United Nations University
Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance

Annual Report 2025

UNU EGOV



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Foreword by the Director



2025 marked a significant milestone in the institutional development of UNU-EGOV and in our continued commitment to advancing inclusive, sustainable, and human-centred digital governance worldwide.

During the year, we launched the UNU-EGOV Strategy 2025-2029, a renewed strategic framework that positions the Unit to respond to rapidly evolving technological, social and governance challenges. Fully aligned with the United Nations University Strategy 2025-2029, our strategy reinforces UNU-EGOV's commitment to generating policy-relevant knowledge, strengthening partnerships, and delivering meaningful impact, particularly in developing countries and the Global South.

The activities presented in this report demonstrate how these strategic priorities are already being translated into action. Through research, policy advisory services, capacity development programmes, and international cooperation initiatives, we continued to support governments, international organizations, academia and civil society in addressing complex digital governance challenges. Our work expanded across multiple regions, with particular attention to Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, while maintaining strong engagement within the United Nations system and with partners around the world.

A particularly important achievement in 2025 was the establishment of a comprehensive Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Framework, creating a new assessment and monitoring mechanism to systematically track our progress, performance and contribution to institutional objectives. Together with the adoption of the new Strategy, this framework represents a significant step forward in strengthening results-based management, accountability and organizational learning within UNU-EGOV.

Throughout the year, we continued to generate research and policy insights on digital governance, support national and international initiatives, deliver capacity development programmes, and foster collaboration through an extensive network of partners. These efforts reflect our aspiration to bridge knowledge and practice, ensuring that research contributes to tangible improvements in public institutions, public services and societal well-being.

As digital transformation increasingly shapes the future of governance and development, UNU-EGOV remains committed to supporting evidence-based, inclusive and responsible approaches that contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the Global Digital Compact.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our staff, researchers, partners, donors and collaborators for their dedication and continued support throughout the year.

Delfina Soares
Director of UNU-EGOV

Our Work

Vision

For the last decade, UNU-EGOV has been shaping and advancing Global Digital Governance. With a multidisciplinary and multicultural team, aiming to foster inclusive and resilient societies by addressing critical digital challenges, also integrating a responsible adoption of emerging technologies and policies with a human-centred approach.

Mission

UNU-EGOV contributes towards building public institutions that are more accountable and trustworthy, while advancing sustainable development, social inclusion and active citizenship through innovation in public services and informed decision-making processes.

As a United Nations actor, the Unit brings governments, academia, and international organizations to the same table to advance digital cooperation in support of the Global Digital Compact and the Sustainable Development Goals.
UNU-EGOV supports governments and public officials with forward-thinking strategies and practical solutions to their most pressing digital governance challenges. By bridging research and action, it drives transformation in public policy, service delivery, and sustainable development.

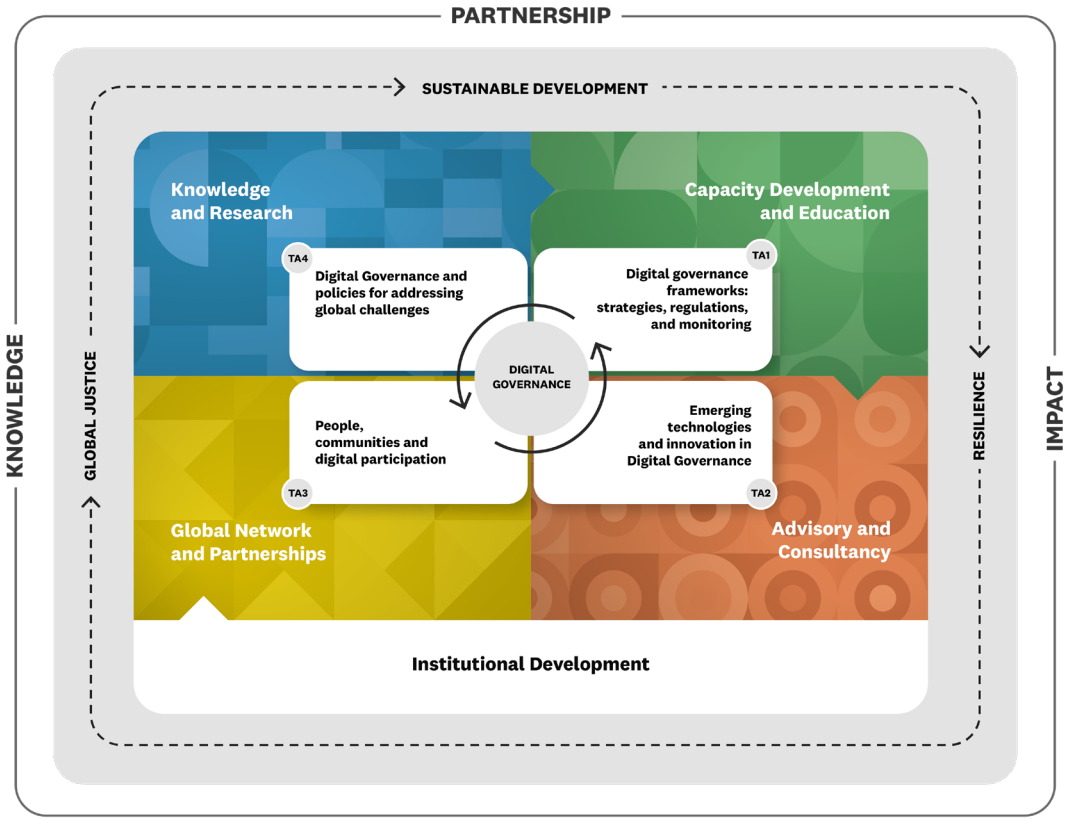
UNU-EGOV is a distinctive combination of a think tank, a policy-driven research operating unit, and a part of the United Nations system. One of its most valuable assets lies in its research team's interdisciplinary and multicultural nature, which gives each project a unique insight into the diversity and specificities of the solutions or challenges posed by each context. By strengthening and collaborating closely with UN Member States and with a global network of partners, the Unit is able to deliver impactful results in the field of digital governance at a local, national, regional, and international level.

As digital transformation remains uneven worldwide — with outdated infrastructure, skills gaps, and limited resources, particularly affecting developing regions — addressing these disparities, alongside growing concerns around cybersecurity, data protection, and participation, is crucial for building just and sustainable digital futures.

UNU-EGOV Strategy 2025-2029 was designed to respond to these realities and advance the Unit's vision of becoming a global leader in digital governance, particularly in supporting the Global South.

The Unit's core activities are directed at contributing to global justice, sustainability and resilience, while remaining grounded in its overarching guiding principles and values — all aligned with three main priority areas: **Knowledge**, **Partnerships** and **Impact**.

UNU-EGOV's Strategy Framework



UNU-EGOV Strategy 2025-2029 structures its work around four interconnected research thematic areas, focusing on generating valuable knowledge and research, capacity development, advisory and partnerships to promote inclusive and resilient digital governance, global justice and sustainability.

