**Draft report for the UNDP**

**Prof. Dr. Alexander H. Trechsel**

**European University Institute & Harvard University**

**(in collaboration with Alina Ostling and Nele Leosk, European University Institute)**

August 28 2013

# Index

[Index](#h.xztx2u79c9f6)

[Introduction](#h.w28plil9sykw)

[1. Literature review](#h.v553k8dud9lk)

[Definition of e-participation](#h.gjdgxs)

[E-participation in developing countries](#h.qco3gzmok4hd)

[Gaps in the literature](#h.rpjahist1ufm)

[2. Critical assessment of e-participation claims](#h.e1w6w5g2pf8r)

[Factors that lead to success or failure](#h.kpj92t2goay3)

[Socio-political factors](#h.uxerekncy9w3)

[Technology](#h.loyiryrpbzrp)

[Key lessons learned](#h.alvh69s4cwqb)

[3. Analytical basis for a framework for future research and evaluation](#h.9nrkobbyxwo1)

[Measuring e-participation readiness](#h.pbwcyfk1tjw6)

[Evaluating e-participation initiatives](#h.t1jrlvh0p60n)

[Sustainability](#h.x0skeism2sz7)

[Bridging organizations/actions](#h.fclhl76d6g56)

[Indices: their limits and how to address them](#h.mlok7j9qbggr)

[Conclusions](#h.fzqxqk16sfsh)

[References](#h.7kxdggtkkwgf)

#

#

# Introduction

In this report, we critically examine the role that modern information and communication technologies (ICT) could play in supporting democratic governance processes. By doing so we first and foremost focus on developing countries, where we believe the potential for ICTs to foster e-participation is particularly challenging. We hope that our reflections will contribute to the setting of standards for good practice in the field of e-participation and assist the development of an evaluation framework for e-participation initiatives.

We first review relevant information and data originating from both academia and the world of practice, and provide a summary analysis of the state of the art in the field of e-participation, in particular in developing countries. We also carry out a critical assessment of the validity of claims regarding the impact of ICTs on democratic governance, focussing specifically on factors that lead to success and failure, and on key lessons learned. Finally, we propose an analytical basis to inform future research and development of an evaluation framework in the field of e-participation. The outcome of our endeavour and our concrete recommendations should ideally feed into initiatives aiming at an increased commitment of policy-makers in developing countries to e-participation. We also hope to contribute with our work to the future incorporation of e-participation outcomes into governance processes.

s

# 1. Literature review

The state of the art suggests that e-participation is probably going through a so called hype cycle,[[1]](#footnote-1) having lived through the peak of inflated expectations about its transformational power and a trough of disillusionment regarding the actual lack of impact on governance processes, it is now becoming a constant of the political landscape.

In academia, e-participation studies are probably in their late teenage years. After early waves of enthusiasm followed by stings of doubts, scholars have adopted a more balanced and empirically driven outlook on e-participation (Chadwick 2009). However, the field is still neither theoretically nor empirically mature. We perceive at least three major shortcomings: first, the literature remains rather vague, leading to potential confusion, when it comes to the very definition of e-participation. What does “e-participation” really mean? Is it a single act or rather a process? And if the latter, what are its different phases? There is an urgent need to clarify these issues, to answer these questions and through this to create some improved conceptual ujnderstanding of the phenomenon at hand. Second, there is lack of comparative studies about how ICTs affect – or fail to affect - democracy. The debate has mostly taken place at the level of anecdotes in the media and conflicting case studies in academia (Grönlund 2011; Tufekci 2013). Third, not all e-participation initiatives are exogenous events, i.e. completely independent one from the other. To use the vocabulary of diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers 1995, Bonfadelli 1999) some early adopters innovating in the field of e-participation have found followers in other contexts, further spreading experiences in the field, with earlier cases informing the later. These linkages between - and even interdependences of - individual e-participation cases within a larger system have so far been neglected (Parkinson and Mansbridge 2012). In sum, we believe that there is a clear need for a more conceptually and theoretically concise as well as empirically systematic approach to e-participation.

## Definition of e-participation

E-participation is an ambiguous notion that originates from the field of e-democracy. The relation between the two fields is still not clear. Susha and Grönlund (2012) distinguish e-participation from e-democracy by suggesting that the latter focuses on ICT that *facilitate democratic goals* (broadly speaking), while the former emphasises *facilitated engagement*. In this sense, e-participation would become one of the ingredients of e-democracy, as citizen engagement or participation is clearly to be counted among the major goals of democracy. According to this conception of e-participation and e-democracy the two fields overlap where citizens take part in a political or governance-related activity (Susha and Grönlund 2012, p. 374). At the same time, e-participation is also related to the concept of e-government. E-government and e-participation often depend upon the same technologies but their function is distinct. Most e-government devices concern efficient performance of administrative transactions with citizens, who are regarded as ‘clients’, while e-participation seeks to improve the relationship with citizens and increase their participation in politics. While the e-government first and foremost aims at efficiency-enhancing processes, e-participation has a more legitimacy-enhancing character. However, the distinction between e-government and e-participation can at times become fuzzy, e.g. the latter can be considered to be part of the former when citizens are involved in shaping administrative practices or service provision. Also, when a primarily efficiency-enhancing e-government initiative produces better transparency and even accountability, it clearly produces some legitimacy-enhancing “side-effects”.

E-participation is often conceptually stretched to include all sorts of political uses of ICTs - from political party websites and e-campaigning tools to internet voting devices and administrative services provided by government (Zittel 2004a). For the purpose of this report, the following definition of e-participation is adopted (based on Trechsel et al. 2003; Zittel 2004a and 2004b):

*e-participation is a process in which new media based tools enable citizens to access information, as well as to connect with each other and with their representatives, for the purpose of improving their participation in democratic instances*

The concept above is a subset of the broad definition of e-participation and focuses especially on elements of communication and political participation, putting the emphasis on the process. It also implies that the use of ICT can have an impact on democratic procedures by enabling the engagement of various actors in practices such as elections, referendums, citizen juries, consultations, deliberations and participatory budgeting (Grönlund 2001; Hoff et al. 2000).

However, conceptually e-participation embraces more than simply technologically facilitated access to government. It implies both innovation of the conventional processes of representative democracy and a move towards more deliberative, participatory or direct approaches to democracy. (see also Trechsel 2007) Moreover, in practice, it often involves blending of different forms of democracy, which both build on and change existing institutions. For example the webcasting of parliamentary meetings aims at reinforcing the transparency and accountability of representatives in order to strengthen existing institutions of representative democracy (Pratchett 2006). In contrast, the European citizens' initiative (ECI), which enables one million citizens – with electronic signatures being admitted - to invite the European Commission to elaborate a legislation. The European Commission is obliged to give a formal response to such proposals and therefore the newly created instrument changes existing democratic practices. Finally, some ICT-driven changes in participation of citizens to political processes create truly new instruments of civic engagement that, in the absence of ICTs, would either not have been developed in the first place or not have had the success in their diffusion. One can for example think of voting advice applications that have become important elements of election campaigns in many democratic context (Trechsel & Mair 2011, Garzia, Trechsel, Vassil & Dinas 2013).

E-participation projects are generally either top-down (i.e. owned and hosted by state actors) or bottom-up (i.e. initiated either by citizens, private actors or civil society organisations (CSOss[[2]](#footnote-2)). In the context of this report we explore both these perspectives, and we thereby address a current gap in the literature that has undervalued the importance of involvement in particular of CSO in the field of e-participation (Susha and Grönlund 2012).

## E-participation in developing countries

E-participation initiatives are being developed not only by democratic actors and not only by governments in modern, liberal democracies. Judging by the latest editions of the United Nations (UN) e-participation index, a number of non-democratic regimes have even begun to outclass some of the more established democracies.[[3]](#footnote-3) Figure 1 illustrates the general trend, showing both the stable level of democratic regimes and the rise of e-participation in non-democratic States between 2008 and 2010. For the time being and on average democratic regimes continue to maintain their leadership role – but the gap is somewhat closing. These new non-democratic leaders in e-participation are concentrated in four regions: (i) Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union; (ii) Latin America; (iii) East and South-East Asia; and (iv) North Africa and the Middle East. At the same time, the development in other non-democratic countries has been constant or stagnating (Åström et al. 2012).

