

Annual Report 2024



UNU
EGOV



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1. Foreword by the Director



A decade. Ten years of building, learning, and connecting. In 2024, UNU-EGOV celebrated its 10th anniversary, a moment of gratitude, reflection, and renewed ambition. It is a privilege to witness how, over the years, with the contribution of the previous Directors, UNU-EGOV has grown into a recognized voice in digital governance, trusted by governments, UN agencies, and public institutions worldwide.

We marked this milestone not with nostalgia, but with purpose. Over 2024, our team worked in more than 20 countries, participated in over 35 international events, and partnered with more than 60 institutions. Behind these figures lie policy dialogues, strategies co-developed with public authorities, and knowledge shared to inform inclusive, people-centred transformation.

We strengthened our presence in the Global South and Portuguese-speaking countries, launching new collaborations and deepening existing ones. Inclusive digital transformation is not achieved in isolation; it is forged through context-sensitive cooperation and long-term trust.

2024 was also a year of global visibility. From Geneva to Riyadh, from Addis Ababa to São Paulo, UNU-EGOV contributed to high-level fora on AI, digital public infrastructure, inclusion, and innovation. We helped shape global agendas and, just as importantly, elevated the voices of those most affected by them.

But 2024 was more than a celebration. It marked a turning point: the conclusion of our Core Research Programme 2020–2024. Over five years, we advanced inclusive, effective, and sustainable digital governance through evidence-based research, strategic partnerships, and capacity development initiatives.

Looking ahead, 2025 brings a new chapter. Guided by the principles of the United Nations University Strategy 2025–2029 — Knowledge, Partnerships, and Impact — UNU-EGOV will deploy its work across five core pillars: Knowledge Enhancement and Research Excellence; Capacity Development and Education; Global Network and Partnership; Advisory and Consultancy Services; and Institutional Development.

To our partners, collaborators, and dedicated team: thank you. Your trust and engagement have guided us along this journey. The next phase begins now, and we look forward to building it together.

Delfina Soares
Director of UNU-EGOV

Vision

UNU-EGOV's vision is to cement its role as an international reference of excellence in digital governance by bringing together multidisciplinary and multicultural teams to exploit the potential of digital technology to address complex problems and emerging challenges.

Mission

The mission of UNU-EGOV is to support the United Nations system and its member states, in transforming the mechanisms of governance and building effective governance capabilities through the strategic application of digital technologies. As such, UNU-EGOV contributes to inclusive social and economic development, environmental sustainability, and peace and security.

UNU-EGOV aims to support the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda through an extensive research programme on digital transformation as a tool for promoting sustainable development, empowered citizenship, and strong and accountable institutions.

2. Our work

We conduct research, advisory, consultancy, and capacity development activities on digital governance and the digital transformation of governments towards more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable societies.

We aim to understand government digital transformation and innovation for socio-economic development and inclusion. This outcome aligns with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our goal is to consolidate and exploit digital governance knowledge while also exploring new insights to advance global inclusion, development, sustainability, and security.

We investigate current and emerging digital technologies and digital governance opportunities and challenges to build resilient societies. This objective responds to the research demands and

needs that have emerged from global situations starting in 2020, particularly the pandemic experience and the significant changes impacting societies and governments.

We are a distinctive combination of a think tank, a policy-driven research operating unit, and an integral part of the United Nations system.

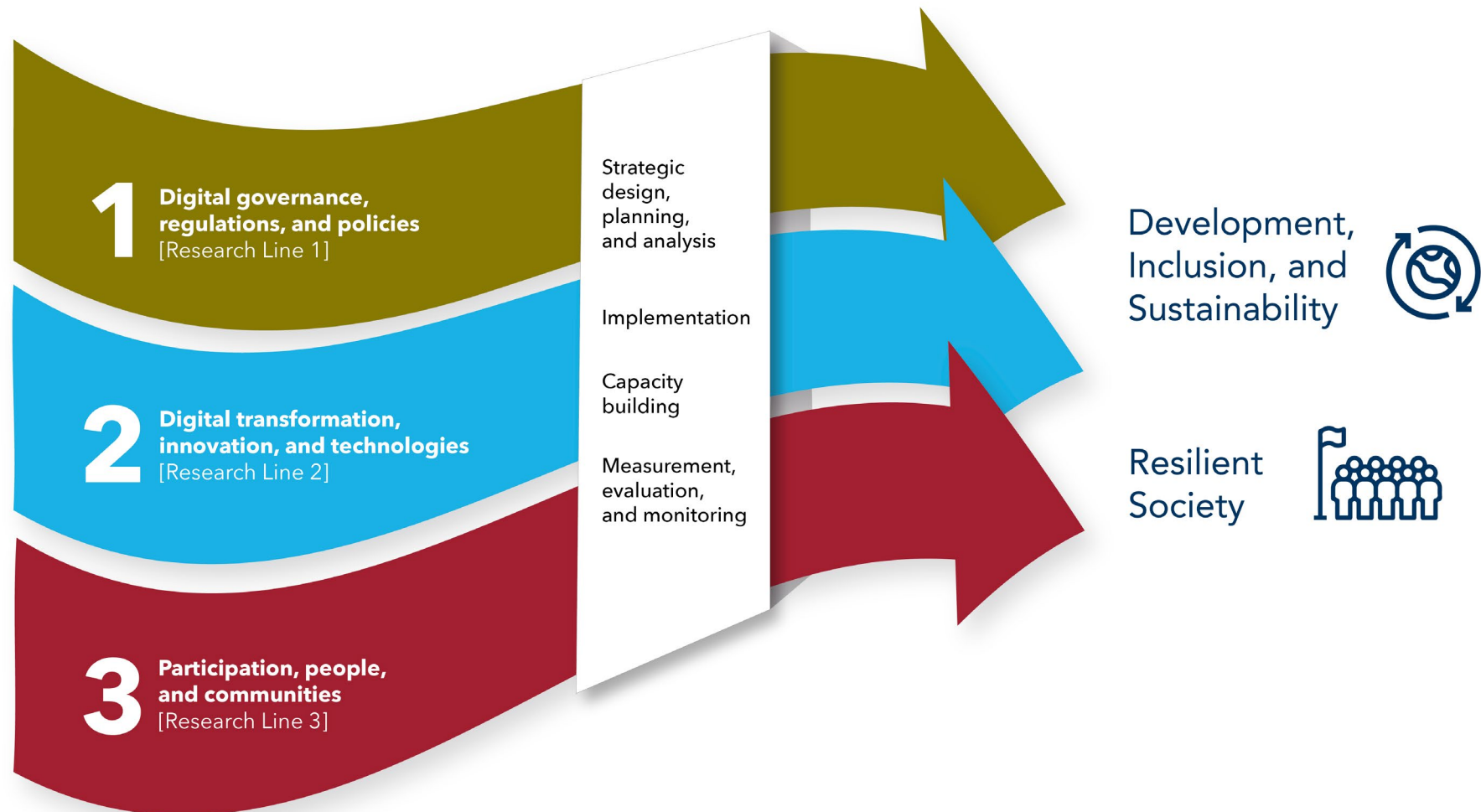
Our most valuable asset lies in our research team's interdisciplinary and multicultural nature, which gives each project a unique insight into the diversity and specificities of the challenges posed by the context.

