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MOROCCO: THE IMPACT OF THE DIGITIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

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Introduction

Morocco's public administration has undergone a significant digital transformation, marked by the introduction of various applications and e-portals to simplify the process of obtaining necessary documents for administrative procedures and access to basic public services in key areas such as education, vocational training, and healthcare. This has also sought to help address social and economic exclusion through initiatives aimed at reviving employment, investment, tax collection, and financial management. These strategies have accelerated the transformation of public utilities and increased the pace of digitization and dematerialization of administrative procedures.

However, there are also negative side effects that cannot be captured by quantitative indicators, which entrench various layers of "digital bureaucracy." This is evident in the challenges faced by individuals who lack access to technology and the limited representation of administrative officials in public utility mechanisms. Official indicators used to evaluate e-governance may create false impressions based on selective and quantitative indicators – such as site visits, automated responses, and the volume of available services and files – which do not reflect the effectiveness and quality of services provided or their responsiveness to public needs. In light of these considerations, it is essential to examine the underlying contexts that led to the development of e-government in the public sector in Morocco. To what extent has it contributed to keeping pace with reform and modernization projects in public administration? What approaches can be used to overcome the negative effects of digital bureaucracy and address new challenges arising in public administration?

To answer these questions, we will discuss two main points. First, we will review the gains of digital transformation in Moroccan administrative systems in light of reports from national and international institutions. Second, we will explore new ways to steer this transformation toward achieving the goals of administrative reform and of modernizing public administration by improving its effectiveness, accessibility, and inclusivity of all users.

The Digital Transformation of Morocco's Public Administration
The digital transformation of the Moroccan administration systems has developed gradually at both the structural and functional levels. Various efforts have resulted in significant qualitative gains for public administration, including improved governance indicators and better public services for both users and professionals compared to traditional administration.

The Evolution of Morocco's E-Government: Contexts and Significance

The Moroccan e-Government Program (eGov Morocco) can be traced back to the mid-1990s, beginning with the first program for information technology in public administration. Gradually, administrative procedures were digitized through projects that aimed to "de-materialize" basic services. These initiatives were part of the Competitive Morocco Strategy, which was launched in 1996 to experiment with e-governance applications while adapting the institutional framework to meet the challenges of digitization. Consequently, a State Secretariat in charge of Post, Technology, Communications, and Information was established in 1998. The alternance government's five-year plan (1999-2004) called for integrating modern technologies and accelerating the organizational transformation of public administration as an engine for development.¹

In the 2000s, the pace of digital transformation accelerated with the development of the first national program for e-government, which included initial efforts to digitize public facilities. For example, courts were equipped with information systems, and websites were established to facilitate access to judicial services, including the Ministry of Justice website and the courts' portal (mahakim.ma).² In 2005, the government implemented the e-Maroc 2010 Strategy, which included the creation of a national system for digital administration (idarati.ma), a public services portal (service-public.ma), and a spatial information portal (maps.service-public.ma). These measures aimed to facilitate administrative procedures, address complaints of beneficiaries (chikaya.ma), and improve the quality of administrative services. Additionally, several websites were dedicated to digitizing transactions, such as filing declarations and payments of tax (tax.gov).

¹ Abdelghani Bachar, "In the Era of Digitalisation: Morocco is a Smart Nation Loading," *Journal of the Geopolitics and Geostrategic Intelligence*, Vol. 3, No 3, 2022, p.325.

² Hisham Al-Rushdi, "The Digital Transformation of the Justice Facility in Morocco," *Al-Bahith Journal for Legal and Judicial Studies and Research*, Issue 45, 2022, p. 309

2 Morocco: The Impact of the Digitization of Public Services

[ma](#)) and managing public procurement electronically ([marchespublics.ma](#)).

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce launched the Digital Morocco Plan (2009-2013) intending to enhance the responsiveness of the administration to the needs of its users through an ambitious e-government program that included 89 projects, overseen by the Inter-Ministerial Committee for e-Government (CIGOV). As of September 2012, its implementation resulted in the launch of 377 websites and the development of 547 public services accessible via the Internet. Remote access to administrative procedures increased by 18%, driving the development of a new plan for a Digital Morocco that aimed to make 50% of public services available online by 2020. Morocco also entered into several international partnerships to strengthen its information infrastructure, such as the partnership with the United Nations Development Program (PNUD) to reinforce electronic reception structures in 31 public administrations by the end of 2021, headed by the Mohammed V Hospital Center and the Vehicle Registration Center in Rabat.³ At the beginning of 2017, the government launched the Governmental Gateway to enable users to perform tasks such as registering data for national identification cards, commercial registry, and criminal records.