Figure 1. e-Participation index: mean value comparison between democratic and non- democratic States in the World (2003–2010)



*Source: Åström et al. 2012, p. 146.*

Figure 2 shows that the median in the e-participation index is lower than the mean, which indicates that the data is not evenly distributed over the range of observations. Additionally, the value of the standard deviation, being higher than the value of the mean, indicates a large range of observations. This suggests that the values of the e-participation index are not evenly distributed over the range of countries, i.e. there are numerous countries with very high levels of e-participation at the same time as there are many with very low levels of e-participation.

Figure 2. The overall results of the e-Participation index 2012

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of countries | 193 |
| Mean | 0.2205 |
| Median | 0.1316 |
| Standard deviation | 0.2552 |

*Source: United Nations e-Government Survey database.*

The literature that tries to explain the cross-country variation in the adoption of democratic (ICT-based) innovations can be broadly separated into four predictors of e-participation (Åström et al. 2012):

**1. Democracy**. Political contexts that are democratic are more likely to host e-participation than authoritarian regimes, which try to limit political freedoms (Norris 2001; Katchanovski and La Porte 2005). For the time being, the type of regime thus remains a first factor explaining the level of e-participation. However, with the trend revealed in Figure 1 that points to a stronger growth of e-participation among non-democratic countries (Åström et al. 2012, p. 145), and the data stemming from the UN e-participation index, according to which a number of non-democratic states are outperforming some democratic countries, this predictor may become weaker over time.

2. **Development**. Development or socio-economic modernization affects the use of ICTs in politics (Lipset 1959; Norris 2001; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Katchanovski and La Porte 2005). One major problem, however, lies in the difficulty for those theories tp explain the frequent deviations from the general cocariance between modernization and e-participation.

3. **Technology**. According to Norris (2001) and Åström et al. (2012), the extent of ICT diffusion is supposedly the main predictor of the availability and impact of e-participation. However, although there is a correlation between Internet access and democracy, it might be a result of democracies being more likely to allow widespread internet rather than of the Internet encouraging democracy (Milner 2006; Farrell 2012).

4. **Economic globalisation.** Globalisation is supposed to open up societies (Rudra 2005). Given that countries tend to be sensitive to the international context, for non-democratic countries e-participation could be an instrument for securing international investment and resources, gaining legitimacy, as well as demonstrating modernity (Johnson and Kolko 2010; Åström et al. 2012).

A recent statistical analysis by Åström et al. (2012) showed that economic globalisation has the strongest effect on e-participation among non-democratic countries. Also technological development matters but, as predictor, it loses strength over time (from 2003 to 2010), probably as more and more people get connected. Democracy and human development were not found to be significant predictors, which suggests that e-participation is not a simple extension of neither. However, Åström et al.’s analysis does not indicate what kind of global pressures are promoting e-participation and uses only approximate indicators in some instances, e.g. Internet users per 100 citizens was used as a proxy for technology. The analysis would have clearly benefited from the inclusion of other indicators such as mobile phone use or the level of digital skills. However, it still points to the general significance of certain predictors for e-participation in non-democracies.

Given that democracy is probably not at the core of some of the e-participation initiatives, it is important to go beyond the availability of projects and into a deeper analysis of their context and the intentions of the governmental actors involved (Åström et al. 2012; Åström and Granberg 2007). In fact, the current research shows that government actors still believe they should make decisions *for* the public rather than *with* them. According to a UN report (2008), only 11 % of countries surveyed are committed to incorporating e-participation results into decision-making processes. This finding is substantiated by another international study that found that nearly three-quarters of OECD governments consider e-consultation to be a priority - a far larger share with respect to the beginning of the decade. At the same time, only one fifth believe that using ICTs to foster participation in policy making is important. In fact, government engagement in e-participation is extremely limited throughout all OECD member countries, something that has remained unchanged since the 2001 OECD report on the same topic (OECD 2009).

Moreover, in their analyses of cases from five continents, Codagnone and Wimmer (2007) assessed the importance given to different areas of e-government (including e-participation) by various governmental and non-governmental actors. Their work showed that government representatives gave less importance to the development of e-participation than any other stakeholder. Furthermore, government representatives from African countries gave the lowest importance to e-participation compared to representatives from other countries (Codagnone and Wimmer 2007).

Going a step further and examining the actual scope of e-participation exercises, we also find that governments have invested more in information provision rather than in the actual involvement of citizens into policy-making. For example, in the African context many state institutions are already present on the web. Recently, some of them have also become more interactive. The European Commission-financed [Africa4All Parliamentary Initiative](http://www.africa4all.net/index.php?option=com_processes&Itemid=59) provides both information and aims at engaging the African public in discussing important policy topics. However, few initiatives have gone all the way to include citizens into the actual decision-making side of e-participation (Gyimah-Boadi 2004; Trechsel et al. 2003; Smith 2009).

## Gaps in the literature

There are a number of gaps in the e-participation literature. Having analysed a wide range of the literature in search for gaps, we have summarized the result according to the issue at hand:

**Lack of rigorous scientific basis:** E-participation models are often based on technology sophistication models and lack a theoretical basis from major works on participation and from theories of democracy. Moreover, the e-participation field - being multidisciplinary - lacks a consistent terminology and coordinated research agendas (Susha and Grönlund 2012).

**Biased assumptions:** Technology’s effect on participation has generally been overestimated leading to the so called ‘technological determinism’ (Ribeiro 2013; Medaglia 2012a; Freschi et al. 2009, Chadwick 2006). Moreover, there has been an overemphasis of a consensus-building perspective on e-participation theory and practice, and an understudy of the contentious nature of it (Dahlberg 2007; Susha and Grönlund 2012).

**Methods:** The most common research methods appear to be surveys, content/discourse analysis and case studies; while very few researchers engage in focus groups, experiments and action research (Medaglia 2012a, p. 356). The lack of the latter method brings us to the issue of insufficiently engaged scholarship. New methods for data gathering,, developed in the world of big data and penetrating the social sciences are, with a few exceptions, so far strongly under-represented (Bond et al. 2012; Cukier & Schoenberger 2013, Silver 2013).

**Engaged scholarship**: The ideal of ‘engaged scholarship’ presumes the involvement of the widest possible range of stakeholders in co-producing research, also those outside of academic communities (i.e. practitioners, citizens, politicians, and voluntary organizations). This can be done not only by means of action research (arguably the most radical and resource-demanding method) but also through stakeholder involvement in formulating research problems, in building theory, and in making sense of research findings. To date, e-participation research has not used the potential of these approaches sufficiently (Medaglia 2012a; Medaglia 2012b; Van de Ven 2007).

**Topical gaps:** There has been insufficient research into: (i) reasons for the lack of political will and institutional resistance to e-participation, and (ii) citizen participation into early stages of decision-making, such as agenda setting (Medaglia 2012a; Macintosh et al. 2009; Susha and Grönlund 2012).

**Online-offline interaction:** Many of the current studies take a narrow approach by making a distinction between online and offline participation, while they would benefit from a more holistic outlook that also examines offline aspects of participation. This can be difficult in practice since it is difficult to distinguish between the effects of technology in isolation from offline participation channels (Freschi et al. 2009; Susha and Grönlund 2012). Technology is transforming social practices at the same time as it is shaped by them, and the relationship between the two is not yet clear to the research community (Meijer et al. 2009; Susha and Grönlund 2012).

**Short-term focus:** The current analyses on the impact of e-participation initiatives tend to focus on the immediate results. In many cases, the assessments are carried out soon after the project launch, and fail to capture the long term impact, e.g. as in the case of the direct democracy portal “Today I Decide” in Estonia in 2001 (Kitsing 2011). There are exceptions to this rule, taking a longer-term perspective, assessing the impact of technological innovation across time, such as the introduction of internet voting in Estonia or in Switzerland (Gasser and Trechsel 2013; Trechsel et al 201o). One of the major problems of taking a longer-term perspective is the rarity of long-term survival of e-participation initiatives. The phenomenon to be studies is often gone before a new assessment across time can be made. However, this starts to change and we believe that future work on e-participation will find increasing numbers of initiatives that persist in time.

**CSO- and citizen-initiated forms of participation**: The academic community has dedicated more attention to government-run initiatives, as opposed to bottom-up approaches. NGOs, grassroots movements and so-called civic hackers are arguably the true force of innovation in e-participation and have the potential to bring about radical change in existing political systems. This also means that research is seriously lagging behind the proliferation of e-participation tools in real-life, especially those using open data and Web 2.0 technologies such as Twitter and Facebook (Medaglia 2012a).

