IDEATION CENTER INSIGHT

Unleashing the power of government transformation

The Ministry of the Future

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Middle East governments need to prepare themselves to achieve quickly and effectively the national goals they have adopted to address the region's economic, social, and technological challenges. They need to make themselves "fit for transformation."

Fit-for-transformation government is digitally powered, evidence-based, and results-oriented. Its operations are collaborative and participatory. Its focus is customer-centric and holistic. It moves in an agile and dynamic manner. It innovates and uses leading-edge technologies to anticipate and deliver services.

To ensure that each of its component agencies supports a fit-for-transformation government, leaders should adopt an ambitious new vision that we call the Ministry of the Future. The Ministry of the Future operates as an invisible platform that delivers proactive and seamless whole-of-life service. It achieves this using a particular set of capabilities, including delivery accelerators, collective and experimental governance, alternative funding and pricing models, smart anticipatory regulations, integrated and collaborative procurement, and accountability capabilities that are, in turn, enabled by human capital, data, systems, tools, and processes.

THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMATION

Middle East governments have ambitious plans to transform their countries in the face of economic, social, and technological challenges. This task has been made more urgent and difficult by the COVID-19 pandemic. The difficulty is that many of the ministries and agencies responsible for envisioning and guiding transformation are hampered by their own roles, operating models, capabilities, and governance structures. If these ministries and agencies are to play a leading role in national transformation, they will have to first transform themselves.

The challenges for Middle East governments are substantial.[1] They include changes in the region's social fabric, mounting economic competition, technological advances, rising barriers to global trade, and budgetary pressures.

In this environment, there is an urgent need for purpose-driven ministries and agencies that are fully accountable for delivering high-impact services. Too often, however, government itself becomes an obstacle to the achievement of national transformation. The sheer bulk of the region's governments, attributable mainly to public-sector employment acting as a social safety net and weak private-sector and economic integration, reduces governmental efficiency, effectiveness, and decision-making ability.[2] The over-involvement of government in operations and service delivery prevents private-sector engagement and expansion, hinders innovation, and creates negative competition. Moreover, few governments to date have fully taken advantage of the power of technology to lower the barriers to decision making, policy formulation, and performance evaluation.

> " Many of the ministries and agencies responsible for envisioning and guiding transformation are hampered by their own roles, operating models, capabilities, and governance structures.

THE FEATURES OF FIT-FOR-TRANSFORMATION GOVERNMENT

Before they can transform their countries, governments need to become fit-for-transformation in seven ways. They must become:
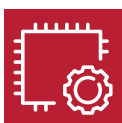
DIGITALLY POWERED
Relying on advanced and emerging technologies to enable solutions and conduct operations

ANTICIPATORY AND PROACTIVE
Utilizing horizon scanning, foresight, scenario analysis, and best practices to address emerging and potential challenges and opportunities

CUSTOMER-CENTRIC AND HOLISTIC
Adopting a customer-focused, whole-of-life approach to service delivery

COLLABORATIVE AND PARTICIPATORY
Taking advantage of the collective resources, capacities, and expertise of the public sector, private sector, and citizens in order to design, deliver, and assess solutions

AGILE AND DYNAMIC
Employing lean and flexible organizational structures staffed with fluid, cross-functional, and accountable teams