- **TA1** **Digital Governance Frameworks: Strategies, Regulations, and Monitoring**
- **TA2** **Emerging Technologies and Innovation in Digital Governance**
- **TA3** **People, Communities and Digital Participation**
- **TA4** **Digital Governance and Policies for Addressing Global Challenges**

Highlights

JANUARY

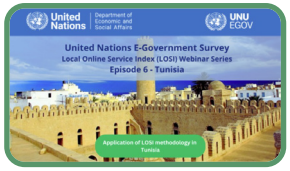


EVENT

Overview of the Civic Tech Field Guide

With Matt Stempeck, curator of the Civic Tech Field Guide, this seminar, in Guimarães, provided an overview of this guide, an open-source project that interconnects the field of democracy tech and supports its development. The curator explored research projects conducted under the umbrella of the Field Guide, including two recent projects on democracy and AI.

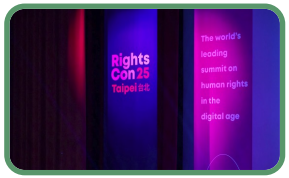
FEBRUARY



WEBINAR

LOSI Webinar Series – Episode 6: Tunisia

UNU-EGOV and UNDESA co-organized the 6th episode of the Local Online Service Index (LOSI) Webinar Series, focusing on its application in Tunisia. This episode, showcasing key findings and insights on Digital Government and Local Governance, gathered the researchers who conducted the study in 24 cities in Tunisia, assessing their e-government service provision. The results provided an opportunity for city officials to learn and discuss the upcoming UN E-Government Survey in 2026.



WORKSHOP

RightsCon Summit 2025 – "Digital Resistance and Preservation: Safeguarding Palestinian Heritage Under Threat"

Co-organized with Cardiff University and University of Glasgow at RightsCon 2025, this workshop addressed the growing risks facing Palestinian cultural heritage, particularly in Gaza. The dialogue included the role of online platforms in artistic collaboration, documentation and archiving, and the challenges and opportunities digital transformation presents for cultural preservation.



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Qatar Accelerates Digital Transformation

Delivered a three-day training at Guimarães with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Qatar (MCIT) to accelerate the public sector digital transformation. The sessions gathered both online and on-site participants and were aimed to support Qatar's digital transformations efforts, focusing on three global benchmarking frameworks.



EVENT

Vitrus Talks on the Impact of AI in Environmental Action

Welcomed a new edition of Vitrus Talks, an event organized by Vitrus Ambiente, exploring sustainability, data challenges and policy implications. As AI continues to redefine governance and environmental policies, events like Vitrus Talks contribute to fostering informed discussions that balance technological advancement with ethical and ecological considerations.

MARCH



PARTNERSHIP

Digital Governance Cooperation with IMA Angola

With the Institute for Administrative Modernization (IMA) of Angola, formalized a new partnership with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The aim was to promote digital transformation in Angola's public administration and one of the first initiatives was a capacity development programme tailored for senior government officials in Angola. This MoU was signed during a two-day visit to Guimarães, which included working sessions on ongoing IMA projects, a thematic workshop and a courtesy visit to Guimarães City Hall.

Highlights

APRIL



WORKSHOP

Utrecht's Data School Conference – "Bridging Research and Practice: The Role of Multistakeholder Workshops for Evidence-based Policy"

Organized a workshop at the international Conference "Making a Difference: Societal Impact through Collaborative Research", held by the University of Utrecht's Data School. The session was on how academic research influences societal change, examining how participatory workshops serve as valuable tools for collecting evidence that informs inclusive and practical policymaking, also focusing on how multi-stakeholder sessions can bridge research and practice.



POLICY BRIEF

Health Online Services in Portugal

Published a Policy Brief on the Digital Health Evolution in Portugal, based in HOSPI assessments conducted in 2019, 2021, and 2023. This brief evaluates the strongest and weakest aspects of the technology features in Portuguese hospital's websites, also comparing public vs private hospital performance. The document additionally provides a set of main recommendations from the past HOSPI editions.

WEBINAR

CAFRAD Webinar Series – "Digital Governance for Sustainable Development"

Moderated the 3rd session of the seminar series organized by the Pan African Intergovernmental Organization (CAFRAD) webinar series. This webinar focused on sharing a multitude of experiences on development projects with organizations like UNDP, UN ECA and UNESCO and the creation of National Strategies for Digital Governance/ Transformation in Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe and Guinea-Bissau, as well as of Digital Governance Forums in West Africa and East and South Africa.

MAY



EVENT

AI4PA Professional Capacity Programme – "Public Innovation: Digital Strategies and Artificial Intelligence in Public Administration and SMEs"

Organized a Professional Capacity Programme within the consortium AI4PA. This programme was conducted in five different cities in the country during 2025 (Viseu, Lisbon, Porto, Faro and Évora), aiming to develop tools within the use of digital transformation in the public sector and SME's. The session was divided into presentations about Generative AI, AI-Driven public services and high impact AI solutions, and also a co-creation workshop on AI solutions for public services.



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

2nd edition UN-Portugal Digital Fellowship

UNU-EGOV has held the 2nd edition of the UN-Portugal Digital Fellowship between 26 and 30 May, an executive training directed to high-level officials from developing countries, focusing on digital innovation and transformation. Within its "2030 Development Cooperation Strategy", Portugal recognizes the importance of digital transformation to achieve the SDGs. In this sense, UNU-EGOV joined again the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through Instituto Camões, to organize the second edition of this fellowship, which uses an active learning approach throughout its 13 modules, combining discussion and practice and adopting peer-to-peer and problem-based learning.

Highlights

JUNE



EVENT

UN Open Source Week – "Breakout Session 2: Operationalizing Data Protection in Digital Public Infrastructure"

Co-organized with the World Bank Group a breakout session during the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Day, at the UN Open Source Week. Bringing together over 80 participants from diverse sectors, the session helped to discuss the importance of using mechanisms to ensure accountability, oversight and privacy-by-design across DPI ecosystems. The key output of this session was the co-development of a Call to Action summarizing the collective understanding that strong enforcement measures are essential for DPI to be trusted and rights-based.

EVENT

IGF Open Forum – "Advancing Digital Inclusion through Segmented Monitoring"

Co-organized with UNESCO and CETIC.br a panel in the Open Forum #29 at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). This session was an inclusive and dynamic dialogue, promoting consensus-building and practical policymaking, by integrating real-world experiences and stakeholders input. The main discussions focused on how to ensure marginalized individuals and communities have equitable access to meaningful connectivity, digital content and services.



JOURNAL

Assessing the Information Security Posture of Online Public Services Worldwide: Technical insights, trends and policy implications

This study evaluates the information of 3068 public service platforms across all 193 UN Member States, through non-intrusive assessments conducted in 2023 and 2024. The evaluation focuses on three key dimensions: the adoption of secure end-to-end communication protocols, the trustworthiness of digital certificate chains, and the exposure of hosting servers to known vulnerabilities. The conclusions of the study reveal progress and persistent security gaps of EGOV services, including a set of recommendations on how to fix them and minimize risk exposure.



GLOBAL FORA

CADGov Launch Event

Jointly with the Ministry of Digital Technologies of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the International Academy of CIO, launched the Central Asia Digital Governance Forum (CADGov). This forum aims to bring together government officials and agencies across Central Asia to advance digital governance capabilities and citizen empowerment. It creates a dedicated platform for knowledge sharing, collaboration and strategic development, addressing the critical need for robust national and local e-government infrastructures in the region.



PAPER

The Role of Regulatory Frameworks in Shaping E-Governance: Insights from Selected Case Studies

This paper investigates how regulatory maturity influences the development and implementation of digital government initiatives across eight countries. Published in the proceedings of the Annual International Conference on Digital Government Research, its findings confirm that while legal maturity is foundational, institutional capacity, technical readiness and public engagement are critical for inclusive and resilient digital transformation.