**Use of e-participation for anti-democratic purposes:** There is a tendency to relate e-participation with positive democratic processes and outcomes, in the sense of a causal relationship where more e-participation leads to more democracy. However, this is not necessarily the case. For instance, participation can be an empty ritual and ICTs can be used to manipulate citizens (Arnstein 1969). Initiatives can be used instrumentally for propagandistic purposes, to disguise social control, legitimize authority and restrain public dissent (Jiang and Xu 2009; Åström et al. 2012; Medaglia 2012a, p. 351). The use of e-participation for anti-democratic purposes has been insufficiently addressed in the literature (Susha and Grönlund 2012).

**Focus on contextual factors:** Contextual factors (such as the role of infrastructure and information availability) that are at the basis of digital divides and can affect success or failure of e-participation initiatives should receive greater attention in the literature, especially when analysing developing countries (Helbig et al. 2009; Medaglia 2012a).

**E-participation in developing countries is under-researched:** A striking majority of e-participation analyses has focused on established democracies in Western Europe and North America. Although research in non-democratic countries as well as in developing countries is increasing, the existing literature is still scattered. Most of the research is based on single-country case studies, while only few authors (e.g. Bussell 2011 and Jaeger and Thompson 2003) have examined the complex relationships at the global level (Åström et al. 2012). While there are many critical factors in developing countries today that need to be understood and addressed, the majority of the research is repeating studies done in the industrialized world in the past two decades (Hedström and Grönlund 2008). Moreover, most contributions are written by authors from the developed world, which means that the perspective from ‘within’ is missing (Zuckerman 2004).

**Rural populations in the developing countries:** Most studies have focused on the urban, cosmopolitan and politically engaged citizens, while there is little in-depth research of rural ICT users (Donner 2008). It is clearly necessary to document the different needs and motivations of rural and poor users (and non-users) of technology such as mobile phones, the Internet etc. in the developing world (McKemey et al. 2003). It is important to do more research in places where for instance shared access to a mobile phone prevails and where issues of economic scarcity are crucial in the decision-making about when and what to communicate (Donner 2008).

# 2. Critical assessment of e-participation claims

At the core of e-participation stands the question about whether it means anything for democracy and if it has any impact on policy-making processes. In practice, there is lack of comparative studies about how ICTs affect democracy. The debate has mainly taken place at the level of anecdotes in the media and isolated e-participation cases in academia, ignoring their interdependence within a larger system (Grönlund 2011; Tufekci 2013; Parkinson and Mansbridge 2012). Moreover, most of the comparative work on e-participation has focused on the United States and the United Kingdom (Anduiza et al. 2012). There is clearly a need for a more systemic approach to e-participation, especially in developing countries.

Initially, e-participation was characterised by community-based discussion boards and mainly targeted at raising awareness. Later, governments started to run their own platforms, mainly targeted at improving services (and saving money) and to a limited extent also for consultations and e-petitions. In a later phase, social media and the opening of data repositories enriched e-participation. While both the latter innovations enable increased government transparency, they also bring along concerns of (state and private) ownership and control (Williamson 2012).

Despite all the theoretical and empirical optimism, as well as apprehension about e-participation, as of today, new digital technologies have not resulted in any radical transformation of representative democracy (Davies 2009; Gibson et al. 2004; Zittel 2004b, Grofman, Trechsel and Franklin 2013). The research available to date shows that most e-participation projects result in complex and mixed impact on democratic practice, or in no impact at all (Pratchett 2006). In fact, a number of studies show that it only rarely affects institutions or policy-making (UNPAN 2005; Chadwick 2006; Wojcik 2007).

At the same time, e-participation can also have a negative impact on democracy. It certainly offers many new opportunities but also presents new challenges, such as inequality in terms of the prevalence of highly educated, digitally skilled and resourceful people among participants, and new ways of controlling opposition (Trechsel 2007). The positive and negative effects of e-participation can sometimes occur in the same cases, e.g. during the ‘Arab Spring’, digital media allowed democratization movements to develop new mobilisation tactics but soon authoritarian governments started to integrate social media into their own counter-insurgency strategies (Ritter and Trechsel 2013; Howard and Hussain 2011); and in the case of Kenyan post-elections, ICTs were a catalyst to both ethnic-based mob violence and to citizen journalism and human rights campaigns (Goldstein and Rotich 2008).

Having discussed the possible effects of e-participation on democratic practices and democracy in general, in the next session, we will look deeper into factors that can lead to either success or failure of e-participation, both in terms of impact and implementation.

## Factors that lead to success or failure

### Socio-political factors

There are numerous and interacting factors that lead to success or failure of e-participation endeavours (Ritter and Trechsel 2013). In this section, we have chosen to organize them according to their technological and socio-political nature. Starting with socio-political factors, e-participation can be categorised along three dimensions ranging from the rather limited information and discussion activities to deeper involvement in decision-making (as illustrated in Table 1).

*Table 1. E-participation dimensions and factors of success and failure, based on Vedel (2006, p. 231-232)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Dimension* | *Democratic value* | *Content* | *Factors of success/failure* |
| **Information** | Transparency,accountability | Prompt access to political content (e.g. news, opinions, factual & open data) | (i) The availability and implementation of adequate information-access laws. (ii) Citizens ability and willingness to process complex information.  |
| **Discussion** | Open/broader public sphere | Promotion of free expression and exchange across geographical, and socio-cultural boundaries | (i) The share of active participants; tolerance, deliberation using logic and reason.(ii) Citizens ability to master the written and spoken language.  |
| **Decision-****making** | Civic engagement; the move towards participatory democracy | Large scale consultations/decisions | Government commitment and (partial) delegation of power to citizens  |

*Source: Table based on Vedel (2006, p. 231-232).*

Each dimension in the Table above represents different democratic values. Most e-participation projects show factors of success or failure related to one or more of these dimensions. Concerning information, many governments of developing as well as industrialized countries still lack adequate information-access laws, or struggle with (political) obstacles to their implementation. At the same time, even if information is fully accessible many citizens are unable to process complex political material, or simply consider it too costly in terms of time, effort and resources [[4]](#footnote-4) (Vedel 2006).

Concerning the second dimension, discussion, the literature shows that generally only a minority of participants is active (Kies 2010; Kies 2013). In the actual discussion, self-expression is often preferred to the engagement in genuine exchange of opinions, and debates tend to get polarized (Sunstein 2002). Moreover, not all people are able to express themselves confidently (verbally or in writing) when discussing complex political issues (Vedel 2006). This point applies even more in a development context, where literacy levels tend to be low.

At the receiver end, our literature review already pointed to a number of studies showing that government officials and civil servants tend to be reluctant to interact with citizens. The literature associates the elites’ limited commitment and involvement in e-participation with a number of conflicting goals. The premise is that e-participation is not neutral but based on values and on political attitudes. In the political as well as academic discourse, e-participation is associated with a strive towards strong, direct or participatory democracy. But the practice shows that e-participation can also be based on other premises.

In Western contexts where citizens are often perceived as consumers rather than political stakeholders, the government may aim at providing efficient services to citizens (leaning towards e-government) instead of a seeing e-participation as a welcome opportunity for interacting with citizens. The ruling elites are still attached to the notion of representative democracy where citizens are supposed to delegate power to their representatives (as opposed to be involved in deciding themselves) through elections and remain passive between elections (Schumpeter 1947). In non-democratic countries, e-participation can be used to control the opposition, legitimize authority, or simply to demonstrate modernity and secure international investment (Johnson and Kolko 2010; Åström et al. 2012).

Ensuring government commitment is one of the keys to success but this does not mean that only top-down projects are important in the move towards democratization. Bottom-up initiatives carried out by the civil society are equally important (Coleman and Norris 2005; Åström et al. 2012). Each approach has its pros and cons. The top-down method is often accused of stifling grass root activity (Pratchett 2006), while the bottom-up perspective, where citizens are seen as initiators and/or producers rather than just consumers, is argued to be a source of democratisation (Macintosh 2003; Baiocchi et al. 2008). However, bottom-up projects often lack a direct communication channel to the representatives, and the latter often see this type of initiatives as oppositional and politically risky (Smith 2009). This means that it is often difficult for bottom-up projects to have a tangible impact on policy-making.

Moreover, donors play an important role in e-participation. The recent diffusion of aid transparency initiatives (e.g. International Aid Transparency Initiative, Aid Info, and the Ujima Project) would benefit from partnering with local projects, such as the Kenyan Budget Tracking Tool, to track aid flows all the way down to project implementation in the recipient countries. This would also enable increased transparency of entire national budgets in developing countries since many of them consist of large shares of aid money (Heacock and Sasaki 2010).