From 2018 to 2020, the government implemented several procedural plans, such as the master plan for digital transformation in public administration in 2018, which aimed to provide high-quality online services and facilitate the exchange of data between them.⁴ The first plan for the open government (2018-2020) was also introduced, with an implementation rate of 84% achieved through several projects aimed at improving indicators of access to public data, budget transparency, the creation of administrative facilities, and the improvement of public services.⁵

Since 2020, the ministerial sector in charge of administration reform has begun implementing the Maroc Digital 2020-2025 development strategy. The aim was to position Morocco among the top three countries in the Middle East and Africa (MEA) for digital public services by leveraging technological

means and keeping pace with economic and social transformations.⁶ The strategy aimed to improve citizens' quality of life through digitization across three strategic axes: digital management to facilitate digital transformation initiatives, innovation to accelerate the digital economy, and combating social exclusion while fostering human development.⁷

The Covid-19 pandemic and the closure of public spaces during the lockdown has highlighted the importance of electronic equipment and applications for remote work. This shift has been particularly evident in the health, legal, and education sectors. Digital resources portals such as TelmidTICE ([taalimtice.ma](#)) and SoutienSco ([soutiensco.men.gov.ma](#)) have been crucial in providing study support and e-learning opportunities.

The pandemic has also underscored the challenges hindering the digital transformation of public services.⁸ As a result, the new national strategy for digital transformation aims to tackle these challenges⁹ by enhancing user confidence in e-transactions and rehabilitating the digital infrastructure, all within a digital transformation strategy managed at the highest administrative level.¹⁰ The government plans to fully digitize administrative transactions by 2030, ensure that 100% of relevant structures are connected to public service user paths via a unified interface, and adopt e-signatures within public institutions and administrations (one stop shop).¹¹

In the past, Morocco's ranking in international e-governance has gradually improved. It ranked fourth in the Middle East and North Africa region in the Digital Commitment Report (DR),

6 Generalitat Valenciana, *To Grow in a Global World: Business Opportunities in Morocco*, 2019, p.15.

7 The Head of Government, *General Guidelines for Digital in Morocco by 2025*, Rabat, 2020, p.3-4.

8 Touhami Abdelkhalek et al, "How Can the Digital Economy Benefit Morocco and All Moroccans?" *The Economic Research Forum*, Working Paper N 1503, 2021, p.38.

9 A public report diagnosed the defects of previous development experiences, anticipating the conditions for a new development model that combines the requirements of economic growth with the entitlements of social justice: <https://www.csmd.ma/rapport>

10 Development Model Special Committee, *General Report of the New Development Model*, Rabat, 2021, p135

11 Ministry of Economy and Finance, *Memorandum for Presenting the Finance Bill for 2023*, Rabat, 2022, p 124.

3 OECD, *Principles of Public Administration Provision of Administrative Services*, 2019, p.37.

4 Ministry of Administration and Public Service Reform, *The Outcome of 2018*, 41-42.

5 Abdellatif Chentouf, *The Open Government in Morocco: Context, Objectives, and Outcome*, MIPA, Rabat, 19 July 2022. Accessed on 14 November 2022, available at: <https://mipa.institute/9309>

3 Morocco: The Impact of the Digitization of Public Services

and second in Africa in the Digital Development Index (DEI). Morocco's ranking has also improved in the UN E-Government Development Index (EGDI), moving from 140th in 2008 with a score of 40.29 to 101st in 2022 with a score of 0.591.12 This remarkable progress is the result of a significant growth in the online services index (OSI), which rose from 0.207 to 0.472 during the same period. The same improvement happened in other areas that contribute to the e-governance index, such as telecommunication infrastructure index (TII) and human capital index (HCI).

	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022
OSI	0.207	0.238	0.542	0.692	0.739	0.666	0.523	0.472
TII	0.134	0.176	0.277	0.334	0.342	0.369	0.580	0.667
HCI	0.543	0.573	0.443	0.490	0.473	0.527	2018	0.635
EGDI	0.294	0.328	0.420	0.505	0.518	0.521	0.572	0.591
Rank	140	126	120	82	85	110	106	101

Evolution of e-government indices in Morocco (Source: The author, based on UN reports 2008-2022)

Despite the fluctuating progress of these indicators, the overall levels of digitization make it still possible to accomplish numerous goals that contribute to administrative reform, improve the efficiency of public administration management in Morocco, and bolster its capacity to address current economic and social challenges.