INNOVATIVE AND RESILIENT
Ideating, prototyping, piloting, and delivering creative and future-proof solutions that make government resilient
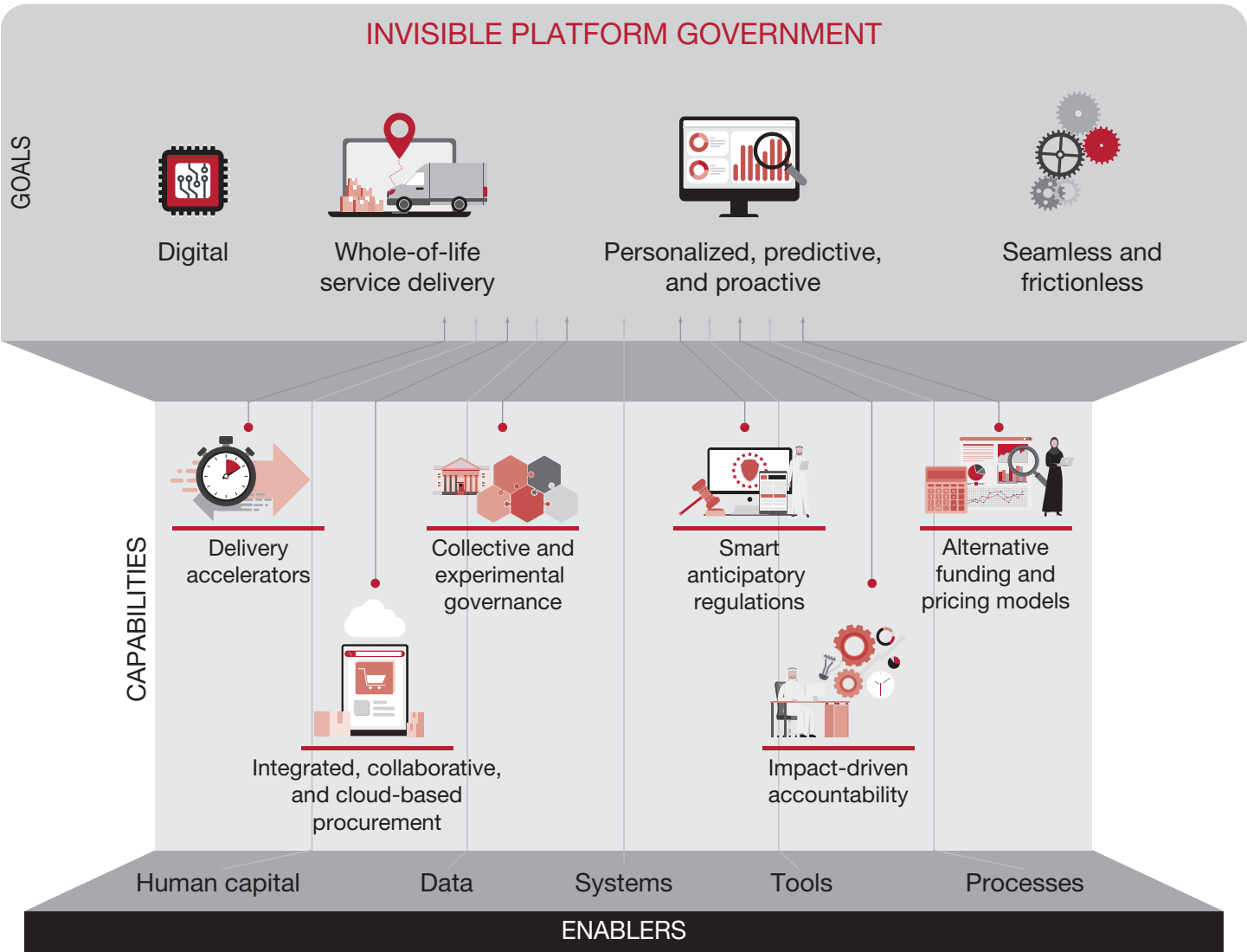
EVIDENCE-BASED AND RESULTS-ORIENTED
Using targets and indicators to set, monitor, and evaluate clearly defined objectives, impacts, and outcomes

Leaders can embed these features in the Ministry of the Future, and throughout all government agencies, by using an integrated design framework (*see Exhibit 1*). This framework defines a new platform for government that can deliver innovative solutions, offer elevated levels of service, and drive national transformation. It specifies the delivery, governance, funding, regulatory, and procurement capabilities needed to operate the platform. It also describes the enablers—the human capital, data, systems, tools, and processes—essential to putting these capabilities to work. It is an actionable blueprint for building the Ministry of the Future.