PROJECT

Digital Governance Dialogues in the PALOP

Launched with the Regional Center for Studies on the Development of the Information Society (CETIC.br) the project Digital Governance Dialogues: Capacity Development and Cooperation in Digital Governance Capacities in the PALOP. This initiative aims to enhance digital governance capabilities in Portuguese-speaking African countries, focusing on their specific contexts and needs, on both the supply side (government institutions) and the demand side (the population's use of services). Also organized the first webinar of this project, which gathered representatives from the different PALOP countries to share their national digital governance strategies and to promote dialogue on their experience to contribute of institutional strengthening, digital inclusion and public sector modernization.

Highlights

JULY



YOUTH

Visit Palavras Infinitas, Erasmus+

Welcomed a group of 33 youth workers from different countries, as part of the Erasmus+ project "Youth Empowerment Through Political Literacy", coordinated by Palavras Infinitas – Inclusion, Communication and Media Group. This visit was part of a broader training initiative on political literacy and inclusion and offered participants the opportunity to engage directly with an institution that works at the intersection of research, policy-making and digital governance. An overview of UNU-EGOV was shared with the group, as well as the values, opportunities and responsibilities of working in an international organization of the United Nations system.



WORKSHOP

WSIS+20 Forum – "Fair Cities: Foster AI for Inclusive and Responsible Cities"

Co-organized with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) an expert-led session at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) + 20 High-Level Event. This session, which was built on the recent Global Assessment of Responsible Cities conducted in collaboration with UN-HABITAT, brought together distinguished speakers to explore how Artificial Intelligence can be responsibly and inclusively integrated into urban development.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

MENA Digital Governance Training

Delivered a five-day digital governance training for Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region experts, covering transformation strategies and inclusion policies. This programme was designed for country experts across the MENA region, in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and gathered government officials and digital governance specialists to develop their knowledge and skills in digital transformation practices. Through partnerships with organizations like the IsDB, we continue to provide country experts with the knowledge and tools necessary to implement effective digital governance strategies that serve their citizens and advance Sustainable Development Goals.



LECTURE

OpenGov2025 Summer School in Greece

Delivered a lecture on "Assessment Methodologies in Open Data Initiatives" at the 12th International Summer School on Digital Government (OpenGov2025), held in Samos, Greece. Bringing together researchers, practitioners and postgraduate students from across Europe and beyond, this Summer School explored key challenges and opportunities in the field of digital governance. The lecture offered insights into how governments can evaluate the impact and effectiveness of open data strategies, as an essential element of data-driven policymaking. The overall goal of OpenGov2025 was to empower participants through applied research across these domains.

AUGUST



PROJECT

Status Quo and Gap Analyses of Digital Social Protection Systems and Cross-Border Portability of Benefits in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

Co-organized with the International Labour Organization (ILO), in partnership with International Social Security Association (ISSA), this project intends to assess, analyze and propose recommendations for strengthening cross-border portability of social protection benefits through system interoperability across the CARICOM region. It also aims to evaluate the current digital and administrative landscapes, identify existing gaps and develop an actionable roadmap to enhance the data exchange and interoperability of social protection systems. By focusing on digital solutions and harmonized administrative processes, the initiative seeks to strengthen the CARICOM Agreement on Social Security, signed in 1996, thereby promoting greater labour mobility and social protection.

Highlights

SEPTEMBER



EVENT

World Social Security Forum – "Social Security Management in the Human-Digital Age"

Participated as keynote speaker in the plenary session "Social Security Management in the Human-Digital Age" in the Social Security Association (ISSA) World Social Security Forum (WSSF), that was led under the theme "Shaping Social Security for a World in Transition". The WSSF focused on the role social security plays in protection, empowerment and resilience in communities, and the ways it needs to adapt and innovate to comply to these objectives. UNU-EGOV's keynote highlighted the challenges of the application of technologies on public administration and how a collaborative approach in Social Security is important to guarantee not only innovation as well as improvement in the public services.

FORUM

Connected by Design: Building Inclusive Digital Infrastructure for Future-Ready Cities

Co-organized with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), this forum gathered global leaders, city innovators and digital visionaries. The high-level forum explored how Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) can transform cities and communities into more inclusive, resilient and citizen-centric spaces.



WORKSHOP

EGOV 2025: "Developing a Model for Sustainable Digital Co-Creation in the Public Sector"

Co-organized the AI Technologies for Sustainable Public Service Co-Creation (AICOSERV) Workshop at the EGOV 2025 Conference, held at the University for Continuing Education Krems. This session brought together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers for interactive discussions on the role of artificial intelligence in public sector co-creation. Through collaborative group brainstorming, case study reflections, and synthesis sessions, participants provided valuable insights that represent an important milestone in validating and refining the AICOSERV model for AI-enabled co-creation.



POLICY BRIEF

Promoting Inclusive Just Energy Transitions: Pathways to Equity and Sustainability

Published a Policy Brief that examines the challenges and opportunities of advancing an inclusive, just energy transition in developing economies. It highlights how policies can be structured to integrate social equity with economic and environmental sustainability, aligning with the Group of Twenty (G20) priorities on climate action and sustainable development. Drawing on case studies from South Africa, Indonesia and Colombia, this brief explores best practices and innovative policy mechanisms.



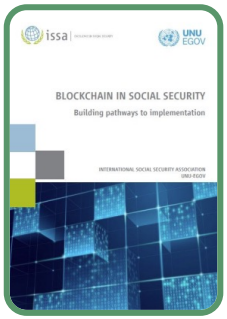
PROJECT

Development of a Policy Brief on the use of DPI for Trade and Investment

This project, born from a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET), aims to identify tangible opportunities to support the work of six G20 Compact with Africa (CwA) countries — Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Tunisia, Ethiopia and Morocco — in leveraging Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for Trade and Investment, particularly for the development of cross-border and regional infrastructure. The study will be based on an exploratory comparison intended to inform policymakers in these six countries and to offer a diagnostic approach that may be adapted to other CwA members.

Highlights

OCTOBER



REPORT

Blockchain in Social Security: Building Pathways to Implementation

Co-published a new report with the International Social Security Association (ISSA) on how social security institutions can use blockchain. This report provides an overview of blockchain technology, outlining how it has been used in social security applications, and discusses its role in reshaping the future of social security. It also explores how blockchain can help address long-standing challenges in social security, from fragmented data and siloed systems to complex coordination across institutions, providing real-world examples that show what is possible. Finally, the report offers a ten-step roadmap for applying blockchain to social security, from understanding the technology to developing infrastructure and monitoring outcomes.



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Training on Digital Public Infrastructure

Delivered a training to Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) staff and partners to design, deliver and evaluate Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) solutions aligned with European Union (EU) standards and adapted to local contexts. The programme combined policy and regulatory dimensions, including the Single Digital Gateway, with practical technical applications. By embedding EU best practices on e-services and governance frameworks, it ensures a balanced and comprehensive approach that strengthens both institutional capacity and practical implementation.

