# E-Participation
## Controls

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# 01. Preamble

on the circular issued by the Royal Court No. (70701) dated 13/11/1443 AH, which includes in its paragraph "Third: All government entities shall apply the concept of electronic participation and survey public opinion in decision-making according to the procedures in place."

In an effort to enhance the digital performance within government entities, improve the quality of digital government services provided, and improve the experience of beneficiaries of those services in line with the Kingdom's ambitious Vision 2030, to achieve the strategic directions of the digital government; The Digital Government Authority paves the way for government entities to provide high-quality and efficient digital government services that contribute to raising investment returns and the value of the national economy, and the Authority works to measure the performance of government entities and their capabilities in the field of digital government.

In the framework of the Digital Government Authority's efforts, the Authority prepared the "Controls Electronic Participation " document, which aims to enhance community participation, empower beneficiaries to participate in building and supporting government entity decisions, raise the level of participation and interaction between government entities and beneficiaries, and enable social responsibility through interaction with beneficiaries, which in turn contributes to increasing transparency in all government sectors, enhancing communication with beneficiaries including individuals and private sector , as well as the responsiveness of government entities to the views of various stakeholders.

# 02. Introduction

The Electronic Participation Controls document is one of the controls included in the regulatory framework for the Digital Government Regulatory Framework, which works to activate the "beneficiary centrality" within government entities by promoting effective participation based on the availability of information, consultation, empowerment, joint development, and innovation. The concept of electronic participation clarifies "the digital interaction and participation that enables beneficiaries to share their opinions, ideas, and proposals on specific topics that affect society, in light of the government entities' efforts to hear the voice of beneficiaries and strengthen their participation, to improve government services and meet the needs of beneficiaries."

This document enhances the direction of community participation and interaction with beneficiaries, which is one of the most prominent targets of government entities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in accordance with Vision 2030, which included in its axes supporting communication channels between government entities on the one hand and citizens and the private sector on the other, facilitating interaction through smart means, listening to the opinions of all citizens and knowing their views, and encouraging government entities to meet the needs of every citizen and improve the quality of the services they provide.

# 03. Objectives

These controls aim to enhance the active participation and interaction of government entities with beneficiaries. This is done by achieving the following:

Enhancing transparency in all government sectors.

Encouraging government entities to be open to cooperative development of systems, regulations, and other related laws.

Promoting and supporting the adoption of electronic participation mechanisms to improve digital services and design innovative solutions.

Supporting communication channels with beneficiaries, the business community, and representatives of the non-profit sector, and raising the level of participation and interaction between government entities and beneficiaries.

Empowering government entities to deal effectively with beneficiaries and increase the use of digital government services.

Ensuring that government entities respond to the feedback of their beneficiaries.

# 04. Scope

The controls are based on the stages of electronic participation (Figure 1), which were designed based on best practices that define the key components for effective design and strategic implementation in order to achieve higher levels of interaction and participation at the level of entities. **The first stage** covers the launch of electronic participation topics and opportunities, which must have clear objectives, a time frame, and sufficient information and instructions for beneficiary participation. **The second stage** aims to enable beneficiaries to participate in the opportunities offered, while **the third stage** includes publishing the results of electronic participation and clarifying the impact of beneficiary participation on the systems, regulations, decisions made, and services provided by the government entities.
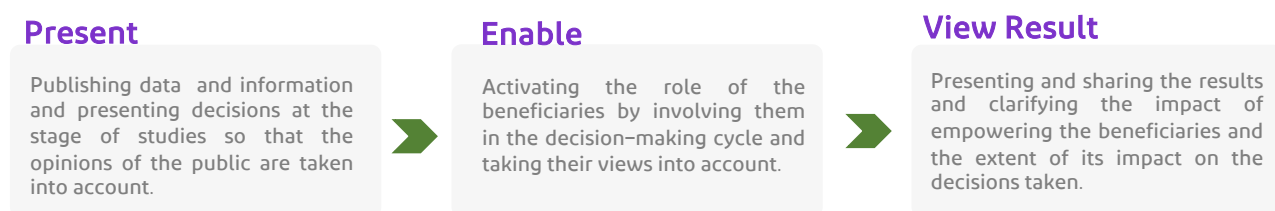
### Present

Publishing data and information and presenting decisions at the stage of studies so that the opinions of the public are taken into account.