By leveraging these strengths and collaborating closely with a global network of partners and stakeholders, we are able to deliver impactful results in the field of digital governance at local, national, regional, and international levels.

3. Our Core Research Programme

Governance, Technology, and People

Our Core Research Programme 2020-2024 focuses on three complementary and supplementary dimensions – Governance, Technology, and People.



4. 2024 Highlights

JANUARY

WEBINAR

Decoding Artificial Intelligence – Unveiling the secrets of explainability UNU-EGOV & ISSA Webinar Series

UNU-EGOV and the International Social Security Association (ISSA) launched a dedicated webinar series exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The first session, “Decoding Artificial Intelligence – Unveiling the secrets of explainability” delved into the inner workings of AI explainability, contrasting transparent models like decision trees with opaque “black-box” systems, and discussed accountability in AI deployment.

The series continued throughout the year with further sessions, including “Report on Artificial Intelligence in Social Security Organizations” in July, which presented the findings of a joint ISSA-UNU-EGOV report on how AI is transforming social security. In November, “Leveraging Usability in Service Delivery – Beyond Access”, focused on transparency, accessibility, and user-centred design.

POLICY BRIEF

Globalizing GovTech Expertise and Solutions: Advancing Digital Collaboration, Diplomacy, and Export Promotion Strategies

UNU-EGOV published a Policy Brief, exploring how governments can promote their digital transformation expertise abroad by exporting GovTech solutions. The brief examines key motivations and strategies behind this globalization and offers five practical recommendations for public institutions looking to share and scale their digital innovations internationally.

FEBRUARY

PROJECT

Portugal EGOV Index – Benchmarking Digital Governance Performance

UNU-EGOV started collaborating with the Portuguese Administrative Modernization Agency (AMA) in assessing the country’s performance across ten major international digital governance benchmarks, including DESI and the UN E-Government Survey. The project delivers strategic recommendations, an action plan, and capacity development activities to enhance Portugal’s digital governance and sustain its global leadership.



WEBINAR

LOSI Webinar Series Episode 4 Uzbekistan

UNU-EGOV co-hosted with UNDESA the fourth episode of the Local Online Service Index (LOSI) Webinar Series, focusing on Uzbekistan. The session brought together researchers and city officials to discuss the application of the LOSI methodology across 14 municipalities. It provided insights into the digital maturity of local governments and facilitated dialogue on enhancing e-government services at the municipal level.

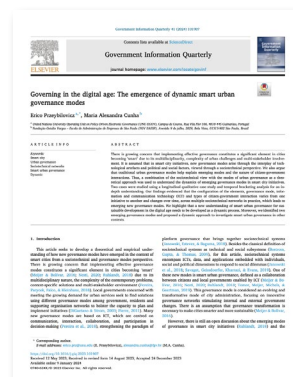
The fifth episode – LOSI Webinar Episode 5 India took place in May, and focused on good practices and key challenges of local digital government implementation in the context of India, highlighting LOSI’s role in fostering inclusive and effective local digital governance.

MARCH

JOURNAL

Governing in the Digital Age: The Emergence of Dynamic Smart Urban Governance Modes

Published in Government Information Quarterly, this journal article explores the evolution of governance modes in smart cities, offering new insights into the dynamic relationships between urban technology, institutions, and society.



JOURNAL

Open Government Data Use: The Brazilian States and Federal District Cases

Published in PLOS ONE, this paper presents the results of an online survey and subsequent interviews investigating whether, how, and why public administrations of Brazilian states and the federal district (Federation Units) use open government data.



INSTITUTIONAL

UNU Rector Meets the President of Portugal

During an official visit to Lisbon, UNU Rector Tshilidzi Marwala met with President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa to discuss the impact of UNU-EGOV over the past decade and explore strategies for strengthening its role in shaping digital governance globally.



2024 Highlights

APRIL

EVENT

Launch of IPIC 2023 Report

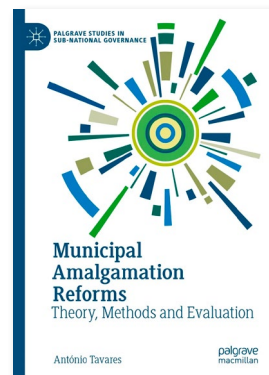
On 23 April, UNU-EGOV co-organized a public session to present the results of the IPIC 2023 study, commissioned by the Portuguese Administrative Modernization Agency and jointly conducted with the University of Minho. The session highlighted key trends in digital service delivery and the online presence of Portuguese municipalities.



BOOK

Municipal Amalgamation Reforms in Europe: Theory, Methods and Evaluation

Published by Palgrave Macmillan (Springer), this book offers a comprehensive analysis of municipal amalgamation reforms across Europe. It combines theory with empirical evidence to assess the outcomes and challenges of merging local governments.



MAY

EVENT

Global Digital Compact: Data Deep Dive Consultation

Held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, this high-level consultation brought together African policymakers, development actors, and UN agencies to explore data governance in the Global Digital Compact. Co-facilitated by the Permanent Representatives of Zambia and Sweden to the UN, the session benefited from the technical input of UNU-EGOV on “Regional Implementation of the GDC: Opportunities and Next Steps”.



EVENT

WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event – Exploring the Vital Role of E-Government in Advancing SDG Session

On 29 May, UNU-EGOV joined the WSIS+20 High-Level Event in Geneva to discuss how digital government contributes to achieving the SDGs. Organized by UN DESA and the ITU, the session focused on leveraging inclusive, efficient e-government services to address global development challenges and foster more resilient public institutions.

JOURNAL

The Generation of Public Value through E-Participation Initiatives

This article provides a comprehensive synthesis of the existing literature on how e-participation contributes to public value creation. Published in Government Information Quarterly, the study explores conceptual frameworks, benefits, and limitations, offering valuable insights for both scholars and policymakers.



EVENT

“10 Years of EGOV: 2014–2024” Official Ceremony

On 23 May, UNU-EGOV held its 10th-anniversary official ceremony. The event brought together high-level guests, including the Rector of UNU, the Portuguese Minister of State and Foreign Affairs, and the Mayor of Guimarães. The gathering reflected on a decade of contributions to digital governance and reaffirmed UNU-EGOV’s commitment to advancing inclusive and effective public institutions. Launched during the celebration, the book UNU-EGOV Memory and Project, traces the journey of UNU-EGOV from its founding to its current global role. More than a historical reflection, the book offers a rich narrative of strategic milestones, flagship initiatives, and lasting contributions made over ten years of advancing e-governance.