### Technology

The success of failure of e-participation initiatives depends not only on socio-political factors but also on technological ones. Technology is unevenly distributed across countries and continents, as illustrated by Figure 3 (Norris 2001). Although Europe and the Americas are leading the way, the developing countries that have invested in telecommunication infrastructure and online services are rapidly catching up. Moreover, there are strong variations in access to different ICTs, e.g. mobile phones are much more accessible in Africa than all the other technologies (Internet, land-line telephones, computers and broadband) put together. As a case in point, the GSMA (Groupe Spéciale Mobile Association) has estimated that, in 2009, more than 31 million Nigerians accessed the web, with circa 30% doing so via mobile phones (Ehimuan 2012). Development researchers have hailed the mobile phone as the ‘great equalizer’, which challenges the digital divide argument (Longe et al. 2009; Hellström 2010).

Figure 3. The digital divide across continents



*Source: Based on the elaboration of Mahfuz (2011) of the Telecommunication Infrastructure Index and its components, and the United Nations E-Government Survey 2010, Statistical Annex A.*

On top of digital divides in terms of availability of infrastructure and access to the Internet and mobile (outlined in the Figure above), ICT skills are important obstacles for wide participation, especially in the low-income countries. Not only users but also state actors involved in e-participation lack ICT capacity and skills. The technical capacity problem is palpable both in developed and in developing countries. According to the World e-Parliament Report (2010) the biggest challenge for Parliament’s use of ICT for communication with citizens, is that parliamentarians are not familiar with the newest communication technology. In Kenya, this capacity gap inspired the founders of the Kenyan Budget Tracking Tool to collaborate with the ministries (that were willing but technically unable) to put budgetary data online (Heacock and Sasaki 2010, p. 35).

When considering technological factors of success or failure, it is also important to consider security of participants when planning e-participation projects. In repressive regimes, threats to personal safety can make-or-break an e-participation project (Zuckerman 2004). Much of the personal data collected and stored by e-participation projects is sensitive, creating new ethical concerns about privacy (Farrell 2012). Moreover, security aspects vary according to the type of ICTs. For example, in terms of the most versatile e-participation technology in many development contexts, the mobile phone, it is much more difficult to achieve privacy on mobile phone networks in comparison to the Internet. Mobile phone networks register a phone’s hardware signature and SIM, which makes anonymous publishing or reporting via mobile phones more difficult (Zuckerman 2009). Given that the security and privacy aspects related to e-participation fall outside of the scope of this report, we will not go any deeper into this area.

## Key lessons learned

One of the key lessons learned from e-participation projects is that the motivation and participation of the state actors and the targeted users is important for success. Given that the participation levels are often low, the user motivation and interest should be taken into account already in the early stages of a project. Heacock and Sasaki (2010, p. 63-64), who have analysed various mobile applications for development in East Africa, recommend the following:

* survey the local/national context before start;
* let the platform be driven by the needs of end-users and involve them into testing and content creation;
* fit it into already existing user patterns;
* market and advertise the project properly (e.g. how to use the service, why it is needed, who is operating it) to get a critical mass of users.

Moreover, according to Matt Berg, Director of ICT for the Millennium Villages Project at the Columbia University, many of the hurdles to overcome in the implementation of e-participation projects are related to building trust in a community (The Economist 2012).

Also, for people with lower (ICT) literacy levels, participation can be facilitated by technological solutions, e.g. by developing graphical interfaces using simple language (Huerta and Sandoval-Almazán 2007) or by making a creative use of government data by presenting them in simple tweets, interactive format or infographic displays as in the case of [BudgIT](http://yourbudgit.com/), which recaps the Nigerian budget and its complex data across different literacy spans.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Yet, even in case of success in terms of citizens’ engagement, state actors are often reluctant to engage in e-participation. To minimize resistance, it is important to examine the motivation and attitudes of the actors running the initiative and other actors in the process chain towards their involvement in the e-participation project (Alvarez 2004). Commitment should be secured from all parts of the organisation - from the officials and management down to the secretariat of every operational unit - asserts a recent study of 230 e-participation initiatives in Europe (Panopoulou et al. 2010, p. 5).

Taking it a step further, e-participation can also be institutionalised or ‘embedded’ into political processes. This occurs when political institutions modify their decision-making procedures to integrate the e-participation project or its outputs (e.g. petitions, voting procedures) into the system. Institutionalisation means that e-participation becomes part of formalised, codified procedures - as opposed to ad-hoc, pilot initiatives (Macintosh and Whyte 2006; Papadopoulos and Warin 2007, p. 460). This can be achieved by e.g. ensuring government commitment to mandatory consideration of citizen proposals already at the outset of the project.

Some authors suggest going even further, e.g. Grönlund (2010) asserts that top-down ICT interventions should be launched together with institutional reform in order to have any important effect. In practice, few countries to date have reshaped government systems in order to take advantage of the immense possibilities of technology. Moreover, experts warn that in order to carry out reform, the government in question needs to have at least some democratic government practices in place (Rumel 2004). This means that e-participation cannot be a starting point for making repressive countries more democratic (Grönlund 2010, p. 12).

From the technological point of view, e-participation has to overcome a number of digital divides such as the availability of infrastructure, access to the Internet and mobile phones, as well as the diffusion of ICT skills, especially in low-income countries. However, there is a number of ways to make e-participation inclusive with existing technology in a developing context. One of the key aspects is to incorporate multiple forms of communication, using the Internet and mobile phones, where possible, but also extending their outreach to community meetings, radio and printed materials, when necessary (Heacock and Sasaki 2010, p. 36). These are some of the showing examples:

● **SMS**: The Kenyan Budget Tracking Tool has developed a script to handle simple queries via text message so that anyone with a mobile phone can text in and find out how much money has been allocated for various projects in his/her area. In the past, the system got some 4,000 queries per month (Heacock and Sasaki 2010).

● **Use of older mobile platforms and compatibility**: The [Nigerian Constitution App](http://www.constitutionforall.com.ng/) aims at making the finer details of Nigerian law accessible to all by providing the country's constitution in app form, with features such as a search function, legal directory and user forum. The app is available not only on newer platforms (e.g. [Android](http://www.theguardian.com/technology/android), [Blackberry](http://www.theguardian.com/technology/blackberry)) but also on Java for older phones. Allegedly as a result of its compatibility with a wide range of devices, since its release in 2011, the app has had some 80,000 downloads (Bychawski 2012).

● **Print versions**: In Uganda, Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), which is working to integrate gender-sensitive language into the country’s national ICT and development policies, circulates a print version of its e-mail newsletter for women who are not able to get online (Heacock and Sasaki 2010).

# 3. Analytical basis for a framework for future research and evaluation

Though there is a vast academic literature on e-participation, the practical experience of its evaluation in governance – supported with evidence – is scarce. The most widely used e-participation assessment model is based on the conceptual framework elaborated by the OECD (2001) comprising three main stages (addressed before in this report): 1) *e-Information* – provision of information via the Internet and ICTs, 2) *e-Consultation* – organizing public consultations online, and 3) *e-Decision-making* – involving citizens directly in decision processes. Other stage-based approaches have been widely used but they differ mostly in vocabulary, rather than concepts. For example, the *Inform-Consult-Empower* approach proposed by Lee et al. (2011) distinguishes between levels of ICT usage for 1) *e-Enabling via informing,* 2) *e-Engaging* *via consulting* with citizens to support debate on policy issues, and 3) *e-Empowering* via *supporting active participation* and facilitating bottom-up ideas to influence the political agenda. Also, international organizations like UNDESA, the Association for Public Participation (IAPP) etc. have based their measurement frameworks on relatively similar stage-based approaches.

Even though it is recognized that the stage-based approach is suitable for understanding the development process of e-participation, it has also been criticized. One of the main reasons for this is that, in reality, these levels cannot be treated separately as information provision, consultations, and collaboration are integral parts of most decision making processes. In addition, these phases often overlap.

The more recent criticism concerns the assessment of e-participation only in the policy making process rather than in governance at large. In other words, e-participation should be considered an integral part of all areas of governance, and the assessments should focus on the role that ICTs could potentially have in the development of democratic governance. There have only been a handful stage-based (or any other for that matter) attempts to assess the potential of ICTs for enhancing democratic governance, most of which are single case-studies. One of the larger scale studies measuring the potential of ICTs to foster open government and transparency in Europe is the 2011 e-Government benchmarking pilot carried out by Capgemini and the Danish Technological Institute on behalf of the European Commission. This exercise has two major aims. First, to assess to what extent policy is geared towards ensuring that online channels are used to promote more open, collaborative, and participatory mechanisms of governance; second, to measure how far countries have gone and how they are progressing in implementing these existing policies. Even though the applied measurement framework is definitely not exhaustive and the indicators need to be re-assessed, it attempts to examine the more dynamic and participative approach to public governance at large.