NOVEMBER



CONFERENCE

ICEGOV 2025 – "Shaping the Future of Digital Governance through Cooperation, Innovation, and Inclusion"

Co-organized the 18th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance (ICEGOV), hosted in Abuja, Nigeria. The local partner in this edition was the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), under the patronage of the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy of Nigeria. 377 people from 51 countries participated. Its programme combined 5 Keynote Lectures, 3 High-Level Panels, 13 Papers Sessions, 6 Workshops, 4 Roundtable Sessions and the Doctoral Colloquium throughout the 4 days of the Conference. A total of 151 papers from 33 countries were submitted to this edition and 51 were presented during the Conference.



JOURNAL

Digital accountability through e-participation: the moderating role of the digital divide

This article investigated the relationship between e-participation and digital accountability, with a particular focus on how the digital divide moderated this relationship across the European Union between 2018 and 2022. The study contributes to the literature by offering a conceptual and empirical framework that treats the digital divide as a background condition and a dynamic factor shaping participatory outcomes.

Highlights

NOVEMBER



GLOBAL FORA

WADGov Forum 2025 Calls for Stronger Regional Interoperability

Co-organized the second meeting of the West Africa Digital Governance (WADGov) Forum, with the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and supported by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The event happened in Abuja, Nigeria, with a two-day high-level exchange among the region's official focal points for digital governance. Since the launch of the WADGov Forum in 2023, in Banjul, The Gambia, West Africa's digital journey has accelerated along multiple paths.



CONFERENCE

Intelligent Nations 2nd Conference

Co-organized the 2nd International Conference on Intelligent Nations with the Movement for Active Digital Utilization (MUDA) that proposed a new look onto Artificial Intelligence role in the transformation of lusophone societies. This conference gathered leaders and specialists sharing strategies and projects that demonstrate how technology can promote digital inclusion and its role in building a more advanced, inclusive and participated future.

DECEMBER

PROJECT

Excellence in Digital Transformation Internationally

This project supports the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in conducting a comprehensive analysis of Digital Indicators to measure and evaluate the maturity level of digital government performance. In collaboration with the Digital Government Authority (DGA) and in consortium with the Arrowad International Group (AIG – Kaizen), it develops improvement methodologies and assessment frameworks to guide the enhancement of indicator performance and define measurable targets based on analytical findings.



EVENT

GovTech Maturity Index 2025 Launch

Participated in the Launch of the event of the "GovTech Maturity Index 2025: Tracking Digital Transformation Worldwide 2025" (GTMI) organized by the World Bank, highlighting the digital citizen engagement component of GTMI. This edition evaluated the digital transformation across 197 economies and introduced new indicators on Artificial Intelligence, Green Technologies and Digital Identity, reflecting emerging priorities in an increasingly AI-driven governance landscape.

Figures

Publications

Journal articles	13
Books	2
Book chapters	8
Conference Proceedings	1
Conference Papers	9
Reports	1
Policy Briefs	4
Total	**38**

Documents Reviewed

Journal articles	64
Conference papers	119
Books	2
Book Chapters	2
Reports	2
Total	**189**

Education

16 Academic lectures delivered to post-graduation programmes

5 Academic courses coordinated and delivered for master's and doctoral programmes

Supervisions

Doctoral Dissertations	**14**
From Developing Countries	1
From Developed Countries	13
Master's Theses	**3**
From Developing Countries	0
From Developed Countries	3

Youth Outreach

Youth involved in UNU-EGOV's activities	93

Figures

Events

Events organized	32
Large Conference	1
Conference	2
Workshops	7
Seminars	11
Webinars	4
Forum	1
Discussion panel/Roundtable	1
Education Outreach	5

Events attendance with active role	66
Discussants	10
Speakers	40
Keynote Speaker	1
Moderators	5
Paper Presenter	6
Chair	4

Projects

38 Ongoing Projects

11 Projects started in 2025

Executive Training

5 Short-term specialized training programmes

97 Government and public officials targeted

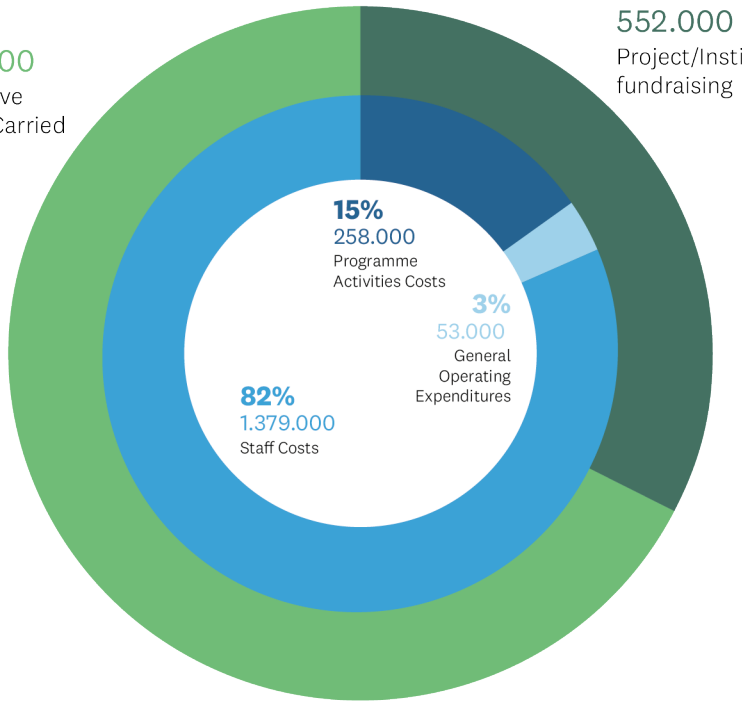
From Developing Countries	94
From Developed Countries	3

Membership in Boards, Committees and Groups

34

Figures

Financials (in US$)



Income
1.690.000

Expenditure
1.690.000

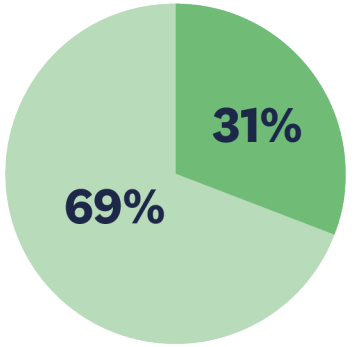
Human Resources

Personnel

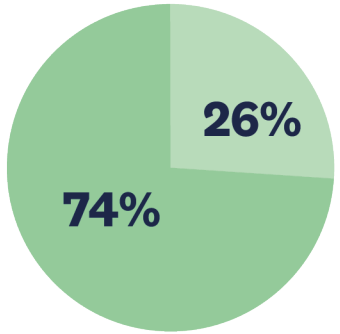
Total of personnel	42
Total of nationalities	17