MoU

Advancing Digital Transformation and E-Governance in Qatar

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with Qatar’s Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) sets the foundation for collaborative efforts in research, capacity development, advisory services, knowledge exchange, and networking.

2024 Highlights

JUNE

CONFERENCE

UNU-EGOV at dg.o 2024

Held in Taipei, Taiwan, the 25th Annual International Conference on Digital Government Research (dg.o 2024) featured the participation of UNU-EGOV researchers and visiting experts. Three papers were presented.

["Digitalizing Public Services by Life Events: A Comparative Study"](#) examines how selected countries in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership region are digitalizing public services. Organized around life events, the study highlights patterns, challenges, and opportunities for enhancing digital service delivery.

["Will Sharing Economy Work in the Public Sector? Exploring Government-Initiated and Facebook-Enabled Use Case from the Philippines"](#) analyses a government-led initiative in the Philippines that leveraged Facebook as a platform for resource sharing in public administration. The paper reflects on lessons learned and the potential for scaling digital collaboration in similar contexts.

["Implementing Data-Driven Governance Strategies in Digital Transformation of Public Administration: Experience from Brazil, South Korea and Russia"](#) explores national approaches to digital transformation and data-driven governance. Drawing on case studies from Brazil, South Korea and Russia, the paper presents insights into common enablers, institutional challenges, and context-specific reforms.



COLLABORATION

IGF Dynamic Coalition on Measuring Digital Inclusion

UNU-EGOV, UNESCO and other stakeholders launched the IGF Dynamic Coalition on Measuring Digital Inclusion at EuroDIG 2024. As founding member of the Dynamic Coalition, UNU-EGOV contributed as speaker with the presentation *Advancing Digital Inclusion for Building Inclusive Knowledge Societies*, highlighting key approaches for equitable access and participation in the digital age.

POLICY BRIEF

Digital Government in Small Island States

Titled *Lessons and Recommendations for Implementing Digital Government in Small Island States*, this policy brief offers actionable insights to support digital governance in Small Island States (SIS). It outlines specific challenges and opportunities, providing targeted recommendations for advancing sustainable and inclusive digital transformation.

JULY



CONFERENCE

Social Media in Elections: A Glimpse of Mis/Disinformation from Developing Countries

Presented at the Data for Policy conference in London (June 2024), this paper explores the growing influence of social media on electoral processes in developing countries. It offers a comparative analysis of misinformation and disinformation trends, highlighting structural vulnerabilities and governance gaps that challenge electoral integrity in digital environments.

PROJECT

National Strategy for Digital Transformation in Guinea Bissau

UNU-EGOV and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bissau launched a joint initiative to support the development of ENT.D.GW, a national strategy aimed at accelerating digital transformation in Guinea-Bissau. The project seeks to foster institutional capacity, promote inclusive digital services, and align digital governance efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals.

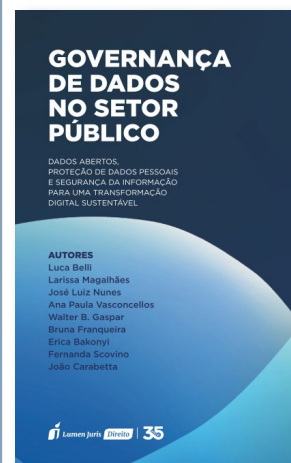
AUGUST



BOOK

UNU-EGOV: Big Family (Children's Book - Online Version)

As part of its 10th-anniversary celebrations, UNU-EGOV launched *UNU-EGOV: Big Family*, a children's book that introduces young readers to the concepts of digital governance and international cooperation. Featuring colourful illustrations and simple language, the book aims to inspire curiosity and awareness about the digital world from an early age.



2024 Highlights

SEPTEMBER

WORKSHOP

Intergenerational Collaboration and Digital Justice at UN Summit of the Future's Action Days

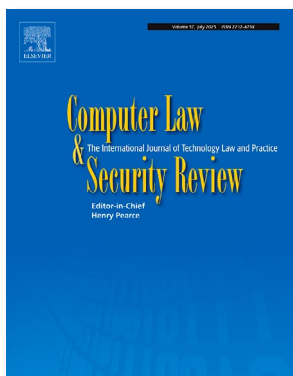
Held in New York as part of the UN Summit of the Future's Action Days, this workshop focused on the intersection of digital technology and climate justice. Co-organized by UNU-EGOV, UNU-IIGH, and Columbia University, the event highlighted the impact of intergenerational partnerships in shaping both digital and environmental futures.



JOURNAL

Open Government Data in the Brazilian Digital Government

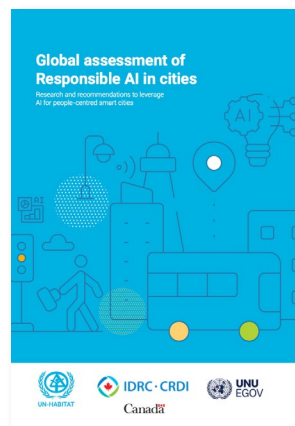
This article explores how open government data contributes to accelerating the SDG agenda in Brazil. Published in Computer Law & Security Review, the article discusses the enabling role of data governance in promoting transparency and innovation.



PUBLICATION

Global Assessment of Responsible AI in Cities

Lead authored by UNU-EGOV in partnership with UN-Habitat and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), this report presents a global assessment of how cities are adopting responsible AI. Published by UN-Habitat's, it provides actionable recommendations for policymakers to advance inclusive, human rights-based smart city strategies. The study highlights best practices, governance frameworks, and common challenges in promoting socially equitable AI adoption at the local level.



REPORT

UN E-Government Survey 2024: LOSI and UNU-EGOV's Key Role

In collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), UNU-EGOV played an important role in the 2024 UN E-Government Survey. Launched in September, this landmark report highlights digital government advancements worldwide. UNU-EGOV's contribution, particularly through its work on the Local Online Service Index (LOSI), was critical in shaping the evaluation of local government portals.

OCTOBER

CONFERENCE

ICEGOV 2024

UNU-EGOV organized the 17th edition of the "International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance" (ICEGOV 2024), held in Pretoria, South Africa, from 1–4 October. The event gathered 330 participants from 49 countries, creating a vibrant space for dialogue between scholars, policymakers, and practitioners committed to digital governance. A total of 157 papers were submitted, 63 were published in the official proceedings.

UNU-EGOV led the conference organisation and actively contributed to multiple sessions, reinforcing its role as a global knowledge hub and convening space for inclusive, evidence-based digital transformation.



FORUM

SEADGov Forum: South and East Africa Digital Governance Forum

UNU-EGOV launched in Pretoria, South Africa, the South and East Africa Digital Governance (SEADGov) Forum. The Forum convened government officials, academics, and international organizations to discuss region-specific strategies for inclusive digital governance. The first meeting of this Forum was co-organized with UN DESA and UN ECA. The forum marked a key milestone in the Global Digital Fora initiative led by UNU-EGOV.