EXHIBIT 1
A design framework for the Ministry of the Future

INVISIBLE PLATFORM GOVERNMENT

GOALS

Digital

Whole-of-life
service delivery

Personalized, predictive,
and proactive

Seamless and
frictionless

CAPABILITIES

Delivery
accelerators

Collective and
experimental
governance

Smart
anticipatory
regulations

Alternative
funding and
pricing models

Integrated, collaborative,
and cloud-based
procurement

Impact-driven
accountability

Human capital   Data   Systems   Tools   Processes

ENABLERS

Source: Strategy&

A PLATFORM FOR INVISIBLE GOVERNMENT

Creating the Ministry of the Future starts with a platform that ensures people and businesses receive and benefit from services for which they are eligible in a unified manner and without undue interaction. The government becomes metaphorically "invisible," an unprompted helper (*see Exhibit 2*).[3]

- **Conversational artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual concierges** improve the delivery of government services by expanding customer access and reducing costs. AI-powered technologies, such as voice computing, provide faster access to service and empower constituents. They also release government workers for higher-level duties and reduce the cost of executing rote tasks. The Finnish government launched a virtual agent network that connects its constituents to the virtual agents of three agencies in a single chat window: the Immigration Service, Patent and Registration Office, and Tax Administration.[4]

- **Whole-of-life service delivery** ensures that citizens and businesses can obtain government services as needed, without having to jump through hoops. This requires that ministries and agencies work together to create integrated delivery channels. These channels use predictive analytics to determine the needs of citizens based on events such as having a child, entering school, joining the workforce, and retiring; and the needs of businesses based on milestones such as registration and licensing, startup of operations, and expansion. For example, Singapore's LifeSG app is a digital gateway to more than 40 government e-services. It was initially created to ease the transition to parenthood for citizens by offering a portal to services that included registering newborns, applying for the country's baby bonus, managing immunizations, locating preschools, and offering parenting advice.[5] In 2020, the app was rebranded and expanded to include career and retirement services.[6]

- **A unique e-identity**, enabled by technologies such as blockchain and biometrics, provides easy access to government services, while protecting privacy and security. Once established, e-identities streamline delivery by eliminating the need to share personal information in order to access a wide range of services. They also facilitate the delivery of tailored content, personalized guidance and advice, and behavioral nudges. Estonia was the first country to create digital identities for its citizens, enabling the online delivery of 99 percent of government services.[7] The result: a reduction in service delivery costs equivalent to 2 percent of GDP annually.[8]

EXHIBIT 2

Three hallmarks of service delivery in the Ministry of the Future
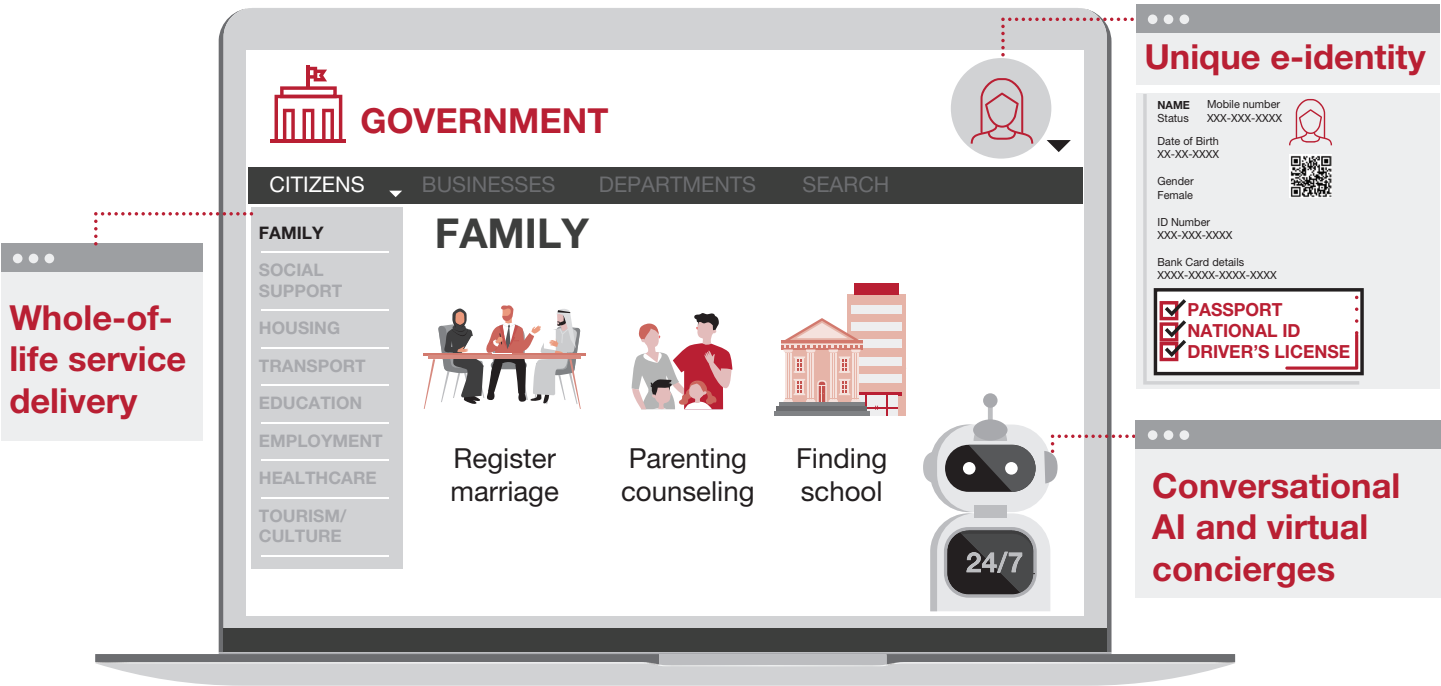
Note: AI = artificial intelligence.
Source: Strategy& Source: Strategy&