Female **50%**

Male **50%**



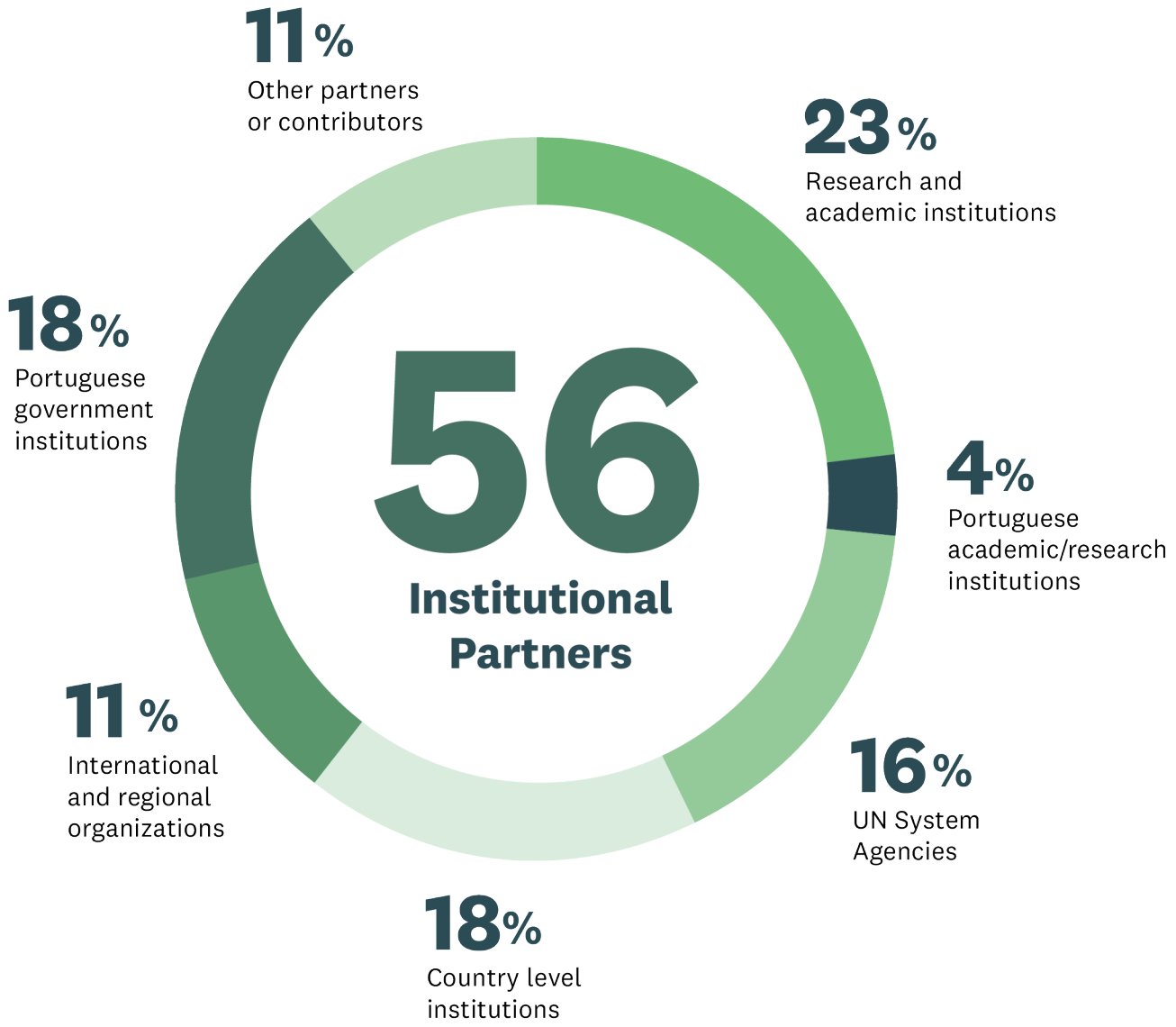
Global North Countries	69%
Global South Countries	31%



Personnel	74%
Affiliates	26%

Figures

Institutional Partners



Core Activities

Developing multilateral solutions through research, education and innovation

The vision guiding the UNU Strategy focuses on three priority areas: **Knowledge**, **Partnerships**, and **Impact**. By expanding its research and educational activities, strengthening partnerships, and enhancing its presence and visibility, UNU will create lasting impact.

Knowledge
Partnerships
Impact

Knowledge

Advancing Knowledge for Digital Governance

In 2025, UNU-EGOV further strengthened its position as a global knowledge hub on digital governance, generating and mobilizing knowledge that contributes simultaneously to scientific advancement, public policy innovation and institutional transformation. Guided by the UNU-EGOV Strategy 2025–2029 and aligned with the United Nations University Strategy 2025–2029, the Unit continued to bridge research, policy and practice, ensuring that knowledge is not only produced, but also applied to address real-world governance challenges.

UNU-EGOV's knowledge activities are characterized by a distinctive approach that combines research, policy advisory services, international benchmarking, capacity development and multi-stakeholder dialogue. This integrated model enables the Unit to transform evidence into practical tools, methodologies and recommendations that support governments, international organizations and development partners in advancing inclusive, sustainable and human-centred digital transformation.

Throughout the year, UNU-EGOV expanded its global knowledge networks through collaborative research projects, international conferences, policy dialogues, academic partnerships and communities of practice. Particular attention was given to strengthening digital governance capacities in developing countries while contributing to global debates on digital government, digital public infrastructure, artificial intelligence governance, data governance and public sector innovation.

UNU-EGOV's knowledge activities combine scientific excellence, policy relevance and practical application. The figures below illustrate the scale and diversity of the Unit's research, education and knowledge-transfer activities during 2025, while the subsequent sections highlight the strategic contributions through which this knowledge supported governments, institutions and international organizations.

Knowledge Production at a Glance in 2025

UNU-EGOV's research and knowledge activities in 2025 resulted in:

- More than 30 scientific publications, including journal articles, books, book chapters, conference papers, policy briefs and institutional reports;
- Publications in leading journals and publishers, including Government Information Quarterly, Nature Cities, Public Money & Management, Journal of Environmental Management, Springer, Routledge and Edward Elgar;
- Five policy briefs and institutional reports targeting policymakers and practitioners;
- Active participation in international editorial and peer-review activities, including the review of 64 journal articles and 119 conference papers.
- 16 academic lectures delivered and 5 academic courses coordinated or taught, in collaboration with universities;
- 17 postgraduate students supervised, including 14 doctoral dissertations and 3 master's theses, contributing to the development of future digital governance researchers and practitioners.

These outputs strengthened UNU-EGOV's contribution to international scholarship while supporting evidence-informed policymaking and practice in digital governance.

Strategic Knowledge Contributions in 2025

In 2025, UNU-EGOV's research and knowledge activities focused on strategic domains where the Unit has developed internationally recognized expertise and continues to shape both academic and policy discussions.

Knowledge

Digital Governance Assessment and Measurement

UNU-EGOV continued to consolidate its leadership in methodologies for assessing digital governance performance. A major contribution was the continued development and implementation of the Local Online Service Index (LOSI), undertaken in collaboration with UN DESA, which has become one of the leading international instruments for assessing digital service provision at the local government level. The Unit also advanced the Hospital Online Service Provision Index (HOSPI), extending digital governance assessment methodologies to the health sector and generating evidence to support service improvement and institutional modernization. Further contributions included support to the Portugal EGOV Index, developed in partnership with the Portuguese Agency for the Technological Reform of the State (ARTE), as well as the advancement of benchmarking methodologies, usability assessment approaches and governance monitoring frameworks that support evidence-based policymaking and performance improvement.

Digital Public Infrastructure and Digital Transformation

Research and advisory activities generated knowledge on the governance dimensions of digital public infrastructure, interoperability, digital identity, trust services and public sector modernisation. These contributions informed projects and capacity development initiatives involving public institutions in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan and Brazil. Through these engagements, UNU-EGOV supported governments in designing and implementing digital transformation initiatives adapted to their institutional realities and development priorities.