G20 BRAZIL

Inclusive Digital Transformation

UNU-EGOV contributed to the G20 Brazilian Presidency through the publication of three policy briefs, entitled "[Citizen-centered digital government: Approaches for advancing the public sector's use of technologies based on demand-side data](#)", "[A Consumer-Centric Approach to Digital Public Infrastructure for Sustainable Financial Inclusion](#)" and "[Standardized payment interfaces as Digital Public Infrastructure: learning from the experience in India and Brazil](#)", addressing topics recognized as priorities in the G20 Digital Working Groups and the Maceió Ministerial Declaration on Digital Inclusion on 13 September 2024.

UNU-EGOV's contribution to G20 Presidency included as well the co-organization with CTS-FGV of a series of four webinars – from February to June – on digital policies in the G20: "[AI Governance in the G20](#)"; "[Platform Regulation in the G20](#)"; "[Cybersecurity in the G20](#)"; and "[Meaningful Connectivity in the G20](#)".

2024 Highlights

NOVEMBER



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

UN – Portugal Digital Fellowship on Digital Innovation and Transformation Programme

The inaugural edition of the UN-Portugal Digital Fellowship, held in Guimarães, brought together high-level public officials from 23 countries. Organized by UNU-EGOV in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, Camões, I.P., and UNIPAR, this fellowship featured 13 modules on topics such as digital governance, AI, cybersecurity, and citizen participation.

WHITE PAPER

Transformation for Our Shared Goals

UNU-EGOV released the white paper *Transformation for Our Shared Goals*. Commissioned by Egypt's National Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development (NIGSD) and funded by AECID, the paper supports the design of an innovation lab pilot to advance sustainable development through experimental public sector approaches.

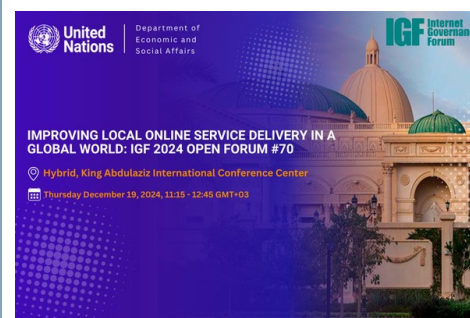


DECEMBER

FORUM

Improving Local Online Service Delivery in a Global World – IGF 2024 Open Forum #70

Held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, this session at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) explored how local governments can improve digital service delivery in a globalized context. Co-organized with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), it featured insights from the Local Online Service Index (LOSI) and global best practices.



PROJECT

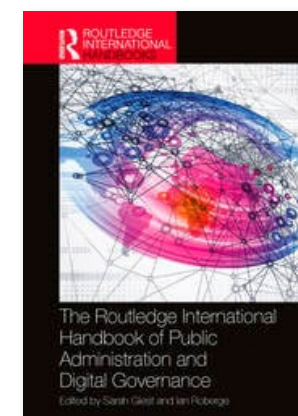
Kenya National Social Security Fund – Data Quality and Governance Framework

UNU-EGOV started a project with the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) to support Kenya in enhancing data quality and governance. The project includes a comprehensive assessment, immediate remediation measures, and the development of a long-term data governance strategy. Deliverables encompass presentations on international best practices and technical documents guiding digital transformation and IT governance in the social security sector.

BOOK CHAPTER

Emerging Trends in the Philippine Government's Use of Social Media

Published in *The Routledge Handbook of Public Administration and Digital Governance*, this chapter explores how social media is shaping public sector communication and engagement in the Philippines, highlighting evolving strategies and governance implications.



5. 2024 Figures



48 Publications

Journal articles	12
Book	2
Book Chapter	3
Conference Proceedings (ed)	1
Conference papers	14
Reports	7
Policy Papers	3
Policy Briefs	6



49 Events attendance with active role*

Speaker	33
Discussant	4
Moderator	6
Presenter	6



35 Events organized

Large conference	1
Conference	2
Webinar	10
Seminar	17
Discussion panel	1
Workshop	4



Education and training

Short-term specialized training programmes organized and delivered

2

Courses coordinated and delivered to post-graduation programmes

1

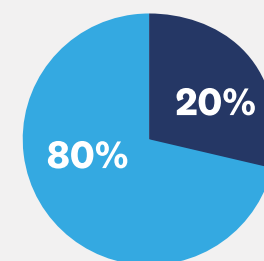
Invited lectures delivered to post-graduation programmes

16

50 government and public officials targeted

From developing economies	50
From developed economies	0

45 students targeted



■ From developing economies
■ From developed economies



21 Supervisions

10 PhD Co-supervision

From developing countries	6
From developed countries	4

11 Master Co-supervision

From developing countries	1
From developed countries	10



93 Documents reviewed

Journal articles	43
Conference papers	44
Other (Book chapter; Report; Policy briefs)	6



53 Memberships in Boards, Councils, Committees, Working Groups

*Speaker includes: keynote speaker; speaker.
Discussant includes: discussant; panellist; invited expert.
Moderator includes: moderator; facilitator; co-facilitator.

2024 Figures



Financials (in US\$)

Income

2 098 000 US\$

Cumulative Surplus
Carried Forward
65 000 US\$
3%

Expenditure

2 098 000 US\$

Staff costs
1 673 000 US\$
80%

Programme
activities costs
328 000 US\$
16%

General
Operating
Expenditures
97 000 US\$
4%

Institutional
core income
1 million
48%

Project/
Institutional
fundraising
1 033 000 US\$
49%



Human Resources

Personnel

Total of personnel	38
Total of nacionalities	14



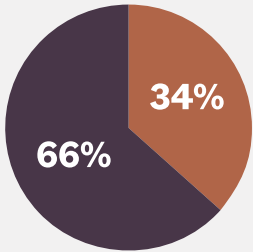
Male

50%

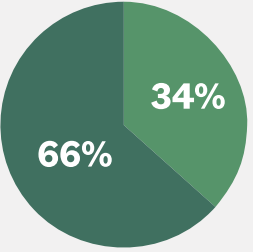


Female

50%



From developing countries
From developed countries



Global North
Global South



Institutional Partners



6. Generating Knowledge and Providing Evidence

In 2024, UNU-EGOV continued to enhance its policy-driven, cross-disciplinary research and advisory activities in digital governance. Our work focused on generating actionable knowledge and producing evidence to support policymakers in navigating the complex digital transformation of governments and society. We executed 40 projects, of which 21 were funded through our core budget. The remaining 19 were supported by external sources, with 16 (84%) involving or targeting emerging economies – an increase from 67% in 2023.

Evidence-Based Policy Advice and Impact Assessment

In 2024, we maintained our commitment to practical, policy-oriented research aligned with pressing challenges faced by governments and societies in the digital age. This included contributions linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Digital Compact (GDC).

