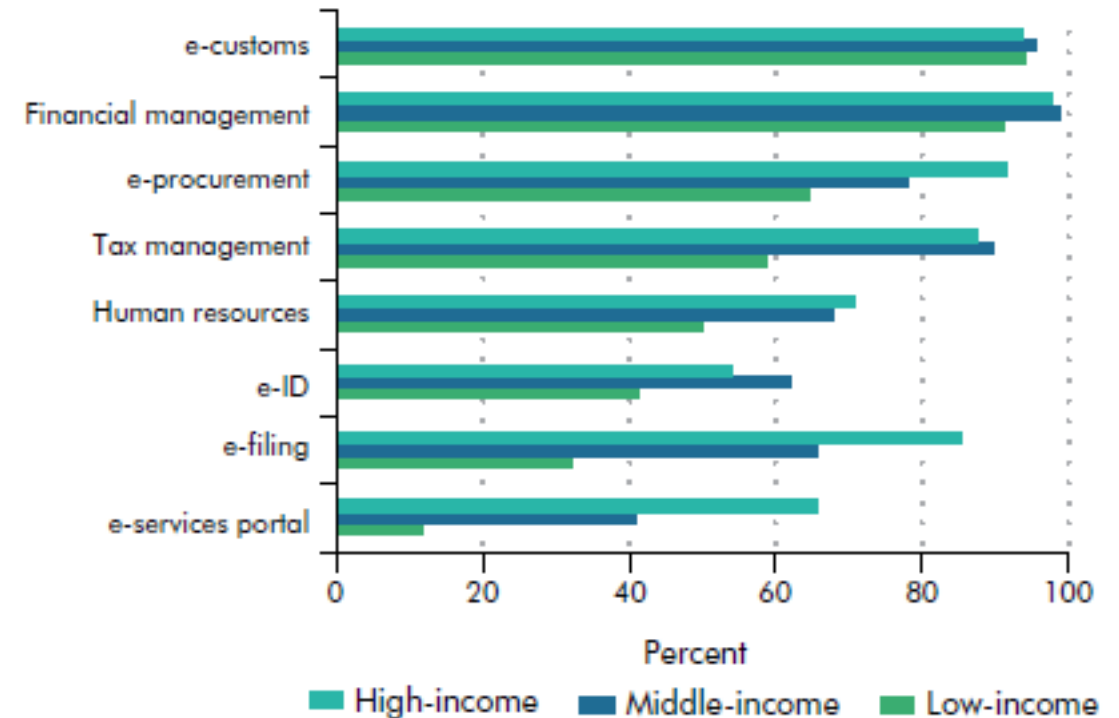
Trends for connected governments

Governments have invested heavily in digital technologies over past two decades

More investment in core government administrative systems

Low and middle income countries have invested less in service-oriented technologies (gov't to business, gov't to citizens)

Investment in main e-Government systems (2014)



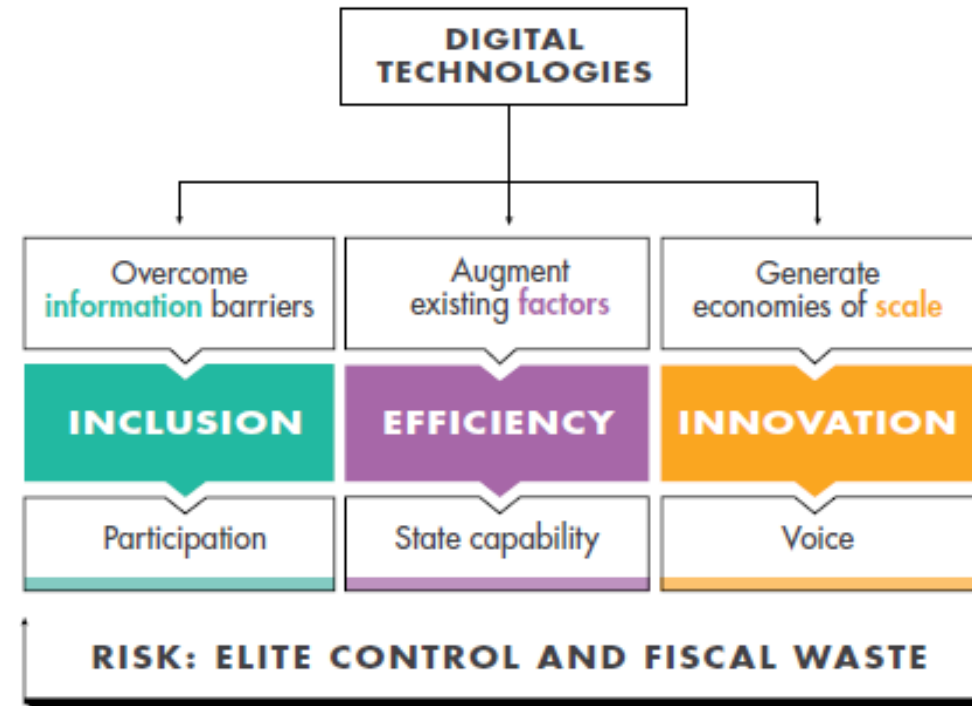
Sources: WDR 2016 team, based on World Bank Global e-Government Systems database 2015b; World Bank Global Digital Identification for Development (ID4D) database 2015c; UN 2014. Data at http://bit.do/WDR2016-Fig3_2.