The Role of Digital Technology in Modernizing Morocco's Public Sector

Thanks to the development of electronic infrastructure and the use of a wide range of digital applications, public administration in Morocco has made significant progress in transitioning from traditional management methods to the adoption of information technology for the provision of public services, using various methods and tools, such as:

News services: Previous interventions have resulted in the creation of virtual spaces that facilitate access to data and documents. The public services portal now offers over 800 administrative procedures categorized into 14 topics, such as personal documents, employment, taxation, and family,

as well as more than 170 online services. In addition, the public operation portal has published nearly 50,000 reports between 2012 and 2022, and the spatial data portal has provided contact information for over 17,500 public facilities.

This progress will be further enhanced by the launch of the second version of the National Open Data Portal, which includes over 32,000 files, 457 sources, and 34 data producers, effective as of December 2022. With the gradual improvement in publishing public data, Morocco has advanced in the open data index (ODIN) and now ranks 41st globally, 1st in Africa, and 2nd in the Arab world.

Interactive services: Interactive solutions have greatly improved communication between the government and citizens. The national complaints portal (Chikaya), which has received over 1.2 million complaints, has shown a relative improvement in response rate to user grievances with nearly 59.13% of the total complaints being answered.

The information portal (Chafafiya) also showed a response rate of over 56% to requests submitted. The administrative portal (Idarati) has simplified the process of obtaining information with the publication of 2,700 written and simplified procedures. The government is working towards full or partial digitization of these procedures by 2025.

Semi-transactional services: These are websites that allow users to start an administrative transaction online and receive the final service either through regular mail or in person. Examples of such services in Morocco include the portal for administrative documents (watiqa.ma), which has successfully processed over 700,000 requests for birth certificates; the biometric passport portal (passeport.ma), which enables users to fill out the form and track the application electronically while still requiring physical submission and collection; and the electronic civil status system, which has made significant progress in digitizing civil status fees since its implementation in 2008, to build a database of 45 million documents dating from 1915 onward. Additionally, the license portal (rokhas.ma) allows for the electronic management of license applications in the construction and economic sectors.

Transactional services: Thanks to digital transformation, certain services have been completely digitized. This includes the launch of a dedicated portal to publish requests for offers and track public deals for contractors.

Additionally, there is an exchange portal that allows remote access to licensing and permitting services, and the management of supplementary allocations for tourism. There are also numerous sites designed for social security permit applications, invoice and tax payments, management of customs procedures, and some digital judiciary applications such as the electronic judicial record and online payment of traffic violation fines. The groundwork has been laid for a

12 United Nations, *E-Government Survey 2022 The Future of Digital Government*, New York, 2022, p 63.

4 Morocco: The Impact of the Digitization of Public Services

shift towards remote litigation, in addition to progress in the electronic management of the education and training system through the MASSAR tracking system.

Integrated services: Digitization has expanded areas of collaboration and cooperation in the public sector through several initiatives. For instance, the Joint Information System for Human Resource Management in Public Administrations (SIRH-AP) was launched in 2019 in 16 ministerial sectors. It aims to optimize and effectively manage human resources by leveraging the capabilities offered by information and communication technology.

Portals have been designed to provide common public services between several departments, especially regarding the development of an investor user interface. Some examples are a platform to support startups and self-employment. Additionally, a digital platform is being developed to exchange and connect various public administration information systems. This platform will then grow to accommodate more and more departments.

The increasing use of information and communication technology in public services has led to significant improvements in the transparency, efficiency, innovation, and quality of the public sector.

These improvements have positively impacted the performance of public administration overall and its relationship with its stakeholders.

One of the main benefits of digitization is the establishment of an objective and transparent relationship between citizens and the administration, which has contributed to mitigating biases, prejudice, or favoritism. Digitization has also reduced the workload of administrative staff while simultaneously increasing the transparency and accessibility of procedures and diversifying how to appeal administrative decisions.

Importantly, digitization initiated a process of “de-bureaucratization” by breaking down administrative traditions and transforming the organizational structures of administrative bodies. This transformation involved breaking down responsibilities and introducing new frameworks for exercising administrative power.