Research on e-participation so far has focused mainly on practice and not that much on policy nor the administration of e-participation (or administration of democracy at large) (Capgemini 2011). There have not been many attempts to see how policy making processes are regulated in different contexts and countries, and how ICTs are integrated into these processes nor how the management and coordination of e-participation is organised. In 2010, legal and organisational frameworks of e-participation were analysed in the framework of EPACE project (lead by the Ministry of Justice of Finland) but focused only on European countries. The three different democracy administration models presented in this study could be further elaborated or modified to be implemented in other countries.

There are, however, other approaches taken. Some of the recommendations propose, for example, to assess separately political, technical and social aspects of e-participation practices (Macintosh and Whyte, 2006) focusing on:

· *Political perspective* i.e., the effect of e-engagement practices in the decision-making process and the extent to which policy is actually being affected, by whom (target group), and how (in a transparent way etc.);

· *Technical perspective* i.e., the extent to which the design of ICTs based tools contribute to the outcome, and whether the skills of the target group are taken into accounted when designing the online tools;

· *Social perspective* i.e., the circumstances that helped the target groups to realistically contribute to the implemented initiative.

Similarly, several institutions like the OECD or the World Economic Forum have added recommendations in terms of both technical and social features to be included when assessing e-participation initiatives. The OECD (2003), for example, suggests considering features like:

· *Content* i.e., the choice of style and language, its appropriateness and simplicity;

· *Format* i.e., the variety of choices to give information (e.g. videos);

· *Channel* i.e., the choice of online tools and the combination of online and offline tools to reach different target groups.

All in all, e-participation is a complex phenomenon and, therefore, difficult to measure. Yet, when assessing e-participation, it is essential to distinguish between two main steps:

1) ***Measuring e-participation readiness*** i.e., measuring the preparedness of all stakeholders for e-participation at all its stages by collecting and analysing a variety of socio-economic and technological data;

*2)* ***Evaluating e-participation initiatives and their process*** i.e., assessing the actual progress made in implementing e-participation initiatives as well as their impact.

## Measuring e-participation readiness

For step 1 – *measuring e-participation readiness*- we propose to include the following main areas:

· *Legal framework* i.e., how policy making, stakeholder integration and the use of ICTs in this process is regulated. For example (i) How is the access to public information regulated, and how are new technologies addressed in these documents? Is there a list of mandatory information that should be published online etc.? (ii) How open is the policy making process and how is it regulated (by a separate law, by good practices and/or other guidelines etc.). What is the role of different stakeholders in this process and how are ICTs integrated into this process? What kind of information should be made public during the policy making process, i.e., is there an obligation to carry out impact assessments that include, among others, the collection of target group feedback etc. Comment: both general laws, strategies and action plans as well as the ones that concern the development of information society (e-governance);

· *Organisational framework i.e.,* how e-participation is managed and how the coordination is organized. For example (i) Is there a specific body responsible for developing and maintaining e-participation issues (e.g. policies / strategies / practices)?

· *Skills* i.e., whether public officials and the public is ready to be engaged. For example, whether there have been some trainings, etc;

· *Technological features* (i) overview of the existing online tools and their main functions and characteristics, (ii) internet and mobile penetration, (iii) actions to reduce digital divide, (iv) actions to increase the ability to use ICTs for receiving information, communicating with public institutions, receiving services, being involved in policy making etc.

Given the growing importance of local government in advancing e-participation development (such as local budgeting for example), the assessment of e-participation readiness of public institutions should pay special attention to regional (sub-national)/local (municipal) levels.

For assessing step 2- e*valuating e-participation practices and their process*- we would consider the slightly modified assessment framework proposed by Fung (2006).

## Evaluating e-participation initiatives

Project design sets the basic conditions for participation. ICTs are not neutral and self-standing tools but devices that actors transform in the process of design and use (Fountain 2001). The same technology may result in different designs and applications depending on the democratic stance of those how manage it (Hacker and van Dijk 2000).

According to Fung (2006), participatory projects vary along three key dimensions: (i) participant selection, (ii) communication mechanisms, and (iii) influence on policy.[[6]](#footnote-6) There is no supreme form of e-participation that addresses all democratic problems at once. Given that each design dimension is more or less apt for addressing democracy problems such as accountability, equality and freedom, each combination of dimensions has a distinct impact on democracy.

The first design dimension, participant selection, can range from an exclusive recruitment of expert administrators and elected politicians (‘authorized delegates’) to an all-inclusive self-selection (see Figure 4). While the authorized delegates are a classical component of representative democracy, ‘professional stakeholders’ are (usually) paid representatives of organized interests and public officials that participate in exercises such as collaborative planning or environmental management. ‘Lay stakeholders’ are unpaid citizens who are willing to invest substantial time to represent and serve other citizens with similar interests, e.g. in neighbourhood association boards or school councils.

Figure 4. Participant selection mechanisms based on Fung (2006)



‘Random’ and ‘targeted’ selection mechanisms are potentially more inclusive since they reverse the traditional participation patterns along socio-economic indicators. However, it is hard to judge which of the two is more inclusive. Random selection would appear to be the most equal approach but in some projects, a targeted selection serves the purpose better. For example, when the Hansard Society held an online forum on domestic violence ‘Womenspeak’ together with members of the UK parliament, they specifically selected victims of domestic violence as participants (Smith 2009). With a random selection method, they would not have been able to reach the marginalised target group.

Finally, ‘self-selection’ can seem more inclusive since it gives an equal right of participation to all citizens who wish to engage. But if undistinguished access is offered to all, it could result in biases, i.e. a concentration of users who have more time, knowledge and resources at their disposal, which would further entrench political and digital divides (Rowe and Frewer 2000; Smith 2009; Trechsel 2007). Moreover, self-selected participation can grow to become massive and unmanageable, e.g. when the aim is problem solving.

Fung’s (2006) second dimension focuses on how participants communicate and decide upon policy. On the one extreme of this scale, participants are passive ‘spectators’ who receive information about a policy issue (see Figure 5). Moving towards a more active approach, the participants are stimulated to express, develop preferences and even change their opinions and preferences. This can happen through access to background briefings, by which they can weigh the advantages and disadvantages of different options, as well as by discussion with their peers or topical experts (Fung 2006). Advanced development of preferences moves towards deliberative ideals, comprising negotiation, clarification of persisting disagreements and discovery of new options based upon reasons, arguments and principles. A prominent example of the latter method is James Fishkin’s deliberative polling that draws participants from a random and representative sample to engage in small-group deliberations to create more informed and reflective public opinion on various policy issues (Luskin et al. 2007). The first three mechanisms do not foresee a translation of preferences into collective opinions or decisions. In the best case, public officials consider the views of participants but do not commit to incorporating their views into policy.

Figure 5. Mechanisms of communication and decision-making based on Fung (2006)



Moving towards the more intense participation mechanisms, Fung (2006) describes deliberation and negotiation as a way of discussing policy issues in order to establish both individual and collective preferences. This includes reading background materials, exchanging facts, opinions and experiences. Deliberative mechanisms often include procedures to facilitate the clarification of disagreements and the discovery of new options that better represent what is of importance to different participants. This stage is characterised by interaction between participants, which should lead to a collective choice based on reasons and arguments. Scholars of dispute resolution also call this type of process negotiation and consensus building (Fisher and Ury 1989, Susskind and Cruikshank 1989, Susskind et al. 1999 in Fung 2006).

Finally, Fung’s (2006) third dimension deals with the influence of participation on policy-making. There are five categories along this impact spectrum starting with the no-impact category of ‘personal benefits’, where participants take part for the sake of getting more knowledgeable about an issue or because of a sense of civic obligation (see Figure 6). In this category, the participant is the one affected, not the policy outcome.

Figure 6. Mechanisms of policy influence based on Fung (2006)



The project design may also predispose for another type of indirect impact on policy and policy-makers, through a so-called ‘communicative influence’. This mechanism can mobilize people for or against a policy issue, and the decision-makers may be influenced by the share mass off people involved or by their testimonies. The third mechanism is ‘advice and consultation’, whereby the officials commit to receiving input from participants (usually on a specific policy topic) but reserve the right not to use it when making the final decision. In fact, participatory initiatives hardly ever exercise direct influence on policy. When they do, they are categorised as ‘co-governing partnerships’, where citizens jointly with officials set the policy agenda and decide on policies, or ‘direct authority’, where participants control financial resources that allow them to plan or implement certain projects.