How do digital technologies affect public service delivery?

Hypothesis: digital technologies can strengthen government capability and empower citizens through three mechanisms

But outcomes depend on institutional conditions, and risks exist

A framework for digital technologies and public service delivery



Why do institutional conditions matter?

Strong institutions:

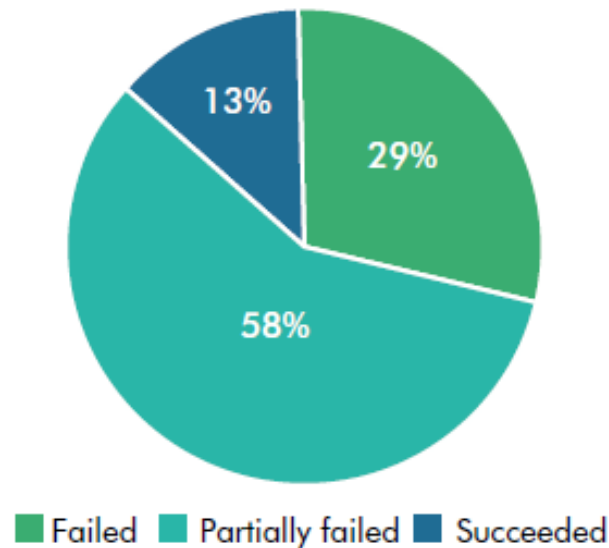
- Create incentives for politicians to work towards public good, public officials to be accountable to those politicians
- Digital technologies can be aligned with these incentives to promote better service delivery outcomes

Weak institutions:

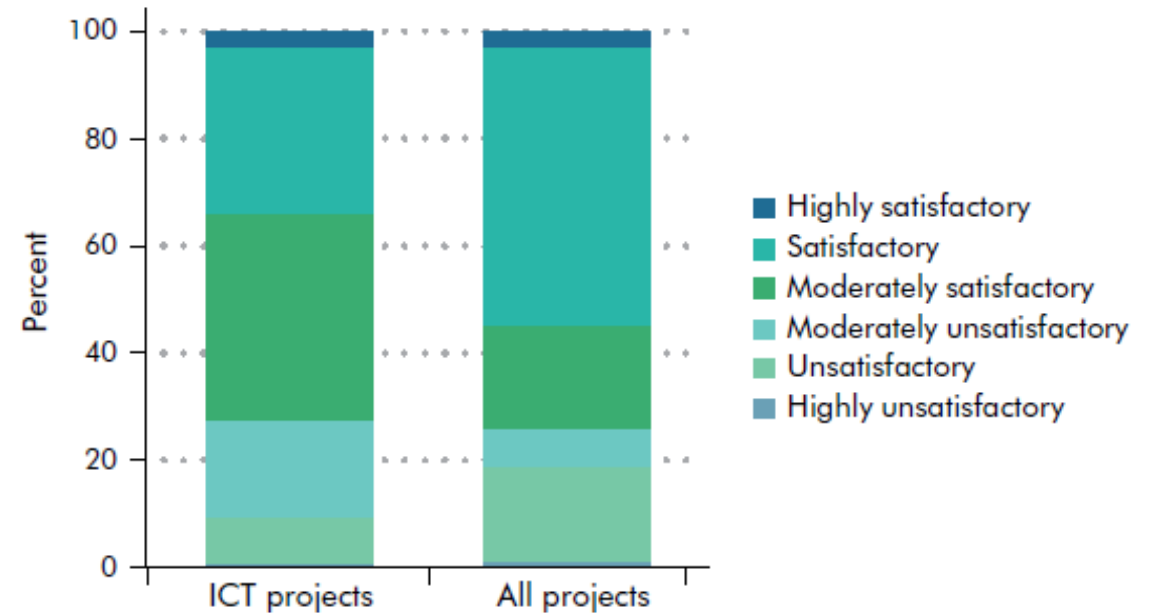
- Poor incentives for public good, accountability of public service
- Digital technologies can enhance capacity for surveillance and control – risking greater elite capture, and wasting public resources

Do institutional risks affect success rates of digital projects in government?