Furthermore, digitization has facilitated the use of public services through soft impact tools based on communication and collaboration. For instance, users can now make appointments online to access medical services through a booking platform (mawiidi.ma), or obtain documents from security services, the judiciary, and other agencies.

The use of digital tools has helped improve the degree of integrity in public services and limited some of the corrupt practices that were previously prevalent due to a lack of transparency, limited public participation in the management

of public affairs, and the absence of a culture of public service among citizens.

Moreover, digitization has enabled the rationalization of human resource management in the public sector by reducing the occurrence of “ghost” employees in light of the frequency of census operations, and by valuing digital professions that do not require high employment rates. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, around 14% of jobs in Morocco are at risk of automation.

Digital administrative solutions can also enhance the job performance of workers and reduce the margin of error resulting from manual data processing.

The Impact of Digital Bureaucracy on Administration: Manifestations and Opportunities

In the past, e-governance systems have had numerous negative consequences, which now require innovative approaches to redirect technologies toward serving the economic and social objectives of digitization. This must be done within a comprehensive vision for public sector reform that extends beyond technical considerations and incorporates legal, institutional, and procedural safeguards to control the new frontiers of public management.

The Side Effects of Digital Transformation on Public Administration

The digital transformation process encounters various obstacles that impede its progress or prevent it from achieving its desired outcomes. Some adverse effects have started to surface, especially given the funds allocated to finance the digital transformation initiatives, especially since these are implemented under several government-led programs in partnership with the private sector and international donors. Among the adverse effects, we highlight the following:

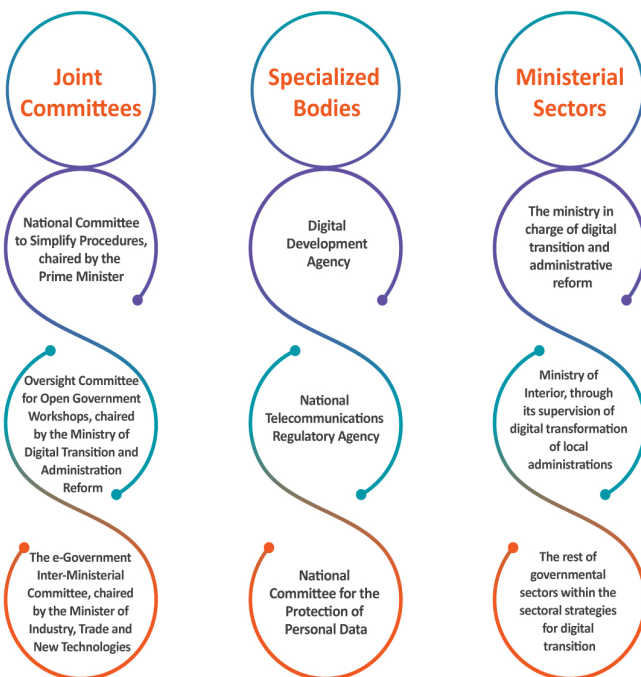
Leadership failures: These systemic failures include limited coordination among programs. For instance, the

5 Morocco: The Impact of the Digitization of Public Services

outcomes of the e-Maghreb 2010 plan were not considered when developing the Digital Morocco 2013 Strategy. Additionally, there has been a lack of control over project implementation, resulting in only 42 services being completed instead of the originally planned 89 services.

Similarly, service quality assessment has been primarily based on the number of services offered, regardless of their readiness and ability to fulfill user needs, as determined by official references such as the reference guide for digital administrative services in 2018 and the Online Services Maturity Report in 2019. Leadership structures also encountered difficulties, as exemplified by the National Council for Media Technology and the Digital Economy, which failed to monitor the implementation of the Digital Morocco Strategy. The Council only held three meetings between 2009 and 2013, despite being required to meet at least twice annually.

Governance issues stem from the absence of a joint governmental mechanism to oversee the different aspects of the digital transition, in contrast to international standards which necessitate permanent leadership structures. In France, for example, the Inter-Ministerial Delegation for Digitization and Information and Communication Systems (DINSIC) played a critical role in coordinating digital transformation efforts. To address these issues, specialized bodies must be empowered with sufficient resources and clear terms of reference.