In cases of extensive state corruption and exclusion of certain groups of citizens, the ‘direct authority’ method can be particularly effective, although difficult to realize. A prominent example of direct authority is the case of participatory budgeting in Porto Allegre in Brazil. There, starting from 1989, citizens are able to make decision about significant shares of the city’s budget, in a city traditionally haunted by corruption and clientelism. By targeted recruitment of participants, the participatory budgeting has managed to involve poor groups that are normally marginalized by the political system. This has led to more support for the poorer neighbourhoods, often neglected by the previous administrations (Talpin 2011; Smith 2009; Avritzer 1999; URBAL Report 2005).

#### Sustainability

A well-recognised problem related to the design and implementation of e-participation projects is sustainability. The sustainability of e-participation initiatives in developing countries is usually characterized by 1) lack of local ownership; 2) lack of leadership; 3) unrealistic vision, strategy, or action plan; 4) weak institutional capability; 5) lack of awareness and capacity; and 6) dependence on external assistance (Heeks 2008; Kumar and Best 2006). Many e-participation initiatives in developing countries are supported by donor organizations, and it has been argued that the latter are more focussed on achieving their objectives and completing the project than on sustaining it beyond completion (Heeks 2003). In order to address the sustainability problem, it is important to design the intervention with scalability in mind. Heacock and Sasaki (2010, p. 63-64) have analysed various mobile applications for development in East Africa, and assert that at the basis of scalability is a service delivery approach with a sound financial and operating model, as well as predictable funding flows.

## Bridging organizations/actions

HERE WE PARTICULARLY NEED THE INPUT FROM THE UNDP (and WB).

In the past few years, various venues for creating ICT applications, such as ‘hackathons’[[7]](#footnote-7) and apps contests, have mushroomed. In Sub-Saharan Africa for example, Nigeria’s socially oriented [Co-Creation Hub](http://cchubnigeria.com/) has held eight hackathons over the past two years. Techies and so-called ‘civic hackers’ have traditionally dominated these venues. However, lately many voices have raised the concern that there is a divide between those who create tools and those who like to use them (The Economist 2012). The technological perspective is not sufficient to bring about sustainable social change. Collaboration with local and regional stakeholders can often make a significant difference when launching civic applications, e.g. given that most of them do not have any budget or time for audience research and marketing (Vila 2013).

The practice shows that there are different ways to help bridging between different types of technological and civic organizations, and to build sustainable communities for social innovation, for example by funding (Vila 2013; Sasaki 2012):

* Physical meeting, incubation and workspaces that enable on-going conversations in diverse groups focused on similar datasets, e.g. Nigeria’s Co-Creation hub supported by [the Indigo Trust](http://indigotrust.org.uk/2012/09/06/africas-tech-hubs/) has helped the development of apps such as [BudgIT](http://yourbudgit.com/) and [Efiko](http://www.efiko.com.ng/about.html).
* Regular event series instead of 2-3 day contests (e.g. [LISC Chicago’s efforts](http://www.knightfoundation.org/grants/201346115/) to create demand for open data with community events);
* Full-time community organizers with management skills, e.g. like in the Code For America’s [New York City brigade](http://www.meetup.com/betanyc/) that builds solutions to the city’s problems;
* The scaling up of apps and platforms (so-called ‘acceleration programmes’), e.g. such as the Code for America Accelerator, that help early stage apps grow rapidly.

In response to the bridging urge, several important events and non-profit organizations that are linking across technology and social needs have emerged recently. To cite a number of examples:

* The Open Knowledge Foundation (OKFN) organizes festivals, hackathons, and generally supports the [open data communities in many countries](http://lists.okfn.org/mailman/listinfo). They host events on topics such as participatory democracy and open development, exploring how the open data community can engage with key development challenges such as poverty, access to education and health care. They specifically aim at involving development actors into the open knowledge debate, and supporting two-way learning about making open data knowledge work for development.
* The [Sunlight Foundation](http://sunlightfoundation.com) creates tools, open data, policy recommendations, and supports hackathons and journalism initiatives. They connect thousands of software developers with local transparency activists, bloggers, on and off-line active citizens and journalists, involving them in distributed research projects, hackathons, targeted lobbying and training.
* [Tactical Tech](https://www.tacticaltech.org/) is dedicated to the use of information and data in activism, and to helping activists understand and manage their digital security and privacy. They do this by films, toolkits and guides, and by hosting trainings and events.

### Indices: their limits and how to address them

One of the reasons for the lack of coherent assessments in the field of e-participation is the complexity of evaluating the effect of ICTs on democratic governance. At the European level, there are a number of e-participation assessments, such as the Eurostat rankings and the Capgemini eGovernment Benchmarks funded by the European Commission. On the global level, the UN eParticipation index is probably the most renowned effort to assess e-participation today.[[8]](#footnote-8) However, the general quality of the data and the results of the past evaluations have been questioned by a number of experts (Bannister 2009; Heeks 2006; Janssen 2010), including by the experts involved in the development of the UN e-government survey (UNDESA 2012). The prominent UN eParticipation index only considers the supply-side of e-participation, while ignoring the uptake of government projects by citizens, and focuses exceedingly on technical aspects of e-participation (Grönlund 2011; Potnis 2010). Some previous indices, such as the e-Government study by Brown University and the ‘e-readiness’ index by the Economist Intelligence Unit, have even been discontinued.

Generally, one of the main weaknesses of the past and current e-participation assessments tends to be methodological. Methodologies are questionable in terms of chosen criteria, the selection of the set of web sites for each jurisdiction and the process of assessing them (Di Maio 2008). The OECD (2007) has criticized the indices for being simple ‘bean-counting’ exercises given that the they tend to measure above all the number of web pages, level of internet penetration and services provided, without going into more complex aspects of e-participation. Aspects that are more difficult to measure such as the national context, the political imperatives for getting involved in e-participation and the user perspective, have generally been ignored by indices (Di Maio 2008).

In the past, the rankings did not consider how many people were actually using the online services or what value they were getting from them (Di Maio 2009). Capgemini et al. (2013) has made a step in this direction by running a user satisfaction survey, also including the aspect of e-participation, as part of its eGovernment Benchmark. Capgemini et al. (2012) have also introduces new methods (still in pilot) that promise to complement the old supply-side centred approach with innovative features such as sentiment analysis, availability of social media tools for collaborative production of services and peer learning groups.

Moreover, in recent years, some new assessment efforts with a broader remit than e-participation have emerged. The [Web Index](http://thewebindex.org/) designed by the World Wide Web Foundation is an annual ranking of countries on the progress and social utility of the Web. The index combines over 80 indicators to evaluate access, affordability, institutional and policy environment and socio-economic utility of the web, including indicators on the use of the web for mobilizing citizens to influence government decision making and to hold politicians/officials accountable. Moreover, the [Open Government Partnership](http://www.opengovpartnership.org) (OGP), which aims at increasing the involvement of citizens in decision making and policy formulation, launched its first round of the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) this year. The IRM will assess government progress on the implementation front of OGP Action Plans in a number of countries. Both of the Web Index and the OGP assessment are still in their infancy and have a number of issues, e.g. the Web index is probably under-resourced for taking on so many (and diverse) indicators, and some of the questions asked could fill a whole separate index in terms of complexity; while the OGP Action Plans are created by the countries themselves, and do not necessarily contain elements of e-participation.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Finally, normatively speaking, the assessment efforts should be more open, both in terms of the research process and outputs. The revision of the EU and the UN indices methodology mostly happen in closed circles of government representatives and experts, while it ideally should be an open process where civil society and the general public should be consulted.[[10]](#footnote-10) This would be in line with the whole idea behind e-participation and with the ‘participatory evaluation’ approach advocated by UN agencies (UNICEF and IPEN 2006). Moreover, the complete set of data should be made available for researchers and the public that could make a useful contribution in validating it and building on it further (Schellong 2009).

## Conclusions

IT IS CRUCIAL TO DISCUSS THE PTICH OF THE CONCLUSIONS WITH THE EXPERTS AT UNDP AND THE WB-> WHERE SJOULD WE GO FROM HERE?

## References

Alvarez A. J. S. (2004). Challenges to Information System Implementation and Organisational Change Management: Insights from the health sector in Ecuador. The Electronic Journal on Information Systems in Developing Countries 16(6): 1-16.