Success rates of large public sector ICT projects



Performance of World Bank funded ICT projects



What is the impact of digital technologies on public services?

Impact of digital technology on public services: a scorecard

Channel	Impact of technology	Main problem to address	Do digital technologies solve the problem?
Informing citizens and giving them an identity	H	Poor information and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes, when poor information is the main barrier to improving service outcomes
Streamlining processes	M	High transaction costs; rent-seeking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sometimes, given the considerable heterogeneity of impacts across countries and the high risks and rewards of reforms
Receiving user feedback	M	High transaction costs; rent-seeking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes, when citizens have an incentive to complain and services can be easily monitored• No, otherwise
Improving service provider management	L	Information asymmetries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes, for reducing ghost workers and absenteeism• No, for improving provider accountability for services that cannot be easily monitored

Informing citizens, giving them identity

Informing citizens: significant advances in the use of digital technologies to improve public health outcomes – **high impact**

- Health providers: POS data collection, disease surveillance, telemedicine
- Service recipients: SMS reminders for vaccination, patient reminders to undertake therapy, drug use, etc
- Examples – Ebola in Central Africa, Earthquake response in Nepal

Establishing identity: targeted social programs relying on effective civil registration

- Lack of birth certificates, official registration documents can prevent citizens from opening bank accounts, receiving transfers and benefiting from social programs

Digital ID programs: using biometrics to build civil registries, establish identity – provide targeted support

- Examples: Welfare payment card in S. Africa, Income Support Program in Pakistan

Streamlining processes

Most useful where public service delivery imposes high transaction costs, OR where opportunity for rent seeking exists – **medium impact**

One Stop Service Centers: provide citizens with access to broad range of public services from multiple government departments at one location – expanding options, saving time, reducing opportunities for corruption

- Examples throughout ASEAN, including Thailand, also India, Brazil

E-Procurement: increase transparency, reduce discretion, create budget savings and better quality infrastructure – mixed results

- Successful in India, Indonesia – but underpinned with institutional reform
- Europe and Central Asia – mixed effects, generally didn't increase perceptions of perceptiveness

Receiving user feedback

Using digital technologies to enable citizens to report service delivery issues; enable governments to report back to citizens when issues are addressed – **medium impact**

- Citizen must have incentive to report
- Government must have incentive to respond

Example: Nairobi MajiVoice (water and sewage) complaint mechanism

- Before: 400 complaints per month, 46% resolution rate, lengthy response time
- After: 3,000 complaints per month, 94% resolution rate, response time drops by 90%
- Effective because: private good, used regularly, specific service failure

Less effective: general complaint systems, public goods, failure difficult to identify