To create the invisible platform of the Ministry of the Future, governments must build a new set of capabilities, which include delivery accelerators; collective and experimental governance; alternative funding and pricing models; smart anticipatory regulations; integrated, collaborative, and cloud-based procurement; and impact-driven accountability.
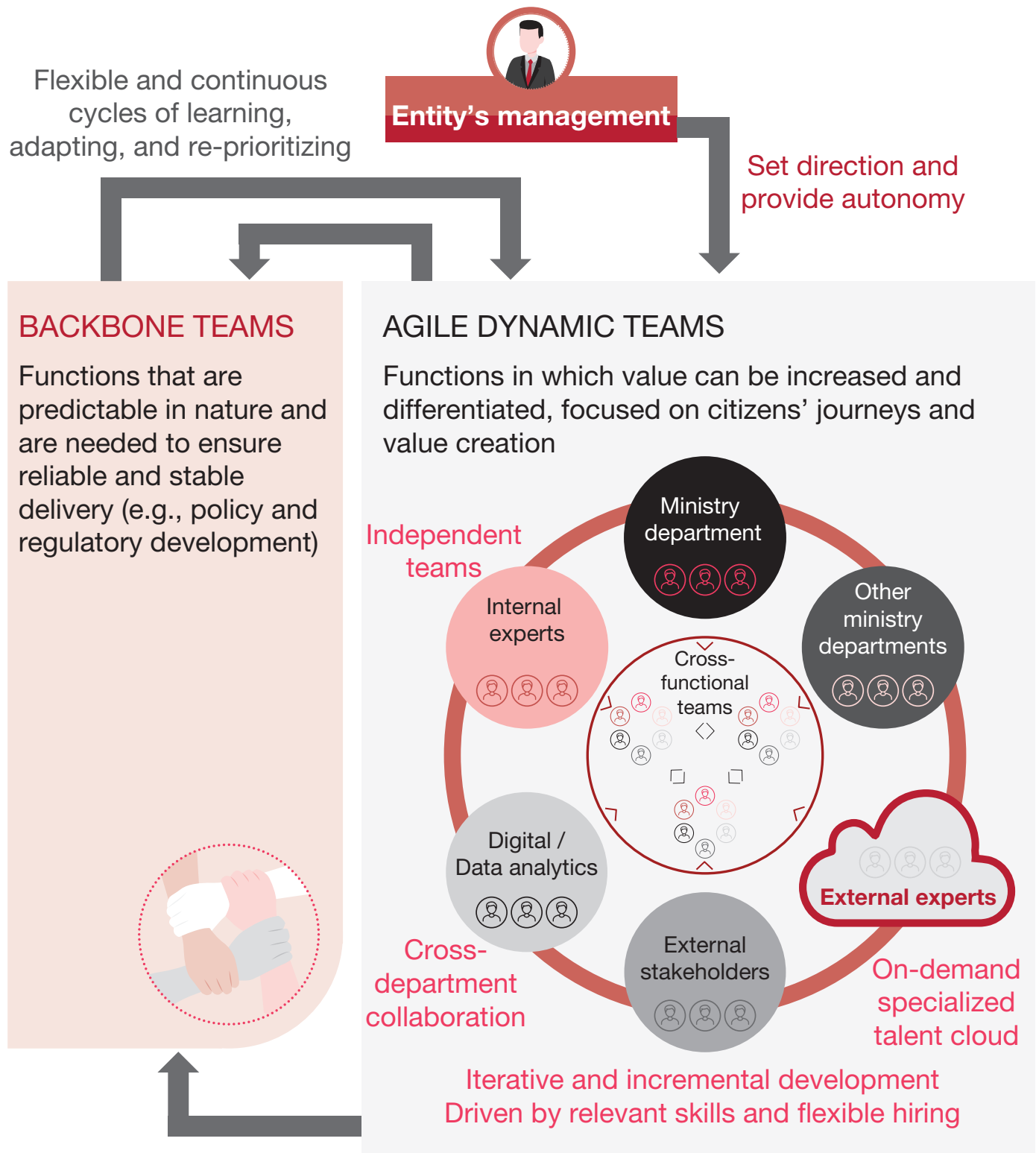
Delivery accelerators