Åström J., Karlsson M., Linde J. and Pirannejad A. (2012). Understanding the rise of e-participation in non-democracies: Domestic and international factors. Government Information Quarterly 29 (2012) 142–150.

Åström J. and Granberg M. (2007). Urban planners, wired for change? Understanding elite support for e-participation. Journal of Information Technology and Politics, 4(2), 63–77.

Arnstein S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. Journal of the American Institute of Planners 35(4), 216–224 (1969).

Bonfadelli, H. (1999). Medienwirkungsforschung I: Grundlagen und theoretische Perspektiven; Konstanz: UVK Medien Verlag.

Bussell J. (2011). Explaining cross-national variation in government adoption of new technologies. International Studies Quarterly, 55, 267–280.

Bychawski A. (2012). Apps: the Afro revolution - Five mobile apps that are putting key information into the hands of ordinary Africans. The Observer. Sunday 26 August 2012. Accessed on 12 August 2013 at:<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/aug/26/african-mobile-apps-budgit-medafrica?INTCMP=SRCH>

Capgemini, IDC, Sogeti, IS-practice and Indigov, RAND Europe and the Danish Technological Institute (2012). eGovernment Benchmark Framework 2012-2015. Method Paper prepared for the European Commission DG Communications Networks, Content & Technology.

Capgemini, IDC, Sogeti, IS-practice and Indigov, RAND Europe and the Danish Technological Institute (2013). Public Services Online ‘Digital by Default or by Detour?’ Assessing User Centric eGovernment performance in Europe – eGovernment Benchmark 2012. A study prepared for the European Commission DG Communications Networks, Content & Technology.

Chadwick, A. (2006). Internet Politics: States, Citizens, and New Communication Technologies. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Codagnone and Wimmer (2007). -> reference to be completed

Coleman S. and Norris D. (2005). A new agenda for e-democracy. Forum discussion paper no. 4. Oxford: Oxford Internet Institute.

Cukier, K. N. and V. Mayer-Schoenberger (2013). The rise of big data. Foreign Policy.

Dahlberg L. (2007). Rethinking the fragmentation of the cyberpublic: From consensus to contestation. New Media and Society, 9(5), 827–847.

Di Maio A. (2008). [Aiming at e-government surveys](http://blogs.gartner.com/andrea_dimaio/2008/09/14/aiming-at-e-government-surveys/). Blog entry dated September 14, 2008. Gartner, Inc. Accessed on 23 August 2013 at: <http://blogs.gartner.com/andrea_dimaio/2008/09/14/aiming-at-e-government-surveys/>

Di Maio A. (2009). [All The World Is The Same When It Comes To Government 2.0… Or Not?](http://blogs.gartner.com/andrea_dimaio/2009/10/04/all-the-world-is-the-same-when-it-comes-to-government-2-0-or-not/) Blog entry dated October 4, 2009. Gartner, Inc. Accessed on 23 August 2013 at: <http://blogs.gartner.com/andrea_dimaio/2009/10/04/all-the-world-is-the-same-when-it-comes-to-government-2-0-or-not/>

Donner J. (2008). Research Approaches to Mobile Use in the Developing World: A Review of the Literature. The Information Society: An International Journal, 24:3, 140-159.

The Economist (2013). Geeks for good. Article dated 27 june 2012. Accessed on 13 August 2013 at: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/feastandfamine/2012/06/technology-and-development>

Ehimuan J.[[11]](#footnote-11) (2012). From farming to films: how the web is changing Africa. [The Observer](http://observer.guardian.co.uk), 26 August 2012. Accessed on 19 August 2013 at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/aug/26/new-technology-farming-films-africa>

Farrell H. (2012). The Consequences of the Internet for Politics. Annual Review of Political Science. 2012. 15:35–52.

Freschi A. C., Medaglia R., and Nørbjerg J. (2009). A tale of six countries: eParticipation research from an administration and political perspective. In A. Macintosh, and E. Tambouris (Eds.), Proceedings of 1st international conference on electronic participation, ePart 2009 (pp. 36–45). Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag LNCS 5694.

Garzia, D., Trechsel, A. H., Vassil, K. and Dinas E. (2013.) “Indirect Campaigning – Past, Present and Future of Voting Advice Applications” in Grofman, B., Trechsel A. H. and Franklin M. (eds.), The Internet and Democracy in Global Perspective: Voters, Candidates, Parties, and Social Movements. New York: Springer (forthcoming).

Gasser, U. and Trechsel, A. H. (2013). “Casting Votes over the Internet: What Switzerland Might Teach Us About the Future of Elections”, Harvard International Review, Spring 2013.

Grofman, B., Trechsel A. H. and Franklin M., eds. (2013), The Internet and Democracy in Global Perspective: Voters, Candidates, Parties, and Social Movements. New York: Springer (forthcoming).

Grönlund Å. (2010). Using ICT to combat corruption. Published in the edition ‘Increasing transparency and fighting corruption through ICT empowering people and communities’. The Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (SPIDER) ICT4D Series No. 3, 2010. Stockholm University. Accessed on 6 August 15, 2013 at: [www.spidercenter.org/publications](http://www.spidercenter.org/publications)

Hansen, H. S., & Reinau, K. H. (2006). The citizens in e-participation. Lecture Notes in Computer Science, 4084, 70–82.

Heacock and Sasaki (2010). ICT4 Transparency in Sub-Saharan Africa. Published in the edition ‘Increasing transparency and fighting corruption through ICT empowering people and communities’. The Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (SPIDER) ICT4D Series No. 3, 2010. Stockholm University. Accessed on 6 August 15, 2013 at: [www.spidercenter.org/publications](http://www.spidercenter.org/publications)

Hedström K. and Grönlund Å. (2008). The Quest for Development – Reviewing ICT4D Research. GlobDev 2008. Paper 24. At: http://aisel.aisnet.org/globdev2008/24

Helbig N., Gil-Garcìa J. R., and Ferro E. (2009). Understanding the complexity of electronic government: Implications from the digital divide literature. Government Information Quarterly, 26(1), 89–97.

Hellström J. (2010). Mobile Technology as a means to fight corruption in East Africa. Published in the edition ‘Increasing transparency and fighting corruption through ICT empowering people and communities’. The Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (SPIDER) ICT4D Series No. 3, 2010. Stockholm University. Accessed on 6 August 15, 2013 at: [www.spidercenter.org/publications](http://www.spidercenter.org/publications)

Huerta E. and Sandoval-Almazán R. (2007). Digital literacy: Problems faced by telecenter users in Mexico. Information Technology for Development 13(3): 217-232.

Inglehart R. and Welzel C. (2005). Modernization, cultural change and democracy. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jaeger P. T. and Thompson K. M. (2003). e-Government around the world: lessons, challenges, and future directions. Government Information Quarterly, 20, 389–394.

Jiang M. and Xu H. (2009). Exploring online structures on Chinese government portals: Citizen political participation and government legitimation. Social Science Computer Review, 27(2), 174–195.

Johnson E. and Kolko B. (2010). e-Government and transparency in authoritarian regimes: Comparison of national- and city-level e-government web sites in Central Asia. Digital Icons: Studies in Russian, Eurasian and Central European New Media, 2010(3), 15–48.

Katchanovski I. and La Porte T. (2005). Cyberdemocracy or Potemkin e-villages? Electronic governments in OECD and post-communist countries. International Journal of Public Administration, 28(7), 665–681.

Kies, R., ed. (2013). Is Europe listening to us? London: Ashgate.

Kies, R. (2010). Promises and Limits of Web-deliberation. London: Palgrave.

Lipset, S. M. (1959). Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy. American Political Science Review, 53, 69–105.

Longe O., Ngwa O., Wada F. and Mbarika V. (2009). Criminal Uses of Information & Communication Technologies in Sub-Saharan Africa: Trends, Concerns and Perspectives. Journal of Information Technology Impact. Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 155-172, 2009.

Luskin R. C., Crow D. B., Fishkin J. S., Guild W. and Thomas D. (2007). Report on the Deliberative Poll on “Vermont’s Energy Future”. Center for Deliberative Opinion Research University of Texas at Austin.

Macintosh A., Coleman S., and Schneeberger A. (2009). eParticipation: The research gaps. In A. Macintosh, & E. Tambouris (Eds.), Electronic participation: Proceedings of first international conference, ePart 2009 (pp. 1–11). Germany: Springer-Verlag LNCS 5694, ISSN 0302-9743.