Responsible and Inclusive Digital Transformation

UNU-EGOV continued to generate knowledge on emerging digital governance challenges, including artificial intelligence governance, digital inclusion, citizen participation, smart cities and gender-responsive digital transformation. Research outputs, policy briefs and expert contributions advanced international discussions on how governments can harness technological innovation while safeguarding inclusiveness, trust, equity and sustainability.

Academic Leadership and Capacity Development

As part of its academic mission, UNU-EGOV contributed actively to **advancing knowledge, fostering research excellence** and **strengthening academic capacity** in the field of digital governance. Throughout 2025, the Unit deepened collaboration with universities and research institutions worldwide, strengthening the links between research, education and policy practice.

In 2025, the Unit **delivered lectures and academic courses** to graduate and postgraduate students in Greece, Portugal and Tunisia, while strengthening collaboration through **joint research projects** with universities in **Europe**, **Africa** and **Latin America**.

UNU-EGOV also contributed to the development of **new academic programmes** in and with universities **in the Global South**, including a Master's programme in Digital Transformation involving the University of Santiago of Cabo Verde and Portuguese Universities, as well as a new joint master's and doctoral initiatives in Digital Governance with the University of Minho (Portugal) and the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS), South Africa.

Research capacity development remained a central component of the Unit's mission, with the **co-supervision** of 14 **doctoral dissertations** and three **master's theses**, involving students from universities in **Europe** and **Latin America**.

Academic partnerships generated **scientific outputs** with institutions in Austria, Brazil, Germany, Poland and Ecuador, resulting in publications in leading international publishers and scientific venues, including Springer and peer-reviewed international journals.

University collaborations also supported the **expansion of UNU-EGOV's global knowledge networks** through initiatives such as the LOSI Network, the HOSPI Network and the AICOSERV project. **Knowledge dissemination** was further strengthened through **ICEGOV 2025 in Nigeria**. Through these activities, UNU-EGOV reinforced its role as a **platform for knowledge generation**, exchange and capacity development, while contributing to the **education of future scholars and practitioners** in digital governance.

Partnerships

Strengthening Global, Regional and UN System Collaboration

Partnerships are central to UNU-EGOV's mission and to its ability to transform knowledge into meaningful impact. Through strategic collaborations with governments, United Nations entities, academic institutions, development agencies and civil society organizations, UNU-EGOV supports the design, implementation, assessment and continuous improvement of digital governance initiatives across multiple regions. In 2025, the Unit was engaged in 38 projects, including 11 new projects launched during the year, further expanding its global network of partners and reinforcing its commitment to strengthening digital governance capacities, particularly in developing countries. These partnerships enabled UNU-EGOV to connect research with policy action, foster institutional capacity, and support digital transformation efforts tailored to national and regional priorities.

The continued engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders enforced UNU-EGOV's path on expanding its global networks, bridging academic and non-academic communities and amplifying South-North and South-South scientific collaborations.

Africa

Africa remained a key region for UNU-EGOV's partnership activities in 2025. A significant milestone was the establishment of a partnership with the **African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET)**, formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding and the development of a Policy Brief exploring the role of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for Trade and Investment.

In **Angola**, UNU-EGOV strengthened its collaboration with the **Institute for Administrative Modernization (IMA)** through a Memorandum of Understanding to promote digital transformation in Angola's public administration. One of the first initiatives under this agreement brought together senior Angolan government officials in Guimarães to learn from and share experiences and strengthen institutional capacities to implement Angola's digital transformation agenda.

In **Nigeria**, UNU-EGOV partnered with the **National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA)** and the **Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy** in organizing ICEGOV 2025. This partnership allowed UNU-EGOV not only to count on a decisive local partner for the success of the Conference, but to establish new opportunities for future cooperation in research, policy support and capacity development, further strengthening UNU-EGOV in West Africa.

In **Guinea-Bissau**, collaboration with the **Technological Institute for Administrative Modernization (ITMA)** and the **Ministry of Transport, Telecommunications and Digital Economy (MTTED)** supported the development of the country's National Strategy for Digital Transformation. This work contributed directly to strengthening the strategic foundations for digital transformation and public sector modernization.

Middle East and Asia

UNU-EGOV continued to expand and deepen its partnerships across the Middle East and Asia, supporting governments pursuing ambitious digital transformation agendas.

The Unit remained actively engaged in regional activities, including participation in the Technical Working Group on Digital Inclusion coordinated by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the design and delivery of capacity development programmes to IsDB Member States, contributing to regional knowledge exchange.

Partnerships

In **Qatar**, collaboration with the **Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT)** continued through four ongoing projects, aimed at accelerating the digital transformation of the public sector of the country.

In **Saudi Arabia**, the **Digital Government Authority (DGA)** remained a strategic partner. Through collaborative activities and advisory support, UNU-EGOV contributed expertise to national efforts aimed at strengthening digital government performance and public sector innovation. This work continued in partnership with the consortium led by **Arrowad International Group (AIG-Kaizen)**.

The Americas

In **Brazil**, collaboration with CETIC.br continued to grow, through joint activities related to digital governance, including initiatives involving PALOP countries, scientific publications and international events. Cooperation with the **Center of Technology and Society of the Getúlio Vargas Foundation** further advanced research on digital transformation within the BRICS context.

Collaboration within the UN System

Collaboration within the **UN System** remains a defining feature of UNU-EGOV's work. Through partnerships with UN agencies, programmes and initiatives, the Unit contributes specialized expertise in digital governance while ensuring that its research, advisory and capacity development activities support broader UN priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The partnership with **UN DESA** continued to expand through the Local Online Service Index (LOSI) initiative, which encompasses the largest cities of all 193 UN Member States. UNU-EGOV and UN DESA also continued to collaborate through ICEGOV and other international knowledge-sharing initiatives, strengthening evidence-based approaches to digital government assessment and benchmarking.

With the **International Telecommunication Unit (ITU)**, UNU-EGOV continued to lead the FAIR for Cities Working Group under the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative, contributing to discussions and events including the WSIS+20 High-Level Event; the Smart City Expo World Congress and the 9th U4SSC Meeting.

UNU-EGOV also maintained active engagement with **UNESCO**, contributing to the Information for All Programme (IFAP) and participating in key international events focused on digital inclusion, information societies and digital governance, such as the EuroDIG 2025, the Open Forum #29 or the IFAP Orientation Meeting.

Collaboration with **ESCWA** remained active through participation in regional digital governance and information society initiatives, while engagement with the **United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS)** ensured UNU-EGOV's contribution to system-wide discussions on digital transformation and digital cooperation.

Institutional partnerships in Portugal

Portugal remains a strategically important platform for UNU-EGOV's activities and international engagement.

The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** continued to be a valued partner, supporting UNU-EGOV's mission and long-term presence in Portugal.

At regional and local levels, collaboration continued with **CCDR-N**, the **Municipality of Guimarães** and the **Landscape Lab**, contributing to institutional dialogue, joint events and initiatives related to innovation, sustainability and digital transformation.

Partnership with the **Agency for the Technological Reform of the State (ARTE)** remained particularly significant. Through the Portugal EGOV Index initiative and related activities, UNU-EGOV continued to support the assessment of Portugal's performance in major international digital governance benchmarks, contributing evidence and analysis that support public sector modernization and digital government reform.