The organizational framework for leading digital transition workshops in Morocco (Source: The author)

Persistence of the digital divide: The discrepancy in the pace of digitization continues to widen the gap between citizens in terms of their access to public services. This divide takes various forms, such as spatial disparity, where certain so-called “white areas” lack adequate Internet infrastructure, and the central administration has monopolized most of the equipment and information solutions, leading to limited resources and poor digitization of the local authorities.¹³ On a sociocultural level, digitized services risk creating inequality among citizens in terms of their ability to access public services. Despite significant developments in the information technology market, thanks to governmental and private efforts, many social groups still lack the necessary means and technologies to access digital services due to limited income or low digital literacy.

From an economic perspective, the level of electronic readiness index (e-Readiness) varies depending on the type of services and their intended recipients. Services targeted toward general users are often less developed than platforms used for the payment of invoices, fees, and taxes,¹⁴ resulting in disparity in the quality of services provided to regular users and professionals. Around 60% of online services offered to the public are limited to providing information while platforms used by companies are entirely digitized and constitute almost 42% of all services, compared to only 32% of fully digitized services available to other users.

Maturity level	Citizens	Professionals	Others	Total
News	106	58	15	179
Interaction	9	0	1	10
Partial digitization	33	59	19	111
Total digitization	29	38	24	91
Total online services	177	155	59	391

Inventory of electronic services and assessment of their maturity (Ministry of Administration Reform and Public Service, 2020)

Overgrowth of digital bureaucracy: The public authorities are increasingly relying on digital tools to make public services more responsive to bureaucratic requirements in the Weberian sense – emphasizing specialization and efficiency, as well as the presence of clear and stable management rules. In practice, however, digital bureaucracy has emerged as a

¹³ Cherif Elhilali, “Public Administration Reform and Development Stakes in Morocco,” *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues*, Volume 25, Special Issue 4, 2022, p.4.

¹⁴ Court of Auditors, *Evaluation of Online Public Services*, Kingdom of Morocco, Rabat, 2019, p.4.

6 Morocco: The Impact of the Digitization of Public Services

significant issue in its own right, hindering the potential of modern tools to improve public services. Some examples of such tendencies are:

Outdated administrative sectors: A significant number of employees are unable to keep up with the technology. The percentage of employees working in information and communication technology in Morocco does not exceed 1.19%, compared to an international average of 3% in 2022. This often results in resistance to change and a preference for paper-based management culture among the older generations of employees.

The lack of a clear definition of online services means that some online services offer only information or the acquisition of basic documents that do not meet the demands of users. Many virtual portals of public administrations lack necessary updates and have underdeveloped interactive and integrated digital solutions, hindering their ability to attract users.¹⁵

Burdensome procedures: Online services for requesting administrative documents are still limited to submitting applications. Obtaining the documents still requires physical presence. If users wish to receive the documents via regular mail, they have to pay expensive fees, rendering the service accessible only to a minority of citizens.¹⁶

Lack of confidence: The lack of a standardized and simplified system for identifying users and employees, coupled with a slow pace in securing digital services, undermines confidence in e-transactions. As a result, many citizens are hesitant to deal with electronic platforms, particularly those related to financial services.¹⁷

Administrative rigidity: The technology behind online services is fraught with challenges that impact its effectiveness. Interruptions due to frequent technical failures and weak maintenance affect the interests of users and make those failures an excuse to evade responsibility and slow down service provision.

Overcomplication: Persistent technical complications and the absence of adequate maintenance can hinder digital transactions and services. These include the occasional connectivity problems, difficulty recognizing e-signatures,

¹⁵ Nasira Al-Hayyouni, "Electronic Administration and the Bet of Administrative Modernization in Morocco," *Journal of Legal Sciences*, Administrative Jurisprudence Series, No. 7, 2018, p. 30.

¹⁶ The Court of Auditors, *Report on the Digital Morocco...*, op cit., p. 117.

¹⁷ OECD, *Case Study: Opportunities and Challenges in Morocco*, 2020, Paris, p.23,

and challenges of uploading necessary documents to obtain services. Limited digital literacy skills also prevent many users from completing electronic forms and conducting administrative transactions, as most official websites are not sufficiently user-friendly.

Even in countries that have made significant progress in digital transformation, users often need assistance to access remote services. For example, studies show that in France 71% of users require assistance, and 78% in Britain.¹⁸ Innovative solutions are being developed to assist users of public administration websites and prevent digitization from becoming an obstacle to accessing services. These solutions are particularly critical for the rural population, who often face challenges in registering on websites dedicated to obtaining documents, support, or services from administrative authorities.