Mahfuz A. (2011).  [Some Perspectives of Information Communication Technology (ICT) Projects toward Addressing the Challenges of Corruption-transparency-accountability at Public Sector.](http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un-dpadm/unpan047434.pdf) Paper presented at the UNPAN Workshop on Engaging Citizens to Strengthen Accountability and Prevent Corruption, Oct 26-27, 2011. Paper accessed on 19 August 2013 at: <http://www.unpan.org/2011WKS-Marrakesh>

McKemey K., Scott N., Souter D., Afullo T., Kibombo R. and Sakyi-Dawson O. (2003). Innovative demand models for telecommunications services: Final technical report. Gamos Ltd.

Medaglia R. (2007). The challenged identity of a field: The state of the art of eParticipation research. Information Polity, 12, 169–181.

Medaglia R. (2012a). eParticipation research: Moving characterization forward (2006–2011). Government Information Quarterly 29 (2012) 346–360.

Medaglia R. (2012b). Engaged scholarship in research on information technology in government: Stuck in the ivory tower? Information. Communication & Society, 15(2), 246–259.

Meijer A., Burger N., and Ebbers W. (2009). Citizens4citizens: Mapping participatory practices on the internet. Electronic Journal of e-Government, 7(1), 99–112.

Milner HV. (2006). The digital divide: the role of political institutions in technology diffusion. Comp. Polit. Stud. 39:176–99.

Norris, P. (2001). Digital divide: Civic engagement, information poverty and the internet worldwide. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

OECD (2007). Measuring and Evaluating E-Government in Arab Countries. Report from the High Level Seminar on Measuring and Evaluating E-Government and 3rd Meeting of Working Group 2 on E-Government and Administrative Simplification (Dubai, 12-13 March 2007).

Östling A. (2012). Parliamentary informatics projects – who are their users and what is their impact?. eJournal of eDemocracy and Open Government (JeDEM).Vol 4, No 2 (2012).

Parkinson and Mansbridge (2012) -> reference to be completed

Potnis D. d (2010). Measuring e-Governance as an innovation in the public sector. Government Information Quarterly 27 (2010) 41–48.

Ribeiro, S. (2013). Democracy after the Internet: Brazil between Facts, Norms, and Code. PhD-thesis defended in the Law Department of the European University Institute.

Ritter, Daniel P. and Alexander H. Trechsel, 2013. “Revolutionary Cells: On the Role of Texts, Tweets, and Status Updates in Nonviolent Revolutions” in Grofman, B., Trechsel, A. H. and Franklin M. (eds.). The Internet and Democracy in Global Perspective: Voters, Candidates, Parties, and Social Movements. New York: Springer (forthcoming).

Rogers, E. (1995). Diffusion of Innovations. New York: Free Press.

Rumel M. (2004). Can information and communication technology help reduce corruption? How so and why not: Two case studies from South Asia. Perspectives on Global Development and Technology, 3(3): 347-373.

Rudra, N. (2005). Globalization and the strengthening of democracy in the developing world. American Journal of Political Science, 49(4), 704–730.

Sasaki D. (2012). On Hackathons and Solutionism. Blog post. December 11, 2012. Accessed on 16 August 15, 2013 at: <http://davidsasaki.name/2012/12/on-hackathons-and-solutionism>

Schellong A. (2009). Blog entry dated May 14, 2009. Complexity and Social Networks Blog of the [Institute for Quantitative Social Science](http://iq.harvard.edu) and the [Program on Networked Governance](http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/netgov) at [Harvard University. Accessed on 16 August 19, 2013 at:](http://www.harvard.edu) <http://blogs.iq.harvard.edu/netgov/2009/05/one_rank_rule_benchmarking_egovernment_eu_un_brown_government20.html>

Schumpeter, J. (1947). Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy. New York: Harper.

Silver, N. (2013). -> reference to be completed

Smith G. (2009). Democratic Innovations- Designing institutions for citizen participation. Cambridge University Press.

Strand C. (2010). Introduction to the edition ‘Increasing transparency and fighting corruption through ICT empowering people and communities’. The Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (SPIDER) ICT4D Series No. 3, 2010. Stockholm University. Accessed on 6 August 15, 2013 at: [www.spidercenter.org/publications](http://www.spidercenter.org/publications)

Sunstein C. R. (2002). The Law of Group Polarization. Journal of Political Philosophy, Vol. 10, No. 2. (2002), pp. 175-195.175.

Susha I., Grönlund Å. (2012). eParticipation research: Systematizing the field. Government Information Quarterly 29 (2012) 373–382.

Talpin, J. (2011).

Trechsel, A. H. & Mair P. (2011). „When parties (also) position themselves – an introduction to the EU Profiler”, Journal of Information Technology and Politics. 8(1), pp. 1-20.

Trechsel, A. H. (2007). “Inclusiveness of Old and New Forms of Citizens’ Electoral Participation”, Representation. 43(2), pp. 111-121.

Trechsel A. H., Kies R., Mendez F., Schmitter P. (2003). Evaluation of the use of new technologies in order to facilitate democracy in Europe. European Parliament, DG Research, STOA working paper, (116 EN, 10, 2003).

UNDESA (2012). United Nations E-Government Survey: Towards a More Citizen-Centric Approach. Report of the Expert Group Meeting (ST/ESA/PAD/SER/167).

UNICEF and IPEN (2006). Evaluation Working Paper, issue #5: New Trends in Development Evaluation. UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional Office and the International Program Evaluation Network (IPEN).

Van de Ven A. H. (2007). Engaged scholarship: A guide for organizational and social research. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vedel T. (2006). The idea of electronic democracy: Origins, visions and questions. Parliamentary Affairs, 59(2), 226–235.

Vila S. (2013). The Permanent Hackathon. techPresident. Personal Democracy Media. Accessed on 10 August 2013 at: http://techpresident.com/news/wegov/24232/permanent-hackathon

Wright S. (2006). Electrifying democracy? 10 years of policy and practice. Parliamentary Affairs, 59(2), 236–249.

Zittel T. (2004a). Political Communication and Electronic Democracy: American Exceptionalism or Global Trend? pp. 231-250 in Frank Esser and Barbara Pfetsch (eds.) «Comparing Political Communication. Theories, Cases, and Challenges». Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zittel T. (2004b). Digital parliaments and electronic democracy. pp. 70-95 in Gibson R. K., Roemmele A. and Ward S. J. “Electronic democracy: mobilisation, organisation and participation via new ICT“, Routledge.

Zuckerman E. (2004). Making Room for the Third World in the Second Superpower. Article retrieved on 15 August 2013 at:<http://gapdev.law.harvard.edu/sstw.html>

Zuckerman E. (2009). *A Response to “A Dialogue on ICTs, Human Development, Growth and Poverty Reduction”.* Blogpost dated 18 September 2009. [Retrieved on 20 August 2013 at: http://publius.cc/response\_dialogue\_icts\_human\_development\_growth\_and\_poverty\_reduc­tion/0917\_0](http://publius.cc/response_dialogue_icts_human_development_growth_and_poverty_reduction/0917_0)

1. The hype cycle was coined by Gartner (a research house based in the U.S.) that is tracking the development and adoption of new technologies by plotting them on the Hype Cycle, updated yearly. The hype cycle is often applied to describe the adoption of new media forms by society (Fenn and Raskino 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. CSOs are here defined as a set of institutions through which society organises and represents itself autonomously from the state (Gramsci 1971). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Although the UN e-participation index has a number of caveats (see our section on indices below), its results give us a general overview of the development of e-participation over time and across countries. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This is termed as falling prey to ‘rational ignorance’ in public choice theory (Downs 1957). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. BudgIT to stimulate citizens’ interests around public data and trigger discussions towards better governance. Source:<http://yourbudgit.com/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Only a selection of Fung’s (2006) mechanisms, are outlined here for reasons of space and adequacy to the scope of the report. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A [hackathon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hackathon) usually draws together programmers and designers who collaborate to create new apps over a few days of frenzied coding, sometimes to win a prize (Vila 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The Networked Readiness Index by the World Economic Forum (WEF) also has an indicator on e-participation (‘10.04 E-Participation Index’) but, judging from the sources, it is based on the eParticipation index of the UN E-Government Survey. Source accessed on 22 August 2013 at: <http://www.weforum.org/issues/global-information-technology/gitr-platform> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Disclosure: one of the authors of this report, Alina Ostling, is involved as researcher in both the OGP and the Web Index. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. For example, the work on the EU’s eGovernment Benchmark for 2012-2015 was restricted to Member States, European Commission officials, and one expert recommended by each Member State (Capgemini et al. 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Juliet Ehimuan is Google Nigeria country manager. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)