The Ministry of the Future is agile and entrepreneurial. It eliminates silos that obstruct efficiency, innovation, and responsiveness and replaces them with the horizontal and vertical collaboration needed to bolster productivity and provide fast service delivery.

- **Flatter, leaner organizational structures** consolidate functions, offer wider spans of control, and require fewer layers of management. Instead of static departments organized according to functions, they support dynamic matrices that are structured around customer needs and staffed with fluid, cross-functional teams. These structures are supported by "backbone" technologies and functions that ensure reliable and stable delivery. They also house innovation labs: The Dubai Police used such a lab to ideate, design, and prototype new security and policing services that incorporate AI and Natural Language technologies.[9]

- **"Sprint projects"** allow ministries and agencies to design and deliver new services quickly (*see Exhibit 3*). They employ the principles of design and systems thinking and iterative cycles of testing and learning.[10] Decentralized project teams that enjoy considerable autonomy conduct the work. In the past six years, the United States Digital Service has applied these methods in 166 successful projects. One resulted in a cloud-based system for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that reduced the time required to develop and implement new software functionality by 75 percent.[11]

- **"One-Team" government** is a dynamic approach to talent management that mobilizes people more effectively. It uses a talent cloud, a digital marketplace for talent inside the government, to provide access to human capital in the public and private sectors as needed on a project basis. In 2017, the Canadian government launched a talent cloud that enabled remote work, increased access to a diverse range of skills, and bolstered employee satisfaction. More recently, it created the OneTeamGov virtual community, which invites "connectors, builders, change-makers, innovators, and collaborators" from across the country to come together to address public service reform.[12]

EXHIBIT 3
The Ministry of the Future uses sprint projects to bolster outcomes and speed delivery

Flexible and continuous cycles of learning, adapting, and re-prioritizing

Entity's management

Set direction and provide autonomy

BACKBONE TEAMS

Functions that are predictable in nature and are needed to ensure reliable and stable delivery (e.g., policy and regulatory development)

AGILE DYNAMIC TEAMS

Functions in which value can be increased and differentiated, focused on citizens' journeys and value creation

Independent teams

Internal experts

Ministry department

Other ministry departments

Cross-functional teams

Digital / Data analytics

External stakeholders

External experts

Cross-department collaboration

On-demand specialized talent cloud

Iterative and incremental development
Driven by relevant skills and flexible hiring