### Enable

Activating the role of the beneficiaries by involving them in the decision–making cycle and taking their views into account.

### View Result

Presenting and sharing the results and clarifying the impact of empowering the beneficiaries and the extent of its impact on the decisions taken.

Figure 1: Stages of e-Participation

# 05. Applicability

This e-Participation Controls applies to:

- Government entities and all digital channels used by government entities, such as websites, digital portals, smart device applications, email, self-service kiosks, call center services, social media sites and applications, automatic response systems, and other means that target effective participation and interaction between the government entity and beneficiaries.

- The private sector and the non-profit sector that works as a developer or operator of businesses related to digital government.

# 06. Implementation and Compliance

In implementation of what was stated in the ninth paragraph of Article 4 of the Digital Government Authority Mandate, which stated "set technical standards for digital transformation models in government sectors and follow up on their commitment to them, in coordination with the government entities." Accordingly, DGA assesses and measures the extent of government entities' commitment to applying these regulatory controls in accordance with the mechanism approved by DGA.

# 07. Controls

## 7.1 Controls for Presenting topics and opportunities for e-Participation

| Presenting topics and opportunities for e-Participation | |
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| **Objective** | Share data, information, draft systems, regulations, and other related laws, without prejudice to the objectives of the issuance of the competent authorities, starting from the early stages of their preparation, in order to take into account the opinions of beneficiaries and their proposals, and to involve them in the decision-making process. |

**Present**
Publishing data and information and presenting decisions at the stage of studies so that the opinions of the public are taken into account.

**Enable**
Activating the role of the beneficiaries by involving them in the decision-making cycle and taking their views into account.

**View Result**
Presenting and sharing the results and clarifying the impact of empowering the beneficiaries and the extent of its impact on the decisions taken.

**Government entities shall commit to the following:**

| Control number | | |
|---|---|---|
| **4-101-01** | Prepare and publish the vision, mission, and goals of electronic participation that are consistent with the strategic direction of electronic participation initiatives in the Kingdom on its portal or official website. | |
| **4-101-02** | Display clear information about the services provided through its different digital channels. | |
| **4-101-03** | Provide the following information on its digital channels: | |
| | **4-101-03.01** | Information related to the rights of beneficiaries to access the information of the government entity and participate in the development of policies and general framework for the work, projects and programs of government entities in accordance with the statutory tools issued in this regard. |
| | **4-101-03.02** | Legislation and regulations related to the protection of personal data. |
| | **4-101-03.03** | The national data strategy or policy, if any, in accordance with the regulations issued in this regard. |
| | **4-101-03.04** | The policy or strategy for digital inclusion (if any) as well as policies and legislation related to persons with disabilities. |
| | **4-101-03.05** | Legislation and regulations related to transparency and sharing of budget data and government expenditure (as applicable). |

