

Summary and Takeaways from Workshop 3 on Service Digitalization

A stakeholder consultation workshop on service digitalization was organized by the Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR) on January 15, 2025, with technical support from the World Bank. The workshop is the third in a series that included digital ID and e-signature (June 2024) and e-government and data hosting (July 2024). A cybersecurity workshop is tentatively planned for April or May 2025.

Service Digitalization: Highlights

This session featured around 75 attendees from public institutions, private entities, and international organizations, and it opened with remarks from H.E. Mrs. Najla Riachi, Minister of State for Administrative Reform, who emphasized the important role of each of the institutions present as the architects of Lebanon's digital transformation.

Several presentations laid the groundwork for understanding service digitalization and the experiences of different countries. **The importance of digitalization in building resilience** was presented, and inputs were given by the audience on the role of digitalization in enhancing public services and ensuring their continuity during crises. International **good practice examples** of digitalized services were also presented, and experts highlighted the holistic approach (including governance, legal reforms, and digital skills) for successful digitalization.

Experts also discussed the importance of **business process reengineering** in optimizing the performance and efficiency of service delivery. Reaping the benefits of digital transformation requires going beyond mirroring paper-based business processes to using digital tools to completely reimagine the way of delivering services to take full advantage of the benefits—such as security, efficiency, accessibility—of moving to digital delivery.

The experts also emphasized the importance of user-centered design in ensuring optimal user experience, highlighting key **user interface/user experience** (UI/UX) principles and the iterative approach. They stressed the importance of continuous user research, wherein users' behaviors, needs and experiences are incorporated in the design to drive actionable improvements and make digital services more effective. To illustrate the impact of good UI/UX, a walkthrough was conducted of different international websites and Lebanese government websites, assessing each website's user interface and highlighting the essential criteria for a user-centric experience.

Experts also gave an overview of the **software development lifecycle**, from the gathering of requirements to system design, implementation, testing, deployment, and maintenance. They emphasized the importance of establishing a structured **quality assurance** process to ensure that digital services meet user expectations, with key metrics to track such as system uptime, compliance audits, bug resolution, and user satisfaction. Various software engineering methodologies, including agile, design thinking, waterfall, and others were discussed, as well as alternatives to procuring bespoke software solutions, such as customizable commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) software and public-private partnerships.

A representative of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MOIM) highlighted the **benefits of digital ID and its importance in improving service digitalization**, and announced MOIM's plans to transition to a

new, modern national ID card with upgraded security that would be the basis for securely activating digital ID. He also explained the step-by-step procedure to obtain a new national ID card and digital ID and presented the corresponding high-level implementation timeline.

During a panel discussion on **sectoral digitalization efforts**, representatives from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Ministry of Public Health, and the Ministry of Finance highlighted digitalization efforts at each ministry and the lessons learned. The panelists emphasized the role of their digitalized services in enhancing resilience during crises, for example by minimizing the disruption of learning and achieving continuity of healthcare services and property management. Panelists also stressed the importance of foundational elements such as digital ID and e-signature that are needed to ensure continuity of these digitalization efforts. They also stressed the importance of digital upskilling, given limited public awareness and digital skills gaps within the administration.

International success stories on service digitalization were also presented, starting with Ukraine, where a centralized portal ensures the continuity of government services during times of war. Examples from Gabon's digital transformation and France's digital health initiatives, such as teleconsultation and teleexpertise, were also presented. **A chat with a senior digitalization expert** tackled the requirements and building blocks for service digitalization, including the importance of upskilling civil servants and end users. The expert also stressed the importance of critical thinking and problem solving as key attributes when hiring software developers.

The workshop ended with a discussion on the **way forward in Lebanon**, with the audience giving its input on the most essential services that should be improved and prioritized. Attendees emphasized the need for improving digital ID and civil registration as a priority, as well as health, educational, financial, social welfare, legal, and transport services. Attendees also discussed the main actions to be taken to fast-track digitalization in the administration, namely prioritizing data hosting, migrating government forms, building a disaster recovery plan for critical data, establishing data governance policies, setting up cross-agency interoperability, piloting key projects, ensuring proper staffing, and avoiding the duplication of work across ministries.