Looking Forward

Collectively, these partnerships demonstrate UNU-EGOV's commitment to working across sectors, regions and institutional boundaries to advance digital governance. By connecting governments, international organizations, academia and development partners, UNU-EGOV continues to expand the reach, relevance and impact of its work, reinforcing its role as a trusted global partner for digital transformation and sustainable development.

Impact

Greater Visibility and Impact through Capacity Development, Institutional Strengthening and Global Outreach, particularly in the Global South

In 2025, UNU-EGOV continued to expand the reach and impact of its work by transforming research, knowledge and partnerships into practical solutions for governments, international organizations and communities. Through 38 ongoing projects, 11 new projects, 32 events, executive education and specialized training programmes, and active engagement with stakeholders across multiple regions, the Unit contributed to strengthening governance capacities, supporting public sector modernization and advancing inclusive digital transformation, particularly in developing countries and the Global South.

The impact of UNU-EGOV's work during the year was reflected in its ability to translate evidence, research findings and international experience into concrete initiatives that generated value for institutions, policymakers and practitioners. This impact was achieved through three complementary dimensions: strengthening individual and institutional capacities, supporting governance reforms and creating platforms for cooperation and knowledge exchange across countries and regions.

Impact through Capacity Development

Throughout 2025, UNU-EGOV delivered executive education and specialized training initiatives that brought together public officials, policymakers and digital transformation leaders from 45 countries. A total of 158 government officials participated directly in the Unit's capacity development activities, creating opportunities for peer learning, knowledge exchange and practical application of digital governance approaches.

Among these initiatives, the second edition of the **UN-Portugal Digital Fellowship** provided executive training to 28 senior officials from 28 developing countries, equipping participants with tools and methodologies to strengthen digital transformation processes within their institutions and governments. The programme reinforced the importance of inclusive design, institutional readiness, cybersecurity and change management as critical dimensions of successful digital transformation.

UNU-EGOV also delivered tailored executive training for 13 officials from the **Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT)** of Qatar, supporting the country's efforts to accelerate public sector digital transformation through improved understanding of international benchmarking frameworks and performance assessment methodologies.

Additional programmes included a regional training initiative for 33 **policymakers from the Middle East and North Africa**, implemented in partnership with the **Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)**, as well as a **specialized Digital Public Infrastructure** programme for 13 professionals from **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)**, which strengthened participants' ability to design, implement and evaluate DPI initiatives adapted to different institutional and national contexts.

Impact through Institutional Strengthening

Beyond individual capacity development, UNU-EGOV contributed to strengthening institutions and governance systems through advisory services, policy support and the development of practical frameworks for digital transformation.

Impact

In **Guinea-Bissau**, the Unit supported the development of the **country's National Strategy for Digital Transformation** and the preparation of an implementation roadmap, contributing to the establishment of a coherent strategic framework for digital government and public sector modernization.

In **Angola**, collaboration with the **Institute for Administrative Modernization (IMA)** supported institutional capacity-development efforts and laid the foundations for long-term cooperation in digital governance and public sector reform.

UNU-EGOV also continued to provide advisory support to governments pursuing ambitious digital transformation agendas, including ongoing collaborations with the **Digital Government Authority (DGA) in Saudi Arabia** and the **Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) in Qatar**. These partnerships contributed to strengthening government capacities in areas such as digital government performance, benchmarking, strategic planning and service modernization.

At the international level, new initiatives such as the project on interoperability and cross-border portability of social protection benefits in the **Caribbean Community (CARICOM)**, developed in collaboration with the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** and the **International Social Security Association (ISSA)**, demonstrated how digital governance approaches can support regional integration and strengthen public service delivery.

Impact through Regional and Global Platforms

UNU-EGOV continued to strengthen its role as a **convener of international cooperation** by creating and supporting platforms that enable governments, practitioners and researchers to exchange experiences, identify shared challenges and develop collaborative solutions.

A major milestone in 2025 was the launch of the **Central Asia Digital Governance Forum (CADGov)** in Uzbekistan, bringing together representatives from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia around a common agenda for digital governance and citizen empowerment. The launch workshop engaged 35 government officials and established a new platform for regional cooperation and knowledge exchange.

The Unit also launched the **Digital Governance Dialogues in the PALOP Countries** initiative in partnership with CETIC. br, creating a new mechanism for dialogue, **cooperation and mutual learning** among Portuguese-speaking African countries. The first activities engaged 26 government representatives and generated important reflections on governance models, measurement frameworks and national digital transformation strategies.

Another important contribution was the continued consolidation of the **West Africa Digital Governance Forum (WADGov)**, jointly promoted with UN DESA, which is increasingly becoming a reference platform for digital governance cooperation and interoperability across the region.

At the global level, **ICEGOV 2025**, hosted in **Nigeria**, brought together **377 participants from 51 countries**, including researchers, practitioners, policymakers and representatives of international organizations. Through keynote lectures, workshops, roundtables and scientific sessions, the conference fostered dialogue on the future of digital governance and reinforced UNU-EGOV's role as a global platform for knowledge exchange and international cooperation.

From Reach to Long-Term Impact

The impact of UNU-EGOV's work extends beyond the immediate outputs of individual projects and activities. By strengthening capacities, supporting institutional reforms and enabling international cooperation, the Unit contributes to creating the conditions for more effective, inclusive and resilient governance systems.

Whether through national digital transformation strategies, executive education programmes, global benchmarking initiatives, regional cooperation platforms or international policy dialogue, UNU-EGOV continued in 2025 to connect research, policy and practice in ways that support sustainable development and improve public sector outcomes. These efforts reinforce the Unit's contribution to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Digital Compact, while advancing its mission of supporting evidence-based, inclusive and human-centred digital governance worldwide.

Global Engagement

The continued engagement with governments, United Nations entities, academic institutions, development agencies and civil society organizations enforced UNU-EGOV's path on expanding its global engagement, bridging academic and non-academic communities and amplifying South-North and South-South scientific collaborations.

