The Government Summit
Thought Leadership Series

Citizen Centric Government
Engaging Citizens and Private Sector in Service Design and Delivery

In collaboration with ATKearney

February 2013
Executive Summary

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has achieved in one decade what took several decades to achieve in most other nations. It is a rapidly changing cosmopolitan, with a diverse population and a fast-growing private sector.

In today’s UAE, citizens and the private sector have increasingly high expectations. To continue its positive growth and competitiveness, and deliver on the promises set out in Vision 2021, government entities will have to become more citizen-centric and agile, with the right organization, culture, processes, and systems in place. Developing a citizen-centric government will be crucial to sustaining the country’s economic growth and meeting its goals—and it will require some changes to current operational practices.

A.T. Kearney’s 2012 Citizen-Centric Government study confirms the need for change. Participants want government entities that meet their needs, with policies and services geared toward the private sector. While a citizen and private-sector focus is a new and perhaps challenging concept for some government entities, it also presents an opportunity for the UAE to further differentiate itself from others in the region and to accelerate economic growth and development.

Supported by unique primary research engaging more than 140 of the most progressive public and private organizations in the UAE, our study finds that most government institutions see advantages in engaging citizens and the private sector. Yet few have the right capabilities, cultures, or processes in place to translate this desire into results.

The socioeconomic landscape, new technologies such as social media, and the rising expectations of citizens and the private sector are creating a complex, volatile operating environment. Public institutions, facing dynamic change and complex demands, now have the opportunity to become more agile and responsive to their citizens and the private sector. But they will need to be more proactive, service-oriented, accountable, and willing to accept and react to constructive feedback. Processes and systems will also be needed to enable citizens and the private sector to systematically and constructively contribute to shaping policy and improving public service.

The next leap of economic development, and another opportunity for the UAE to improve its competitiveness, will be driven by the government’s ability to implement its strategy. Most everyone agrees that it is extremely critical for government to embark on a journey of public sector citizen-centricity improvement focusing on 4 key areas:

- Redesign public organizations to meet long term vision of the country and at the same time have the flexibility to dynamically respond to citizen emerging needs.

- Develop the right capabilities by providing the right training to public servants and facilitate culture shift of government institutions to become more citizen-centric.

- Encourage transparency by developing and disclosing organizational KPIs - especially service delivery KPIs- and providing citizens the right to information.

- Streamline and optimize processes to meet citizen needs and incorporate robust mechanisms for collecting, analyzing and responding to citizen feedback.

Failing to adopt a citizen-centric approach in public sector transformation can have huge future economic costs driven by difficulty to sustain competitiveness and ultimately a decrease in FDIs. Increasing citizen centricity thereby is the lever to sustain growth and development.
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The government is not a power over people. It is a power to serve the people. Therefore, the ultimate government’s success is measured by its citizen satisfaction.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Public Institutions in an Era of Accelerated Growth

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have witnessed tremendous change and progress in the past decade, transitioning from resource-based to emerging global economies that have grown at a staggering pace, taking much less time to mature than their global counterparts in most developed countries. Government policies have opened up the markets to evolving resident and business demographics, more foreign talent and companies operating in the region, and new technologies. Facebook, Twitter, and other social media have created more engaged, connected citizens with more access to information.

Government institutions, exposed to these new demands from citizens and the private sector, and more volatility and complexity, must adapt their service delivery models. They must move from a traditional reactive, transaction-based role to a more proactive, economic-shaping one. Now more than ever, public institutions must be agile, balancing the need to push their strategies forward while receiving feedback from an array of people who have a stake in the outcome.

Agility means quickly doing the right things in a continuously changing environment. It requires engaging citizens, understanding their needs, and partnering with the private sector to produce efficient public services and policies that better serve people.

Agility and Competitiveness

A.T. Kearney’s study reveals a strong correlation between agility in government institutions and a country’s competitiveness (see Figure 2). The GCC is now among the world’s most competitive countries, but there are still many opportunities to improve government agility and move from the league of rising stars to true world leaders. The study also sought input on the following questions (see Figure 3)
Figure 2

Government agility versus country competitiveness

GCC countries are among the most competitive countries but they still have the potential to increase their agility score.