Source: Strategy&

Collective and experimental governance

Collective and experimental governance models invite citizens, businesses, and members of academia to participate in the design of policy, products, and services. These engagement models help ministries and agencies bolster accountability and improve service delivery (*see Exhibit 4*).
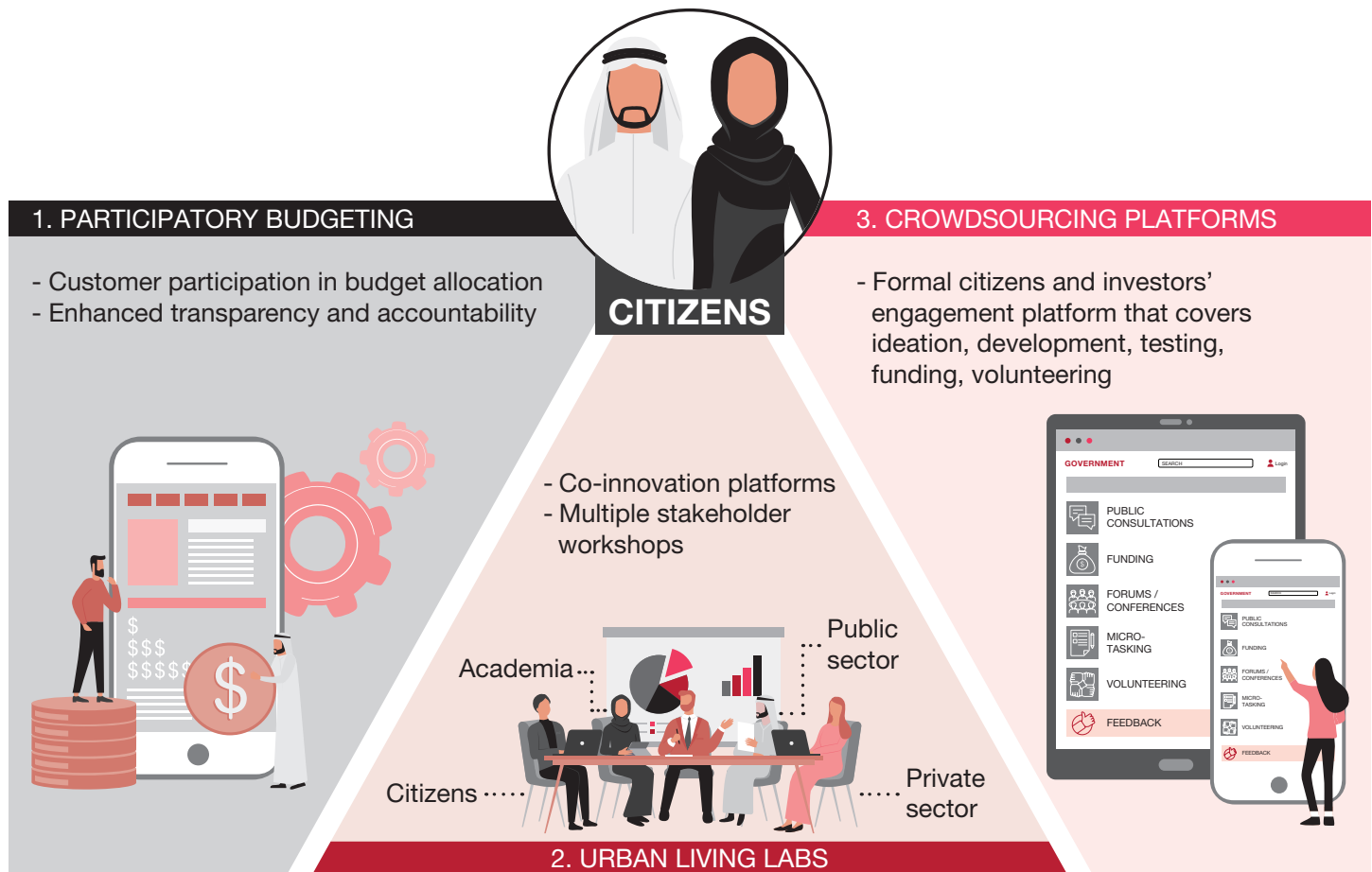
- **Participatory budgeting** invites external stakeholders into selected internal allocation processes. It gives them a voice in prioritizing public funding and projects, thereby enhancing transparency and trust in government. In Scotland, the government allows its constituents to direct 1 percent of their local authority budgets through its Community Choices Fund.[13] Boston's government invited the city's young people to decide how to spend US$1 million of its capital budget.[14]

- **Urban living labs** stimulate innovation by inviting multiple stakeholders from the public sector, citizenry, private sector, and academia to jointly design and test government solutions. In developing its Six City Strategy Framework, Finland created urban living labs that attracted nearly 2,400 companies and led to more than 800 new products and services.[15] In addition to these labs, governments are using citizens' assemblies or citizens' juries to bolster engagement and address changes in national strategy, institutional frameworks, and constitutional issues.[16]