Our approach ensures that all recommendations are actionable and grounded in rigorous research methodologies. Both exploratory and applied research projects were conducted to study the implementation and outcomes of digital transformation initiatives within the public sector.

We continued to deliver evidence-based recommendations to governments and international organizations across regions.

In Africa, supported by the EU's Knowledge Hub Digital, we provided the European Commission and the East African Community (EAC) with a comprehensive situation analysis, stakeholder consultations, and strategic recommendations for the four-year, €25 million "Safe Africa Boost" programme. Our support extended to parallel assignments on cybersecurity, privacy, e-commerce, and mobile payments. In Cabo Verde, we concluded our GovTech innovation lab recommendations funded by LuxDev. In Egypt, we authored a white paper on policy and innovation labs for the National Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development, while continuing our executive training programme. Further contributions included ad hoc support for the Digital for Tanzania Twinning project and a new initiative with the ILO and ISSA to develop Kenya's digital services and data governance strategy. In Guinea Bissau, we collaborated with UNDP to help define national digital transformation priorities.

In Asia and Middle East, we launched the year in the UAE by assessing public service performance using the Dubai Model Center methodology. Our ongoing work with Saudi Arabia included finalising recommendations for a National and Regional Digital Service Act and advising the Digital Government Authority on improving service portfolios across 24 government entities — contributing to the country's 4th-place ranking in the 2024 UNDESA E-Government Development Index. We also advanced the ePART4GOV framework and concluded a two-year collaboration with Qatar's Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, including recommendations for the Studio 5 youth innovation lab and signing a new Memorandum of Understanding. Additionally, we became an observer of the Digital Cooperation Organization and initiated discussions with Oman's Ministry of Transport, Communication and Information Technology during a UNU-EGOV-led workshop on public sector innovation. We also hosted delegations of public and private sector stakeholders from Oman and Uzbekistan.

In the America's our work centred on ongoing collaborations with e.g. Cetic.br and Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV), the organization of a study visit to Portugal by a delegation of Brazilian mayors, and contributions to the Brazilian Presidency of the G20+ specifically through workshop on digital transformation of the public sector but also policy brief G20 policy briefs on demand-driven digital inclusion indicators or financial inclusion. With the International Social Security Association (ISSA) and Caricom we contributed to the ongoing dialogue on small island states and emerging economies may optimize the benefits of AI in social security provision.

In Europe, we advanced the ethical and effective use of AI in public administration through the AI4PA Portugal project. We also partnered with the Portuguese Administrative Modernization Agency (AMA) on international benchmarking, strategic assessments, and capacity development efforts. With the University of Minho, we continued tracking implementation of the university's 2021-2025 Action Plan via the UM Barometer. Our support to the European Commission included legal analyses on e-governance instruments and specialized training for EU officials. The year also saw the launch of the UN — Portugal Digital Fellowship, a training initiative for senior and emerging civil servants, funded by the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Rigorous Cross-Disciplinary Research and Knowledge Creation

In 2024, UNU-EGOV deepened its research footprint, contributing to both established and emerging domains. We published 47 outputs, including reports, journal articles, white papers, policy briefs, and op-eds. Highlights include:

- AI policy recommendations for people-centric smart cities, with UN-Habitat.
- A study on AI applications in social security, with ISSA.
- Recommendations on how small island states may digitally transform the public sector.
- Strategies to diversify e-participation mechanisms
- Analysis of online service delivery in Portuguese municipalities.
- Trends and approaches to optimize digital diplomacy, digital collaboration and GovTech export.

We co-supervised 20 students (80% master's and 20% doctoral levels) — in partnership with institutions such as the University of Minho, Aveiro and Porto (Portugal), Fundação Getúlio Vargas (Brazil) and University of the Aegean (Greece) — with 50% being female and 34% from the Global South. We entered discussions for a joint PhD programme in Digital Governance with WITS University (South Africa) and the University of Minho.

UNU-EGOV also served on 52 committees, boards, and councils – a 53% improvement from 2023. These include the World Bank's Working Groups on Interoperability, Cloud Computing, and Mobile Government; the UNDP's Digital Public Infrastructure Safeguards group; and the UNDESA E-Government Readiness Survey. New collaborations in 2024 included observer status in the Digital Cooperation Organization and participation in the Islamic Development Bank's technical working group on digital inclusion.

Our contribution to academic discourse extended to peer review of 93 publications — 47% conference papers and 46% journal articles. Key platforms included HICSS, d.go, EGOV-CeDEM-ePart, and journals such as Government Information Quarterly and Journal of Urban Technology.

7. Developing Digital Capacities and Competencies

In 2024, UNU-EGOV deepened its commitment to building digital capacities by delivering targeted training programmes, launching strategic collaborations, and expanding its global reach, empowering public servants and institutions to lead inclusive digital transformation processes.

In 2024, UNU-EGOV scaled up its training portfolio to respond to the growing demand for high-quality, context-sensitive capacity development initiatives in digital governance. Our programmes combined cutting-edge knowledge, practical applications, and multicultural exchange, advancing global conversation on digital transformation in the public sector.

A key highlight was the Digital Governance for Egyptian Legislators programme, delivered in Guimarães from 6–13 May. In collaboration with the National Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development (NIGSD), the programme brought together 25 participants from the Egyptian House of Representatives, Senate, Council of State, and Ministry of Justice. Over seven intensive days, participants explored ten modules covering the foundations of digital transformation, blockchain for accountability, open data, legal frameworks, and emerging technologies. Cultural activities and a field trip enriched the experience, supporting cross-context learning and trust-building.



Later in the year, UNU-EGOV hosted the first edition of the UN–Portugal Digital Fellowship on Digital Innovation and Transformation, held from 4–11 November in Guimarães. This high-level programme, designed in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the UN, UNITAR, and Camões, I.P., brought together 15 international fellows. Over 13 modules in five days, the curriculum spanned digital governance fundamentals, inclusive service design, e-participation, emerging tech, civic tech, data governance, and GCIO function. The programme aimed to enhance fellows’ capabilities to lead digital transformation efforts in alignment with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

In addition to these flagship programmes, UNU-EGOV maintained a strong academic presence. Our experts:

- Delivered the course TSIG: Information Systems and Technology for Government at the University of Minho;
- Taught in the Specialized Training Programme in Public Administration (FA>AP), reaching Portuguese civil servants;
- Supervised master’s and doctoral theses across multiple universities;
- Lectured at the 11th International Summer School on Digital Government hosted by the University of the Aegean.

Furthermore, through its involvement in international projects like the Kenya NSSF Data Governance initiative (with ILO and DataQue Analytics), UNU-EGOV brought training and technical guidance to the field of digital social protection.