UN System

Research and Academic Organizations

External Partners

UN System

UN Organizations

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies

UNDP

unesco United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ITU

ILO International Labour Organization

UNRIC

UN Processes, Initiatives and Events

UNGIS United Nations Group on the Information Society

DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE Universal Safeguards

CNY Digital Inclusion COALITION

U4SSC United for Smart Sustainable Cities

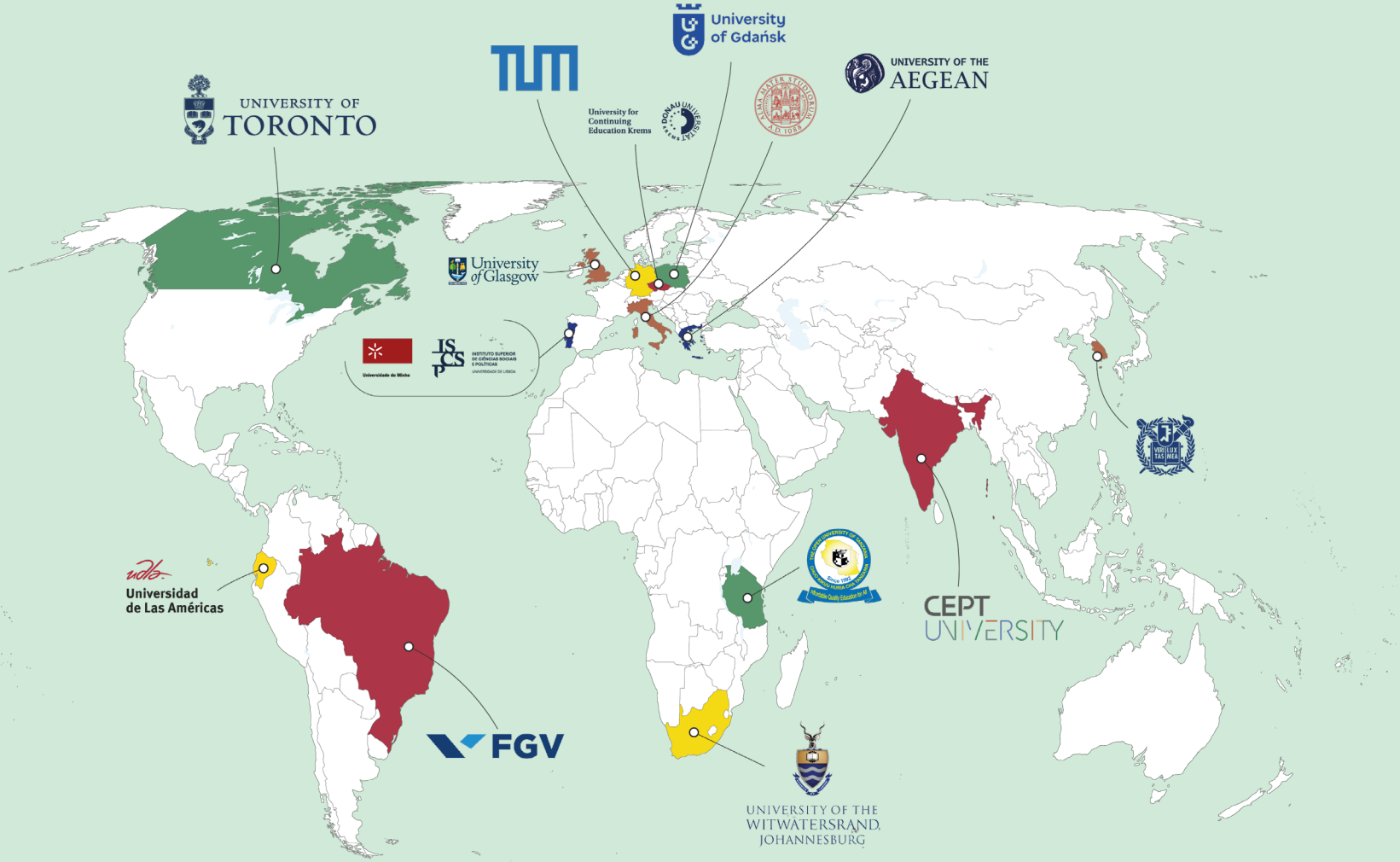
EuroDIG European Dialogue on Internet Governance

IFAP unesco Information for All Programme

WSIS+20

Research and Academic Organizations

Throughout 2025, UNU-EGOV deepened collaboration with universities and research institutions worldwide, strengthening the links between research, education and policy practice



External Partners

Governmental Organizations

وزارة الاتصالات وتكنولوجيا المعلومات
Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
State of Qatar

arte
AGÊNCIA PARA A REFORMA TECNOLÓGICA DO ESTADO

Digital Government Authority
هيئة الحكومة الرقمية

NITDA

IMA
Instituto de Modernização Administrativa

Digital Government Projects Management Center

estdev
From the people of Estonia

giz
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

CAMÕES
INSTITUTO DA COOPERAÇÃO E DA LÍNGUA
PORTUGAL
MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS

MUNICÍPIO DE GUIMARÃES

CCDRn
COMISSÃO DE COORDENAÇÃO E DESENVOLVIMENTO REGIONAL DO NORTE

International and Regional Organizations

European Commission

ACET
African Center for Economic Transformation

THE WORLD BANK

IsDB
البنك الإسلامي للتنمية
Islamic Development Bank

Digital Cooperation Organization

issa

smart africa
CONNECT. INNOVATE. TRANSFORM

Other Partners

cetic.br

IAC
International Academy of CIO

改革
شركة كايزن للاستشارات
Kaizen Consulting Co

Stantec

Closing Words from the Deputy Director



If asked to single out an event to represent UNU-EGOV's dynamics in 2025, I would not hesitate: Abuja, in November. Through a remarkable partnership with NITDA, Nigeria hosted ICEGOV 2025, emphasizing, in its overarching theme, *"cooperation, innovation, and inclusion"* as key assets for *"shaping the future of digital governance"*.

In a sense, this motto drove all our activity throughout the year across the different thematic areas in which it is structured. Above all, it helped to identify and conceptualize new, cross-cutting research questions.

For example, can digital transformation help to address current global challenges, which are systemic in nature and require collaborative solutions worldwide? Or, what is emerging in our societies, and their governing layers, from the amazing propagation of generative AI? And how does the latter interconnect with data and their governance models (or lack thereof)? If data is indeed the magic word, its governance requires a new understanding as an adaptive decision-making process, far beyond a static view focused solely on compliance or control. In broad terms, how can data, technology, digital public infrastructures, and governance contribute to social inclusion and resilience? More concretely, how to balance institutional cooperation and accountability at all levels of governance, in contextualized frameworks calibrated to risk and purpose?

At UNU-EGOV, cooperation and innovation guided the promotion of **Global Digital Governance Fora**, bringing together Governments and key stakeholders of specific regions around the Globe to tackle region-specific challenges, foster synergies, and explore opportunities in digital governance. A new forum, this time for Central Asia, was launched in Samarkand in June 2025. The one for West Africa met, for the second time, in Abuja, later in November.

Cooperation and inclusion also underlie the **UN-Portugal Digital Fellowship** programme, a flagship capacity development initiative designed to strengthen digital governance across UN Member States, organized by the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and delivered by UNU-EGOV.

Just two examples picked from a long, diverse and exciting road that embodies the Unit's multiple dynamics, in all their dimensions: from research to capacity development, from the promotion of networks to the rigorous support for Member States on their journey towards a digital transition able to promote more sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies.

A demanding path that requires a lot from each of us. First and foremost, the ability to identify relevant research questions and translate them into assertive public policy proposals. But also to network, reach many geographies, foster synergies, and build projects.

This explains our efforts towards a more efficient organization and an institutionally stronger Unit. In this area, we also face significant challenges that must be addressed to avoid putting the essence of our mission at risk. Among them, I would like to emphasize the ongoing negotiations for a new, broader agreement with the country that has generously hosted us since 2014. But also the need, internally, at the UNU level, to streamline mechanisms in order to consolidate teams and retain talent. Because all institutional construction is a process over time.

Allow me to quote a major Spanish poet, Antonio Machado (1875–1939), who died in exile, when, then as now, difficult times loomed over the world:

Wayfarer, only your footprints
are the path, and nothing more;
wayfarer, there is no path,
you make the path as you walk.
(in Campos de Castilla, 1917)

Thank you

The year of 2025 marked a milestone in the Unit and in its commitment to advance inclusive, sustainable and human-centred digital governance worldwide. We keep growing and fostering more policy-relevant knowledge and translating it into action, supporting governments, international organizations, academia, the private sector and civil society.

UNU-EGOV calls upon all to join us in building public institutions that are more accountable and trustworthy, advancing sustainable development and social inclusion.

For more information or collaboration proposals, please visit:

unu.edu/egov



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