1. GDP weighted average of GCC performance in competitiveness and agility

Figure 3

UAE performance in citizen centricity

It is time for the UAE to shift to a higher gear to increase its citizen centricity level and move to the world class league table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>level</th>
<th>Today’s performance</th>
<th>Performance evolution in the last 5 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1, 6.5, significantly declined, significantly improved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UAE private sector survey, A.T. Kearney analysis

“Most people are happy that the UAE continues to ask for feedback and ensure all government departments continue to push for feedback and suggestions, especially in engaging companies that are supporting or using the services at a very high degree.”

Middle East Sales Director
Global Logistics Company

“It is really good that the UAE government thinks about its citizens and residents. Very interesting survey. Hopefully, more questions will arise when this is implemented.”

Human Resources Manager
Media Company
To identify how GCC public organizations are engaging their citizens, A.T. Kearney surveyed senior managers in leading policy-making and service-delivery government institutions and private-sector companies (see sidebar: About the Study).

**About the Study**

A.T. Kearney’s 2012 Citizen-Centric Government study was designed to measure the level of agility in governments and public-sector institutions in the UAE. The study focuses on four dimensions to evaluate citizen centricity: strategy, organization, processes, and systems (see Figure 4).

Our survey was conducted with agency leaders and senior-level civil servants and policy makers, including ministries, service providers, customs, and municipalities. The results were compared to global data on public sector performance and benchmarked against international best practices.

The study also examined the private sector perspective on agility in the UAE’s public institutions. More than 120 companies representing various sectors in the UAE participated (see Figure 5). Participants were asked to rate the UAE’s performance in engaging citizens and the private sector in policy making and service design, to cite the enablers and obstacles incurred when dealing with government institutions (particularly concerning the impact on speed and flexibility), and to recommend ways to increase citizen centricity. The survey took place through two channels: e-mail and social media, including Facebook and LinkedIn.

**Figure 4**

Government stages of excellence pyramid

We evaluated government institutions in the UAE from 4 perspectives: strategy, organization, processes, and systems.

**Figure 5**

Distribution of private sector participants

More than 120 companies representing a wide range of sectors have submitted their responses.
Citizen-Centric Policy Design

Policy making is a cyclical process that involves many steps, from identifying issues to reviewing programs (see Figure 6). Citizen and private-sector contributions can be important at every step in a process that requires multiple communication channels, from targeted surveys of the general public and business leaders to workshops with members of internal policy think tanks. Our study of the UAE private sector reveals that 23 percent are involved in one way or another in policy making, either before or during policy formulation, while 85 percent have a strong interest in being involved and believe they can add the most value in the early stages.

Figure 6
A typical policy development cycle has multiple steps and is cyclical

1. Issue identification
   - Establish evidence base, complete needs analysis and requirement to act
   - Map policy implications, affected populations and key stakeholders
   - Consult key stakeholders and affected population to gather input

7. Policy review
   - Capture feedback on new policy through public engagement/consultation and other channels
   - Review effectiveness against agreed KPIs
   - Identify issues.......

6. Policy implementation
   - Capture feedback on new policy through public engagement/consultation and other channels
   - Review effectiveness against agreed KPIs
   - Identify issues...

5. Public awareness campaign
   - Develop and roll out comprehensive awareness campaigns (e.g. websites, private sector forums, media, etc) and targeted communication campaigns for key stakeholders
   - Announce future review of new policy

4. Policy refinement & finalisation
   - Refinement of proposed policy
   - Finalisation and approval of given policy initiatives

3. Proposed policy consultation & testing
   - Public consultation on policy options (general public, private sector and public sector) covering key stakeholders
   - Development of whitepaper with final policy recommendations

2. Solution development
   - Develop policy consultation paper and policy options
   - Clarity government objectives

Source: A.T. Kearney analysis
Case Study: The UAE Education Strategy 2010

The UAE government launched a new education strategy in 2010 and asked the general public for their comments (see Figure 1). The strategy, published on the prime minister’s website to gather broader community input, was downloaded 14,000 times, and more than 700 comments were provided. Sharing the strategy online was unique in the Middle East.