All initiatives ensured a balance between global frameworks and local realities, and prioritized equity, accessibility, and innovation. From Egypt to Guinea-Bissau, Portugal to Qatar, UNU-EGOV’s training activities in 2024 exemplified its mission to develop the digital capabilities needed to build more inclusive, accountable, and future-ready governance systems.

8. Partnering for Digital Sustainability

UNU-EGOV further reinforced its partnerships through strategic engagement with numerous stakeholders, including governments, United Nations (UN) agencies, regional organizations, academic institutions, and civil society actors.

Throughout 2024, UNU-EGOV collaborated with 61 institutional partners across 11 countries. These partnerships reflect UNU-EGOV's commitment to contributing towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 17 on strengthening partnerships for sustainable development.

UNU-EGOV's strategic engagement in Africa was solidified by the launch of the South and East Africa Digital Governance Forum (SEADGov), held in Pretoria and co-organized with UN DESA and UNECA. The forum brought together over 80 stakeholders from 16 countries, including government officials, regional organizations, and development partners, to discuss region-specific priorities in digital governance. SEADGov marked a significant step within the broader Global Fora on Digital Governance initiative, which seeks to foster inclusive digital transformation through targeted regional cooperation and the exchange of knowledge and best practices.





Key partnerships in 2024 also included UN DESA for the 2024 UN E-Government Survey; UNDP Guinea-Bissau, to support the development of the national digital transformation strategy; the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Kenya, to assess and improve data quality and governance at the National Social Security Fund; and the International Social Security Association (ISSA), to contribute to a report on the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in social security organizations. UNU-EGOV also collaborated with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), to support regional discussions on inclusive digital transformation; the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA), to provide expert input to the ENACT report on digital innovation in Arab public administration; and with UN-Habitat and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), through the publication of findings from multi-city assessments on the responsible use of AI in urban governance. Additionally, UNU-EGOV became an Observer of the Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO), expanding its role in digital cooperation.

Of particular relevance, UNU-EGOV significantly expanded its engagement in Portuguese-speaking countries in 2024 through a series of strategic projects in Portugal, Brazil, Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde. With Portugal, UNU-EGOV carried out two initiatives: (1) the EGOV Index Project, assessing the country's performance in the main international benchmarks on digital governance; and (2) the implementation of the first edition of the UN Digital Fellowship on Digital Innovation and Transformation, a capacity-development programme funded by the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations. For Brazil,

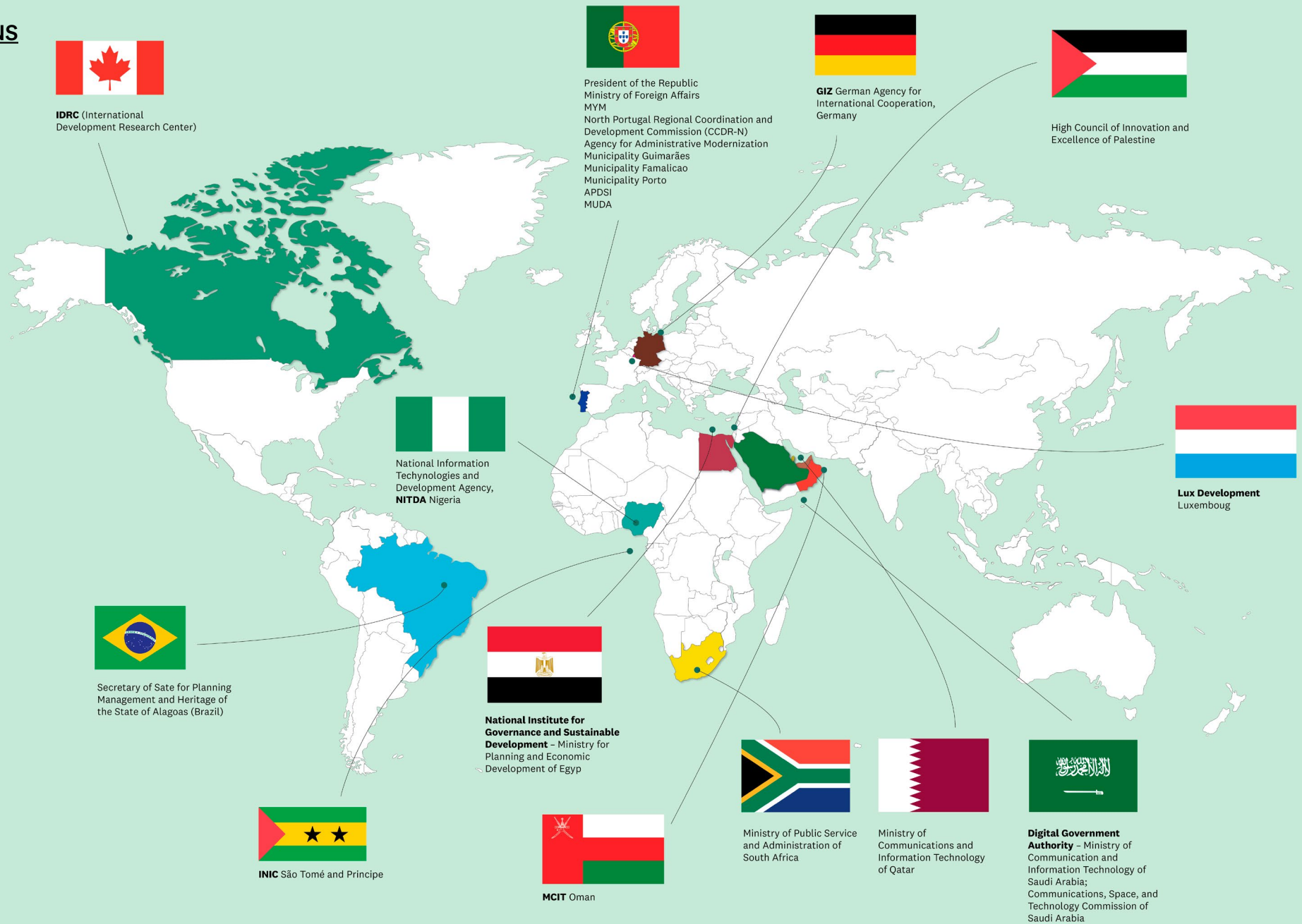
UNU-EGOV contributed to strengthening the capacities of public and private stakeholders to operationalize the Digital Government Laboratory (LAB.ges). Additionally, an MoU was also signed with CETIC.br to strengthen cooperation in digital governance across Lusophone countries. In Guinea-Bissau, our team provided technical expertise to draft the country's first National Strategy for Digital Transformation, while in Cabo Verde, support focused on developing the strategy's implementation framework.

UNU-EGOV maintained a strong presence in global forum and multilateral processes, contributing actively to international discussions on digital governance. Participation in high-level events such as the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20), the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Open Forum #70, and the Global Digital Compact consultation positioned UNU-EGOV as a contributor to key policy discussions. Furthermore, through its involvement in the Think20 (T20) platform under the G20 process, UNU-EGOV advanced joint recommendations on digital public infrastructure, responsible artificial intelligence, and citizen-centred governance.