Given the additional cultural and material challenges of e-governance in Morocco, adequate resources and measures must be allocated to enhance communication and interaction between users and public service portals. While this is the primary responsibility of the government, non-governmental organizations have also a role to play in terms of raising awareness, advocacy, and training aimed at fostering a culture of digital literacy and public utility.

The Potential of Digitization to Enhance Public Services

Digitization has enormous potential to streamline administrative work. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the accompanying risks and challenges to be able to proactively transform them into opportunities. We can unlock the full benefits of digital technology through:

Digital justice: As we move towards a more digital society, it is crucial to address the growing digital divide that persists between communities. Despite government efforts, disparities in access to quality equipment and fast internet continue to widen, leaving behind vulnerable groups such as individuals with disabilities, the elderly, women, youth, and those living in poverty.¹⁹ To bridge this divide, new measures must be taken, including expanding access to high-speed

¹⁸ See Sopra Steria, *Digital Gouv' Barometer 2019: Digitization of Public Services Between Necessity and Concerns*. Accessed on 27 February 2022, <https://bit.ly/3HI3NhT>

¹⁹ Vincenzo Aquaro, *Can Digital Government Accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals?* Dubai Policy Review, 2019. Accessed on 3 January 2023, available at: <http://bit.ly/3xX-4spE>

7 Morocco: The Impact of the Digitization of Public Services

Internet and ensuring quality service in this field.²⁰ It is essential to make artificial intelligence more accessible and develop user-friendly mobile applications and innovative digital systems that have a tangible impact on the lives of users. Public platforms should also be strengthened by providing specialized electronic support and advice to visitors seeking digital public services.

Advanced e-governance: To enhance user access to online administrative services, it is essential to simplify the pathway for users by reducing the number of steps required, limiting necessary documentation, and streamlining the involvement of the different service departments. Developing data interoperability platforms that enable the exchange of data and documents between various public administrations is also crucial, alongside improving transparency, maturity, effectiveness indicators, and providing secure access to digital services.

Managerial effectiveness: Preparing for digital administration requires a comprehensive organizational review that effectively tackles the challenges of digitization. This involves bringing about a profound change in administrative structures, rather than merely implementing superficial modernization to outdated devices. To achieve this, the government must establish specialized administrative departments for analysis, processing, programming, and maintenance processes. These departments should handle technical matters related to the dissemination of digital information and applications.²¹ Information skills should be a fundamental criterion in the recruitment of human resources. Digital professions that require specialized qualifications, such as information security, smart design, cloud computing, information engineering, and big data analysis, must be promoted to ensure that competencies are available to adapt modern technology to the requirements of administrative work.²² To address these challenges, a comprehensive set of administrative reforms must be approved to establish the necessary political, legislative, institutional, and financial

²⁰ Economic, Social and Environmental Council, *Towards a Responsible...* op. cit., p 9.

²¹ Imad Yaquobi, *The Contribution of Information and Communication Technologies to Improving the Administration's Relationship with Citizens*, doctoral dissertation in public law, Mohammed I University, Faculty of Law, Jeddah, 2006, p. 112.

²² Abdelkader Boufi, *Information Technology and its Impact on Humans: The Case of Public Administration*, doctoral dissertation in public law, Mohammed V University, Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences, Agdal, Rabat, 2003 p 147.

conditions for the digital transformation of the administration systems. This includes dematerializing administrative procedures and public services to streamline processes and improve efficiency.

Politically: To achieve successful digital transformation, it is crucial to develop an innovative strategy that draws upon lessons learned from previous experiences. This strategy must prioritize unifying the vision and accelerating implementation while ensuring seamless integration between digital solutions. Partnerships with the private sector are also essential to enhance digital economy indicators, facilitate cooperation between public actors, and streamline data exchange between various administrations. To ensure digital sovereignty, a dashboard must be developed to track policies related to the dematerialization of public services, similar to the Digital Governance Index (DGI) in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This will help measure the effectiveness of digital technology in activating administrative modernization strategies.²³