Several workshops were conducted with rulers, experts, teachers, parents, and students to validate and refine the strategy. The prime minister personally responded to some comments, which provided an additional incentive for people to get involved. From 756 written comments, the government gleaned 945 constructive suggestions. These were then grouped under eight strategic elements and linked to the strategic initiatives.

Figure 1: UAE education strategy

“
I think it’s brave, and it is the first time that I have been asked such questions.

CEO of an education service provider"
Citizen-Centric Services

Public-sector service providers need to engage citizens in improving their services. Input from those who use these services will enable the public sector to develop services based on a real understanding of citizens’ needs. Reforms can also increase the country’s productivity and competitiveness.

Governments that have mastered the citizen-centric challenge and are considered pioneers in this area have successfully traversed four stages of excellence, moving from citizen neutral, to citizen aware, to citizen motivated, and finally to citizen central (see Figure 7). They have a clear strategy and mission statement that puts citizen satisfaction as its main focal point. They have a citizen-centric organization structure with dedicated teams to review feedback from citizens and take action where necessary, and they use their resources to deliver services that meet their citizens’ expectations.

Figure 7

Government stages of excellence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- No clearly defined strategy in terms of anticipating citizens’ needs</td>
<td>- Strategy acknowledges citizen needs</td>
<td>- Strategy incorporates citizen as one of the primary strategic elements</td>
<td>- Citizens are the primary element and the center of the strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Crisis-driven decision making</td>
<td>- Short-term strategy without long-term vision</td>
<td>- Partial linkage between strategies and objectives</td>
<td>- Clear and consistent linkage between strategies and objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>- No dedicated team for citizen relationship management</td>
<td>- Limited resources dealing with citizen concerns on a case by case basis</td>
<td>- Citizen service desk with defined roles and responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No collaboration/information sharing with other govt organizations</td>
<td>- Very limited collaboration/information sharing with other govt organizations</td>
<td>- Collaboration and information sharing with other govt organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No KPIs to measure organization service performance</td>
<td>- No KPIs to measure organization service performance</td>
<td>- Some elements of service KPIs are consistently tracked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- No process exists for receiving and analyzing citizen feedback</td>
<td>- Some elements of service KPIs measured but not systematically tracked</td>
<td>- Well-defined process for receiving and analyzing citizen feedback focused on organization effectiveness and efficiency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systems</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- No use of media/social media/internet or any other mechanisms to communicate with citizens</td>
<td>- Limited use of media/social media/internet to communicate with citizens</td>
<td>- Opportunistic use of media/social media/internet mainly as platforms to communicate policies/services (Push model)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: A.T. Kearney analysis
Stage four governments translate their strategic goals into key performance indicators (KPIs) that are drilled down to the entire organization, understood by all employees, and disclosed to citizens. They use social media and the Internet to continually communicate with their people, and use other communication tools and channels such as surveys and town hall meetings to capture citizen and private-sector expectations. Social media is another way to capture feedback and identify threats, trends, and opportunities (see sidebar: Social Media Shaping the Majlis of the 21st Century). Pulling information that is then used to shape the service-delivery model. These governments excel in four dimensions—strategy, organization, process, and systems—and provide a benchmark for others to follow.

Social Media Shaping the Majlis of the 21st Century

Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter have more than a billion users, making them the most common form of online communication. On any given day, 175 million people log on to Facebook.

Social media is changing the face of GCC countries as more people get connected. For example, Facebook has a penetration of 70 percent in the UAE and 80 percent in Qatar. Additionally, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum has been ranked in the world’s top 10 most followed leaders on microblogging site Twitter.

The enormity of the social revolution raises two questions: How should government institutions engage in social media? How can governments address the massive flow of information from social networking?