Looking ahead, the 2025–2029 UNU-EGOV strategy identifies “Global Network and Partnerships” as one of the five strategic priorities, to deepen cross-sector and cross-border cooperation, promote knowledge exchange, and expand our impact in the Global South.



GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS



UN SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



**DIGITAL PUBLIC
INFRASTRUCTURE**
Universal Safeguards



United Nations Group
on the Information Society



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



International
Labour
Organization



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa



UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

INTERNATIONAL/REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS



Digital
Cooperation
Organization



WORLD BANK

IsDB



البنك الإسلامي للتنمية
Islamic Development Bank



OECD



issa

African
Union



OTHER PARTNER INSTITUTIONS



Global Digital Inclusion
Partnership

GOV

GFA
CONSULTING GROUP

cetic.br

مجالس الرواد
Arrowad Group

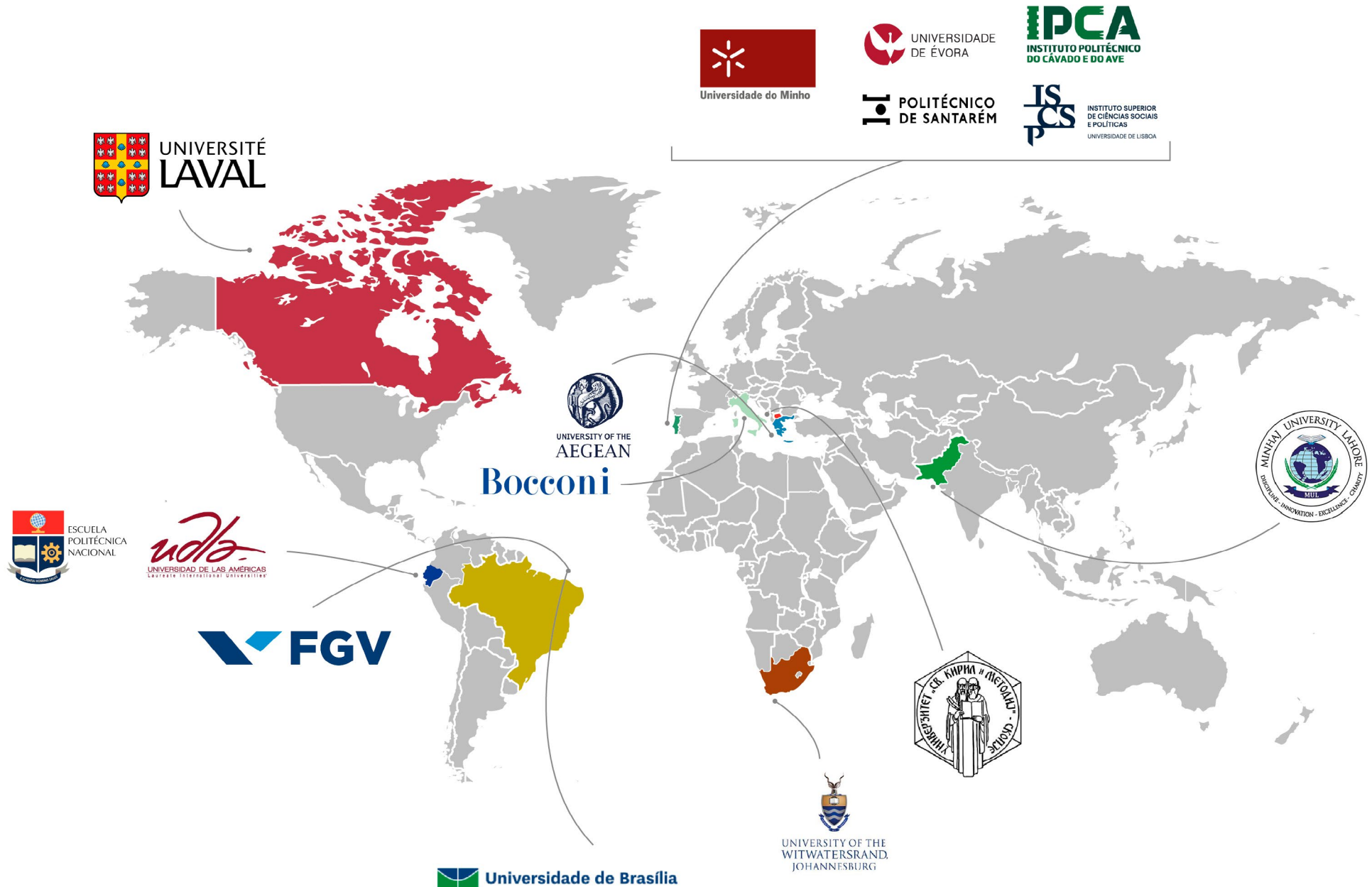


Aets



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RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS



9. Strengthening Connections with the Global South

The Global South remained a central focus of UNU-EGOV's agenda in 2024, collaborating with governments and regional bodies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. We co-developed national digital governance strategies, empowered public officials and launched regional platforms for policy dialogue. Over 80% of externally funded projects carried out in 2024 involved or directly targeted emerging economies, underscoring UNU-EGOV's growing impact in the regions where the digital transformation of the public sector is both most needed and most promising.

UNU-EGOV's engagement across the Global South in 2024 was multifaceted, combining advisory, capacity development, research, and networking to strengthen digital governance systems. None of these efforts would have been possible, nor their outcomes sustainable, without the trust and collaboration of partners. Throughout the year, UNU-EGOV deepened its cooperation with UN agencies, regional organizations, and national governments, reinforcing a shared commitment to inclusive digital transformation.

Key partnerships included UNDP (projects in Guinea-Bissau), ILO and ISSA (in Kenya), UN ESCAP and UN ESCWA (in Asia and MENA), and UN DESA (in Africa and globally). The UNU-EGOV promoted ICEGOV 2024 in South Africa and actively contributed to major multilateral events such as the WSIS+20 Forum, the G20 Brazil Digital Inclusion Series, and the IGF 2024 in Saudi Arabia. UNU-EGOV further expanded its engagement through observer status in the Digital Cooperation Organization and participation in the Islamic Development Bank's Working Group on Digital Inclusion, reflecting its growing role in shaping global digital policy ecosystems.