| Control number | |
|---|---|
| 4-101-04 | Introduce topics and opportunities for electronic participation, and make them available to beneficiaries for the purpose of providing their views and suggestions on what is being shared of data and information related to the work and services of the government entity according to the classification of shareable data, in addition to draft laws and regulations and the like to obtain their views on their formulation and implementation mechanisms, and topics should not be limited to Opportunities for electronic participation focus on aspects related to the government entity, but they must also include topics related to beneficiaries. |
| 4-101-05 | Allowing access to its competitions data (current and past), and making it available on the digital channels designated for this in accordance with the provisions of the Government Tenders and Procurement Law issued by Royal Decree No. (M/128) dated 13/11/1440 AH. |
| 4-101-06 | Provide through the national designated procurement portal, Etimad, information about the public procurements (future and current) including information about the results of these procurements with full details about the contracts (beneficiary, contractor name, contract type, contract value, etc.). Open data regarding public procurement processes should be available on the entity's open data website and the designated national open data portal, data.gov.sa. |
| 4-101-07 | Publish a calendar function on its digital channels which contains the activities, consultation dates, events, news, information about the due dates of most relevant services to beneficiaries. |
| 4-101-08 | Publish their legal and regulatory drafts on the designated national legal consultation platform, Istitlaa, and use the relevant tools to enable beneficiaries to provide opinions and comments on regulations issued by government entities related to any policy area. Entities must comply with the relevant guidelines published by the designated national legal consultation platform, Istitlaa. |
| 4-101-09 | Use simple language (i.e., language that is easy to read and understand by everyone like short simple texts, and clear messages) when sharing e-Participation topics, policies and programs. Avoid using any technical or legal terms or regulatory jargons that are hard to understand by the average reader/beneficiary. Language use must be aligned with relevant linguistic and language guidelines established by DGA for online platforms. |
| 4-101-10 | Share e-Participation opportunities in multiple languages, provide translation features or enable auto-translation features. |
| 4-101-11 | Ensure that the shared e-Participation topics, opportunities, and information are up to date. |

| Control number | |
|---|---|
| **4-101-12** | Publish e-participation topics and opportunities on the e-participation platform "Tafaul", and on the government entity's website (as applicable). |
| **4-101-13** | Provide open datasets on their designated portals, and on the national open data portal, data.gov.sa. Datasets must be regularly updated, and provided in a live manner (real-time data) when applicable, contemplating different categories of society such as:data on persons with disabilities, women, children, the elderly and residents. Entities should engage beneficiaries on using this data over its digital channels. |

| **4-101-14** | | Publish open data packages that are relevant to the core business of the government entity, including data related to the government entity's budget and its competitors, as follows: |
|---|---|---|
| | **4-101-14.01** | Include reference and link to the designated national open data portal, data.gov.sa. |
| | **4-101-14.02** | Include information and reference on national legislation and regulation regarding open government data, particularly the Open Data Policy, issued by the National Data Management Office. |
| | **4-101-14.03** | Provide data in a complete and primary format. |
| | **4-101-14.04** | Publish the latest version of the open datasets on a regular basis and make them available to everyone, as soon as they are available, free of charge. |
| | **4-101-14.05** | Datasets should be machine-readable (meaning they should be in format of CSV, JSON, XML etc.) |
| | **4-101-14.06** | Include Metadata containing dataset listing, list of files in every dataset, records in every file, row, and column details. |
| | **4-101-14.07** | Display the open data use license for the Government open datasets. |
| | **4-101-14.08** | Include a digital form for requesting open data. |

| Control number | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4-101-15 | Ensure compliance with all legislations and regulations related to e-participation, particularly:<br><br>• The Digital Government Policies.<br>• The Open Data Policy Issued by the National Data Management Office.<br>• The Personal Data Protection Policy Issued by the National Data Management Office.<br>• The Guideline for Web Accessibility of Websites issued by the Digital Government Authority.<br>• The cybersecurity regulations issued by the National Cybersecurity Authority. | |
| 4-101-16 | Adopting internal procedures and performance indicators to deal with the views and suggestions of all categories of beneficiaries, and analyzing the shared views and suggestions to take them into account when designing and reviewing programs, draft laws and regulations, and the like for the government entity. | |
| 4-101-17 | Assigning a work team to enable e-participation, and this team must include the following tasks. There may not be a need to create new departments, as the work can be accomplished through cooperation with existing departments and teams in government entities, and by identifying the relevant persons to fill the aforementioned roles according to the following: | |
| | 4-101-17.01 | Communicate with the senior management of the government entity. |
| | 4-101-17.02 | Monitor and follow up on all aspects of e-participation in the projects of systems, regulations, and other related laws, and the general programs of the government entity. |
| | 4-101-17.03 | Communicate to implement the participation and communication strategy with beneficiaries. |
| | 4-101-17.04 | Digital technologies to help manage and operate e-participation tools. |