Improving management of public services

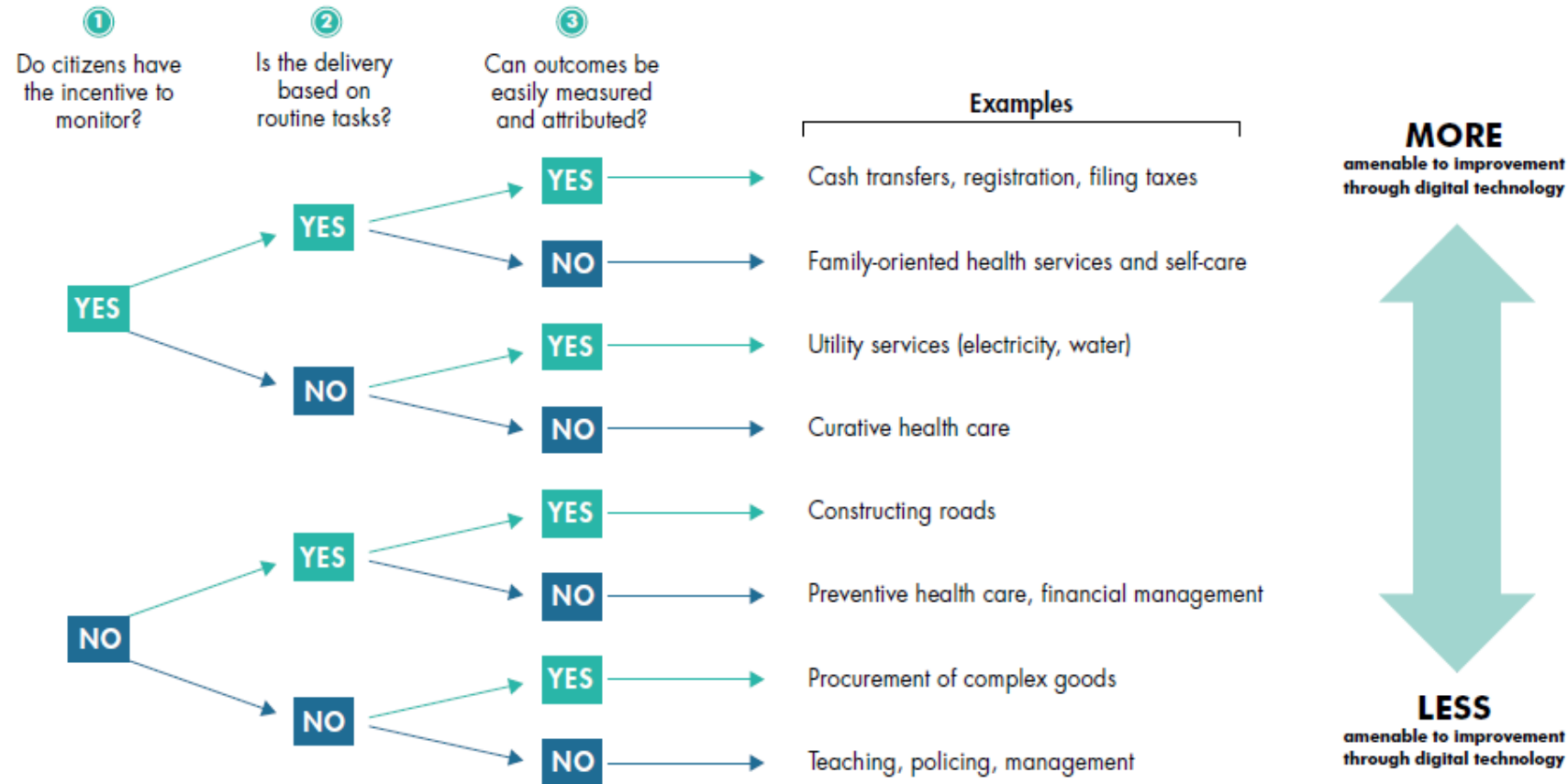
Better monitoring of workers and facilities strengthens accountability within government by reducing information asymmetries between policy makers and service providers – **low impact**

- Absenteeism amongst service providers (teachers, doctors, nurses etc) can be addressed using digital technologies to record attendance and transmit data – but must be accompanied by good management practices
- More difficult to address failures where quality is difficult to measure and issues are complex – showing up for work doesn't guarantee quality

Where can digital technologies help improve management?

- Monitoring goals and operational performance for organizations and workers

Public services and digital technology – a flowchart



Sources: WDR 2016 team, based on Batley and McLoughlin 2015; Pritchett and Woolcock 2002; Wilson 1989; World Bank 2003.

What is the impact of digital technologies on citizen empowerment?

Impact of digital technology on citizen empowerment: a scorecard

Channel	Impact of technology	Main problem to address	Do digital technologies solve the problem?
Free and fair elections	H	Lack of information; high transaction costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes, monitoring reduces errors and fraud in voting
More informed voting	M	Information asymmetries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes, for blatant abuses of office; no, for less newsworthy public service failures• Increase ability of elites to manipulate information
Greater citizen voice	L	Collective action failures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective only when governments are already willing to listen to citizens• Must be complemented by offline mobilization by civil society groups

Key observations

Digital technologies have a mixed impact on improving public service delivery and citizen empowerment

- Innovation and technology matter – but are conditional on **quality of institutions, and are not without risk**
- Digital technologies have had an impact on public service delivery – especially on informing citizens, and providing identity, with more mixed results on streamlining processes, providing feedback and improving management of public services
- There is still room for improvement in the way digital technologies support citizen empowerment

For the most part, digital technologies reinforce, not replace, accountability relationships between citizens and government – and compliment, rather than substitute, for existing government capabilities.

Thank you

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