Africa: Strengthening Institutions and Regional Dialogue

In Africa, one of the year's most strategic initiatives was the co-development of the National Digital Transformation Strategy of Guinea-Bissau (ENTD. GW), in partnership with UNDP. This project combined diagnostic analysis, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building to align national priorities with the Sustainable Development Goals. In Kenya, a joint initiative with the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) focused on strengthening data governance in the social protection sector. The work encompassed a comprehensive assessment, the design of a data quality improvement plan, and technical training, carried out in collaboration with the ILO and ISSA. The UNU-EGOV also contributed to the Safe Africa Boost programme, funded by the European Union and implemented by the East African Community, by leading strategic foresight and stakeholder consultations on cybersecurity, e-commerce, and digital payments. A key milestone in regional engagement was the launch of the South and East Africa Digital Governance Forum (SEADGov) in Pretoria. Co-organized with UN DESA and UNECA, this platform brought together over 80 representatives from 16 countries to identify region-specific challenges and foster cooperation on digital public sector reform.

Asia and the Middle East: Policy Advice and Institutional Innovation

In Asia and the Middle East, UNU-EGOV supported the design and implementation of policy frameworks and innovation strategies. In Saudi Arabia, the Unit advised the Digital Government Authority on developing a National and Regional Digital Services Act and improving the service portfolios of 24 public institutions. In Qatar, a two-year collaboration with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) culminated in strategic recommendations for youth-led digital innovation and capacity building. In Oman, a workshop with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology focused on public sector innovation and cross-border collaboration. Meanwhile, a high-level training programme for Egyptian legislators, held in Guimarães, explored topics ranging from AI and blockchain to digital rights and open data. The Unit also played a central role in capacity-building webinars in India and Uzbekistan on local digital governance, within the framework of the Local Online Service Index (LOSI) — the local component of the UN E-Government Survey, developed in partnership with UN DESA.

Latin America: Advancing Citizen-Centred Governance

In Latin America, UNU-EGOV deepened its strategic partnerships with key national institutions. With CETIC.br and Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV), the Unit co-developed three policy briefs for G20 Brazil 2024, proposing inclusive and data-driven approaches to citizen-centred digital government. Research collaborations addressed the use of open government data by Brazilian states and the risks of disinformation in electoral contexts. The Unit also supported the consolidation of LAB.ges, Brazil's national digital government laboratory, and produced targeted guidance for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), in cooperation with CARICOM, ISSA, and the ILO.

Throughout the year, UNU-EGOV produced a range of research outputs addressing topics such as responsible AI in cities, data governance, and the public value of e-participation. These insights fed directly into policy processes and capacity development. Flagship training programmes, including the UN — Portugal Digital Fellowship, brought together public officials from across the Global South for immersive, practice-based learning. Delivered in Guimarães in partnership with Camões, I.P., UNITAR, and the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the fellowship underscored the Unit's role in building leadership for digital governance rooted in global knowledge and local realities.

10. Closing Words from the Head of Administration



2024 was a special year for UNU-EGOV, marking 10 years since the Unit was established. It has been quite a journey from a small initiative to an institution increasingly trusted by governments, international organizations, and academic partners around the world. This anniversary offered an opportunity to reflect on how much we have evolved, not only in terms of external visibility but also in the way we work internally.

The complexities of the financial and administrative framework in which we operate remain a demanding aspect of our work. As UNU-EGOV does not receive funding from the UN regular budget, fundraising continues to be a key element of our activities. The support of the Portuguese Republic in providing core funding is gratefully acknowledged, despite the challenges in its operationalization. We are also thankful to all our partners worldwide who, through advisory and capacity development projects, enable us to sustain our activities.

With more than 60 active partnerships, multiple international projects, and growing responsibilities within UNU and the broader UN system, the demands placed on our team continued to increase. This annual report reflects that effort and the work in place.

Yet in the last decade, the resilience of our staff has been a defining strength. More than 130 people have worked with us, as researchers, consultants, government fellows, adjunct professors, visiting experts, communications and administration experts. Their commitment and adaptability have allowed us to maintain continuity and deliver on our objectives despite ongoing challenges.

Behind every successful event, publication, partnership, and project lies a complex and committed network of processes. This work is often invisible, but it is vital to ensuring that ideas move forward, collaborations materialize, and resources are managed with efficiency and transparency. I am deeply proud of the small but dedicated team that, day after day, ensures the sustainability of our operations.

A major highlight of the year was the organization of the ICEGOV conference in South Africa. The conference welcomed 330 participants from 49 countries, with diverse representation across sectors. It allowed bringing visibility to the host country's initiatives and reinforcing networks on global digital governance.

Another institutional milestone was the establishment of the UNU-EGOV Advisory Committee, created to oversee and guide the development of the Unit's strategy and activities, drawing on the expertise of its distinguished members.

As we look ahead, change will accelerate with the introduction of technologies such as artificial intelligence, which will increasingly shape the way we operate. I remain hopeful and confident that, through the United Nations' broader mission and our small but meaningful contribution at UNU-EGOV, we can help build a better world.

Elisabete Simões

Head of Administration of UNU-EGOV

11. Thank you

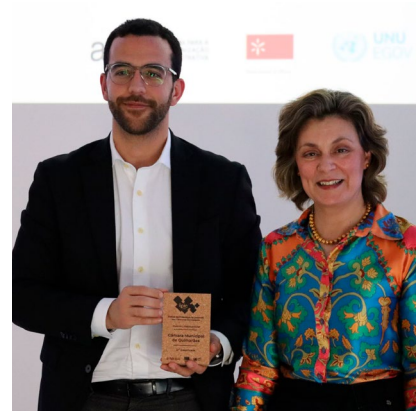
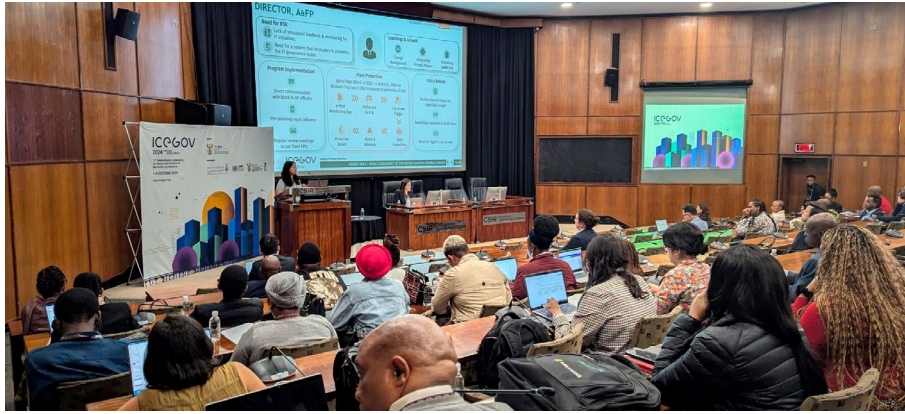
2024 was a year of bold progress made possible by shared vision and commitment. UNU-EGOV's growing impact reflects its role in shaping digital transformation policy and practice.

UNU-EGOV calls upon stakeholders, partners, and institutions to join us in advancing inclusive, responsible, and sustainable digital governance.

Together, we can shape a world that truly works for people, everywhere.

For more information or collaboration proposals, please visit:
<https://egov.unu.edu>







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