Legislatively: To ensure a successful digital transition of the public sector, it is vital to strengthen the legislative framework. This can be achieved by Law No. 41.19 related to digital administration, which is yet to come into force. This law aims to remove obstacles that limit e-transactions and enhance the level of digitization of services. Another important step is to issue a decree related to e-signatures to secure administrative documents and increase trust and credibility in digital applications. New decrees must be introduced to regulate the processes of sharing and exchanging data between departments, which will exempt users from producing documents that are already available with public administrations such as the General Administration of National Security, Health and Social Security Funds, the General Directorate of Taxes, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of National Education, and others.²⁴

Institutionally: To keep up with the fast pace of digitization, it is necessary to establish a higher authority responsible for coordinating the involvement of the various stakeholders. This can be achieved by creating a specialized team, such as a joint ministerial committee, to lead structured workshops and consolidate efforts between all relevant departments and organizations.²⁵ This committee should include representatives from various bodies, such as the Digital Development Agency, the Information Acquisition Committee,

²³ OCDE, *Overview of Public Administrations*, 2021 p.190.

²⁴ Ministry of Administration and Public Service Reform, *Inventory of Electronic...* op. cit., p 54.

²⁵ Development Model Special Committee, *General Report...* op. cit., p 135.

8 Morocco: The Impact of the Digitization of Public Services

the National Telecommunications Regulatory Agency, the National Committee for the Protection of Personal Data, and the National Leadership Committee for Open Data. There should be a review of the general governance of online public services, including the terms of reference and relationships between relevant ministerial sectors, particularly between the Ministry of Digital Transformation and Administration Reform and the Ministry of Interior²⁶

While important, these reforms alone will fall short of overcoming the constraints that impede the digital transformation of public administration. To achieve this, it is necessary to implement an integrated set of measures to modernize and rationalize the public sector. It is also essential to be aware of the risks and side effects of the digitization of public services on the basic principles of public utility, such as continuity and equality. This will prevent online applications from becoming a means to privatize management and undermine public services. This is particularly crucial given the technical and procedural complexities that limit user access and create spatial and social gaps, leading to the exclusion of a large sector of society from the benefits of digitization.

Conclusion

Information technology has undoubtedly made administrative procedures and obtaining public services easier and more cost-effective. However, digitization has become a breeding ground for bureaucratic practices due to the slow decision-making process, the expansion of the institutional framework, and the complexity of the communication systems. It is, therefore, necessary to create conditions to improve the quality of digital public services, including by:

Accelerating the organizational transformation of public administration systems by reviewing their structural and functional frameworks and managing the career development of human resources according to the requirements of the digital transition.

- Removing technical complications that hinder users from accessing online services, and enhancing virtual support indicators on official platforms and portals to better assist users.
- Developing comprehensive digital solutions instead of relying on an experimental approach that has proven to be ineffective. Most services remain limited to the news

or interactive elements without progressing towards partial or complete digitization, although the deadline for transitioning to fully digitized public service has passed.

- Recognizing the importance of civil society in keeping up with the digital transformation of public administration by promoting the value of public utility, introducing online services, and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of digital transactions.
- Ensuring digital justice by providing fast internet coverage across the country, offering efficient electronic devices in administrations, facilitating access to tools and solutions, and developing digital competencies among users and workers.
- Accelerating the development of a data interoperability platform, establishing common rules for information sharing between public administrations, and strengthening the connections between official portals dedicated to online services.
- Continuously monitoring the effectiveness of digitized services through periodic and annual reports to measure their ability to meet user needs. This should be done using objective criteria that go beyond quantitative aspects, and instead focus on indicators of accessibility, accuracy, innovation, fairness, and relevance.

In conclusion, digital technology must be integrated into the core of new public administration workshops. This includes implementing initiatives such as regional stimulating investment, reforming public institutions and contracting, modernizing public facilities and local administration, and establishing the Unified Social Register (RSU) as an information system that identifies those who are eligible to benefit from social support programs. The goal is to view the digital transition as a reflection of other forms of political, economic, social, and administrative transition.

²⁶ Mohamed Bahar, "The Evolution of Electronic Administration in Morocco: The Model of the General Directorate of Taxes," *Moroccan Journal of Local Administration and Development*, No. 158, May-June 2021, p 389.

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10 Morocco: The Impact of the Digitization of Public Services

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The Arab Reform Initiative is an independent Arab think tank working with expert partners in the Middle East and North Africa and beyond to articulate a home-grown agenda for democratic change and social justice. It conducts research and policy analysis and provides a platform for inspirational voices based on the principles of diversity, impartiality, and gender equality.



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