## 7.2 Controls for enabling beneficiaries to participate in e-Participation

| Engaging beneficiaries in e-Participation | |
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| **Objective** | Enable beneficiaries by engaging them in the decision-making processes and considering their opinions and ideas to enhance the quality of governmental services and policies. <br><br> **Present** <br> Publishing data and information and presenting decisions at the stage of studies so that the opinions of the public are taken into account. <br><br> **Enable** <br> Activating the role of the beneficiaries by involving them in the decision–making cycle and taking their views into account. <br><br> **View Result** <br> Presenting and sharing the results and clarifying the impact of empowering the beneficiaries and the extent of its impact on the decisions taken. |

**Government entities shall commit to the following:**

| Control number | |
|---|---|
| 4-101-18 | Create and execute an engagement and communication strategy in order to foster beneficiaries' participation |
| 4-101-19 | Enable beneficiaries to participate in e-participation opportunities shared through the use of different tools like government entities' official digital channels, the designated national e-participation portals, Tafaul and Istitlaa. Entity's social media profiles, DGA's social media profiles among other channels that can be used to achieve the same purpose. |
| 4-101-20 | Provide through their digital channels and designated national e-participation portal the function to comment and rate every service provided by the entity. |
| 4-101-21 | Provide a feature that enables beneficiaries to submit complaints or suggestions, either by email, phone, instant messaging, or through an electronic form that can be filled in, and provide a clear mechanism to follow up on complaints or suggestions without the need to contact or visit the government entity. |
| 4-101-22 | Continuous and periodic follow-up of beneficiary participation, opinions, proposals or complaints, and notifying the beneficiary with a reference number for the request or proposal and the results of the study of the request or proposal. |
| 4-101-23 | Use all available means to enable the participation and inclusion of different categories of beneficiaries, such as: people with disabilities, women, children, the elderly, and residents, and comply with what the Authority and the competent authorities issue in this regard. |

## 7.3 Controls for the Publication of e-Participation results

| **Publication of e-Participation Results** |
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| **Objective** | Display and share the results of e-participation and clarify the effect of beneficiary's participation on the decision making process |
|---|---|
| | **Present** Publishing data and information and presenting decisions at the stage of studies so that the opinions of the public are taken into account. **Enable** Activating the role of the beneficiaries by involving them in the decision-making cycle and taking their views into account. **View Result** Presenting and sharing the results and clarifying the impact of empowering the beneficiaries and the extent of its impact on the decisions taken. |

**Government entities shall commit to the following:**

| **Control number** | |
|---|---|
| 4-101-24 | Publish the results of consultations, on the Entity's official digital channel(s), and through the designated national e-participation portals, Tafaul and Istitlaa. |
| 4-101-25 | Publish information and documenting how the input, comment, and rating of beneficiaries is used in decision making, on the Entity's official digital channel(s), and through the designated national e-participation portals, Tafaul. |
| 4-101-26 | Publish information about the results of handling complaints which were used in making, modifying, or revoking a decision by the government Entity, on the Entity's official digital channel(s), and through the designated national e-participation portals, Tafaul. |
| 4-101-27 | Publish information about the results of processing the incoming suggestions that have been used in optimizing the Entity's offered services or updating decisions, on the Entity's official digital channel(s), and through the designated national e-participation portals, Tafaul. |
| 4-101-28 | Publish information about the results of suggested ideas and their effect on the Entity's decision-making process, on the Entity's official digital channel(s), and through the designated national e-participation portals, Tafaul. |
| 4-101-29 | Publish information about the results of co-creation initiatives, such as hackathons, developed between beneficiaries and the Government entity and its effect on the decision-making process, on the Entity's official digital channel(s), and through the designated national e-participation portals, Tafaul. |

# 08. Table of Definitions

The following terms and expressions - wherever they appear in this document - shall have the meanings indicated on the opposite side of each of them, unless the context requires otherwise.