Social networking is also affecting companies. One quarter of the search results for the world’s 20 largest brands are derived from user-generated content, which means buyers have more control than sellers. It’s little wonder, then, that companies are quickly moving into the social media space.

At the government level, GCC public institutions should consider taking a more interactive approach by using social media to solicit direct input on new policies and get feedback on their service delivery models. Best practices can be learned from leading private companies. For example, rather than describing their new telephone technologies, Nokia’s Facebook page asks users what they want to do with a new feature in Ovi Maps, an application that lets users record and share voice instructions for turn-by-turn navigation: “Hi, everyone. Have you seen the new Own Voice feature for Ovi Maps? It lets you personalize the Ovi Maps voice guidance on your device. So now we want to know: Whose voice will be your first and last choice for this new feature?” Government agencies should use similar strategies to reinvent how they deliver citizen-centric services.
The following are the major findings about the UAE’s public institutions:

- Most UAE government institutions are transitioning from stage two (citizen aware) to stage three (citizen motivated) (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8**

**Citizen centricity level in the UAE compared to benchmarks**

UAE is currently in the transition between government stages of excellence 1 and 2 Citizen centricity stage of excellence

- Almost 90 percent of government institutions believe engaging citizens in public service design is important or very important, and that meeting citizen and private-sector needs is the focal point of their strategy. However, less than one fourth of these institutions review citizen and private-sector feedback on a weekly or monthly basis (see Figure 9).

**Figure 9**

**Citizen engagement and feedback capture**

Almost 90% of government institutions in our sample believe that citizen engagement in service design is important

Source: A.T. Kearney analysis

About 90% of respondents believe that citizen/private sector engagement in service design is important/very important

Only 22% of respondents actually review citizen/private sector on a weekly or a monthly basis

Source: UAE public sector survey, A.T. Kearney analysis
For some institutions, the reasons for low or no engagement of citizens and the private sector is due to process and organizational issues. Of these, 40 percent say they do not have well-defined processes to capture citizen expectations and reflect them in their service delivery models (see Figure 11).

**Figure 11**

Capturing citizen/private sector expectations

More than 40% of government institutions in our survey don’t have well defined processes to capture citizen expectations.

Organizational culture and a lack of internal skills are the main obstacles hindering citizen engagement, rather than the fear of not meeting citizen and private sector expectations or a lack of skills for citizens to provide useful input (see Figure 10, Figure 12).

**Figure 10**

Obstacles for engaging citizens in service design

Organization culture and internal capabilities are considered the main obstacles for citizen engagement in government service design.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normalized impact</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization culture does not encourage citizen engagement</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of internal capabilities in our organization to engage citizens</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens/private sector not having appropriate skills (policy knowledge) to provide useful input</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear to fail to meet citizen/private sector expectations</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UAE public sector survey, A.T. Kearney analysis
Figure 12

Levers to increase government citizen centricity level in the UAE

According to private sector, skills, transparency and process reengineering are the main levers to increase citizen centricity level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of participants</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skilled and motivated staff</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure of information (transparency)</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process reengineering</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private public partnerships</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear strategy</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent monitoring of governance</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition and tracking of KPIs</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UAE private sector survey, A.T. Kearney analysis

KPI disclosure is also an issue. All study participants say their strategic goals are translated into KPIs, but only 60 percent say they are drilled down to the entire organization or understood by their employees. Only 30 percent disclose their service delivery KPIs to citizens and the private sector (see Figure 13).

Figure 13

Government institutions’ service delivery KPIs

Only 33% of surveyed public institutions have their service delivery KPIs disclosed to citizens/private sector.

Service delivery KPIs

Are your service delivery strategic goals translated into KPIs?

No

Yes

To what extent are your service delivery KPIs disclosed?

100%

67%

33%

KPIs known to top management

KPIs drilled down to entire organization and understood by employees

KPIs disclosed to citizens/private sector

Source: UAE private sector survey, A.T. Kearney analysis
The most-used channels for engaging citizens and the private sector in service design are industry-representative groups and surveys (see Figure 14). Other channels such as web forums, targeted interviews, and town halls are used, but only on a case-by-case basis. These channels are relatively successful and could or should be used more often.

Figure 14

Channels for citizen engagement in service design
Web forums and targeted interviews are relatively successful and could be used more often

Source: UAE public sector survey, A.T. Kearney analysis
The Road to a Citizen Centric Government

Among the most important aspects of citizen-centric governments are operating models that can deliver short-term results—citizen satisfaction, for example—while also capturing the emerging needs of citizens and the private-sector, their changing expectations, and new market dynamics. This way, government can respond to their constituents in a flexible and timely manner. One noteworthy example can be found in Australia, where the Department of Human Services is collaborating with citizens to improve the way services are delivered.

Case Study: Australia Reforms its Service Delivery

Australia’s Department of Human Services started an ambitious program called Service Delivery Reform to deliver Medicare, Centrelink (disbursement of social security payments), and child support to its citizens. The goal was to better meet Australians’ social, health, and economic needs. The department worked with citizens to co-design the new delivery model. In 2010, the department ran a series of forums with customers, staff, and community groups across the country to develop the program’s agenda. The forums provided insight into how people experience the department’s services, the obstacles they face, and their daily frustrations. This was an important first step in co-designing to improve service delivery.

The reform package was guided by international best practices with a focus on how world-class services can be adapted to work for Australia. The first phase of the program has been successful, and the department plans to continue engaging the community to further shape services in phase two, which is now underway.

“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”

Charles Darwin
The UAE’s Focus: Speed, Flexibility, Responsiveness

The UAE has done tremendous strategic work by defining Vision 2021 at the federal level and setting various local strategic plans. However, the right organization, culture, processes, and systems are needed to efficiently execute these strategies while responding to citizen and private-sector expectations. Focusing on the following will improve its speed, flexibility, and responsiveness:

- Design an organizational structure that allows decisions to be made quickly and implemented effectively. The organizational structure should meet the long-term vision of the country, strategic outlook, customer expectations, and economic dynamics. It should not be a multilayered management hierarchy with fragmented functions that create excess administrative positions, are inefficient and result in delayed decision making. The public sector continues to be perceived as taking a passive, reactive role hindered by inferior organizational principles rather than an active economy-shaping role (see Figure 15).

![Figure 15](image)

**UAE evolution**

Public institutions in the UAE are recognizing the need to take a more proactive economic shaper role.

A good government organization structure has unobstructed information flow and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Resources are allocated to meet citizens’ changing needs, and the culture makes room for improvements, especially by listening to and incorporating constructive feedback from citizens.
• Develop skills by regularly training public servants, especially for customer service. Greater investment should be made in establishing strong government-related education systems and creating opportunities for continued learning for public servants. The UAE invested in this area in 2005 when it established the Dubai School of Government to enhance the quality of public administration and the effectiveness of policy making. More work can be done to develop public servants’ technical understanding of industry-specific needs. Another option is to develop a mechanism for continuous collaboration with the private sector to develop and test policies and service-delivery models before releasing them. This is especially important now that the UAE is embarking on a journey of industrial diversification. On a broader level, education is undergoing a facelift with the Ministry of Education’s new education strategy.

• Reengineer and optimize processes to meet customer needs. It is crucial for government institutions to standardize and streamline their processes, eliminate unnecessary or overlapping tasks, and remove bottlenecks. And perhaps most important, to focus on enabling and supporting strategic goals, taking into account the capabilities and services that may be required in the future. Simply reshaping or automating an "as-is" process may work in the short term but almost never works in the mid- to long-term. Planning the future “to-be” organization and designing processes that can adapt to future demands is the optimal transformation strategy. Government institutions also need a mechanism for capturing feedback from citizens and the private sector and a process to continuously analyze, aggregate, and identify improvement opportunities in current processes.

This is a good step. Congratulations on the effort. The legal system in the Gulf countries needs particular attention.

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