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Authority | Digital Government Authority |
| Digital government | Promotes administrative, organizational and operational processes between the various government entities in their transitioning to a comprehensive digital transformation to allow easy and effective access to government digital information and services. |
| Government entities | Ministries, authorities, public institutions, councils, national centers including any additional form of a public entity. |
| Non-Profit Sector | The system of civil activities, voluntary services and non-governmental organizations, which are not intended for profit in the first place, and aim to achieve one of the purposes of charity, solidarity, cooperation, social development or other purposes of public or ad hoc benefit. |
| Policy | A Policy defines the course or principles of action to guide and determine present and future actions and it specifies what government entities are required to do. Policies can have related standards that provide more information for entities. |
| Controls | Specify the conditions government agencies must comply with and what they must do to achieve the objectives and general provisions stated in the policy associated with them. |
| Standards | A set of rules and controls regulating the operations and tasks related to the digital government. |
| Beneficiary | Citizens, residents, visitors, government agencies, private sector, non-for-profit sector, inside or outside the KSA that require to interact with a government entity to receive any of the services offered in the Kingdom. |
| Beneficiary Centricity | The ability of government entities to understand beneficiaries' situations, perceptions, and expectations. It requires having beneficiaries as focal points of all decisions related to delivering government services and experiences. |
| Promote Beneficiary participation | Involvement of beneficiaries in digital government service design through obtaining their insights and ideas on service delivery to help government entities understand their experiences. |
| Electronic participation (E-Participation) | Digital interaction and participation that allows beneficiaries to express their opinions and share their ideas and suggestions on specific topics related to society, including the endeavour of government agencies to hear the voice of beneficiaries and strengthen their participation, in order to improve government services centered on the needs of citizens. |
| Communication and engagement strategy | A strategy that must comply with the need to engage beneficiaries on e-participation opportunities by building trust in the relationship between them and government entities. A successful strategy relies on achieved results of social participation, with the provision of enhanced inclusion of persons with special needs, women, youth, elderly, migrants, and other vulnerable groups. |
| Open Data | A specific set of machine-readable public information that is available to the public for free and without restrictions and can be used and shared by any individual, public or private entity. |

The following terms and expressions - wherever they appear in this document - shall have the meanings indicated on the opposite side of each of them, unless the context requires otherwise.

| Term | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| General Information | Unprotected post-processing data received, produced, or dealt with by entities, regardless of its source, form, or nature. |
| Digital channel | A digital means of communication to display information or offer digital services and products to beneficiaries, such as websites, digital portals, smart device applications, e-mail, self-service kiosks, call centre services, social networking sites and applications or Chabot's. The services may be provided on all channels or selectively on some of these channels. |
| Digital Portal | A web application that works through the browser and acts as a single point designed to access all services and information of an entity in one station. The portal is used to provide a range of digital services in a customized way, often requiring a login. |
| Smart devices | An electronic device, generally connected to other devices or networks via different wireless protocols to support data collection, online services, or other applications. The device can operate, to some extent, interactively and autonomously. |
| Smart device application | A software application that is specifically programmed for smart devices such as smartphones and tablets to provide a set of services or informative content. The software application can be downloaded from the official application stores. |
| Social participation | Involving citizens considering their opinions and suggestions in the process of making public policies and/or issuing decisions by government, including the sharing of results stating how their contribution was used and/or issuing justifications if not |
| Website | Non-interactive web pages that provide information and news content available to everyone without need log in to the website. It can also demonstrate the available service and products catalogue, but without the ability to request them, meaning that they are noninteractive services. |
| Web application | An interactive web application through the browser that acts as a single point designed to access all services and information of an entity in one station. The portal is used to provide a range of digital services in a customized way, often requiring a login. |

# 09. Table of Abbreviations

| Abbreviations | Description |
|---|---|
| XML | Extensible Markup Language |
| CSV | Comma-Separated Values |
| https | Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure |

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