- **Crowdsourcing platforms** are valuable sources of data, ideas, feedback, and funding. For example, South Korea uses a digital platform to collect citizen petitions and proposals, and to host broad-based policy discussions.[17] Competition platforms add financial incentives to encourage citizens and businesses to pitch ideas to the government. The Innovative Solutions Canada program offers small businesses an opportunity to compete for government grants and procurement contracts aimed at solving specific problems. It also offers a streamlined pathway for commercialization by lowering testing and development hurdles. There are currently 20 federal departments and agencies participating in the program.[18]

> " Competition platforms add financial incentives to encourage citizens and businesses to pitch ideas to the government.

EXHIBIT 4

Collective and experimental governance models enhance constituent participation, trust, and responsibility

CITIZENS

1. PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

- Customer participation in budget allocation
- Enhanced transparency and accountability

3. CROWDSOURCING PLATFORMS

- Formal citizens and investors' engagement platform that covers ideation, development, testing, funding, volunteering

- Co-innovation platforms
- Multiple stakeholder workshops

Academia

Public sector

Citizens

Private sector

2. URBAN LIVING LABS

GOVERNMENT · SEARCH · Login

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS
FUNDING
FORUMS / CONFERENCES
MICRO-TASKING
VOLUNTEERING
FEEDBACK

Source: Strategy&

Alternative funding and pricing models

In the Middle East, traditional public funding models place mounting pressure on government budgets, liquidity, and debt levels. One result: The total value of planned and unawarded projects in the GCC was estimated at $2 trillion in 2020.[19] To fund projects, minimize budget deficits, and enhance risk mitigation measures, the Ministry of the Future will seek out alternative forms of financing and pricing (*see Exhibit 5*).

- **Blended finance** brings public and private funding together to create greater financial leverage when scaling up development projects. The Sustainable Development Investment Partnership, a global platform of 42 public, private, and philanthropic institutions that is using blended finance to achieve sustainable development goals, has attracted $100 billion in private financing in five years.[20] Blended financing agreements also offer flexible structures. In Thailand, for instance, the government developed a solar photovoltaic power plant and supported a first-mover company, the Solar Power Company Group, with a blended finance agreement. This financing included an $8 million loan from the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation and $4 million in concessional financing from the Clean Technology Fund, a multi-donor facility within the Climate Investment Funds.[21]

- **"Pay-for-success"** impact funding uses performance-based contracts and social impact bonds (SIBs) to finance programs.[22] New York State used an SIB to finance a jobs program for former prisoners reentering society. It reduced return-to-prison rates by 9 to 12 percent, saving taxpayers about $20,440 annually for each person who did not go back to jail.[23]

- **Dynamic pricing models** use real-time data and machine learning to set and adjust prices more accurately in order to encourage desired behaviors and generate revenue. In Stockholm, the municipal government used dynamic pricing for roadways and parking to generate $155 million in annual revenue starting in 2016, more than triple the $51 million collected annually using fixed pricing.[24]

EXHIBIT 5

Alternative funding and pricing models can help ease the financial pressure on the Ministry of the Future

1 BLENDED FINANCE

- Joins financing for projects with social development objectives
- Boosts sustainability, skill sets, quality, and innovation

Government → Project X ← Private sector
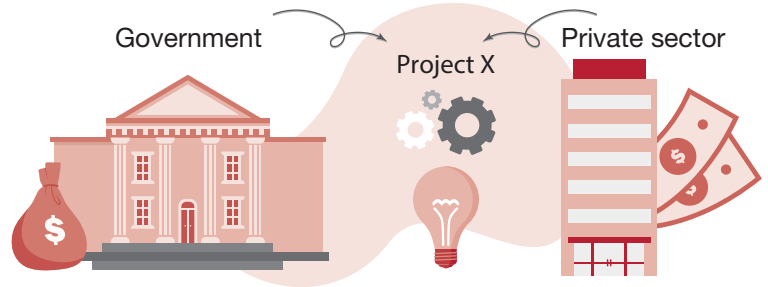
2 "PAY-FOR-SUCCESS"

- Rewards are based on conditional achievement of predetermined social outcomes

Government

Initial capital

Additional capital if targets are met

Private sector
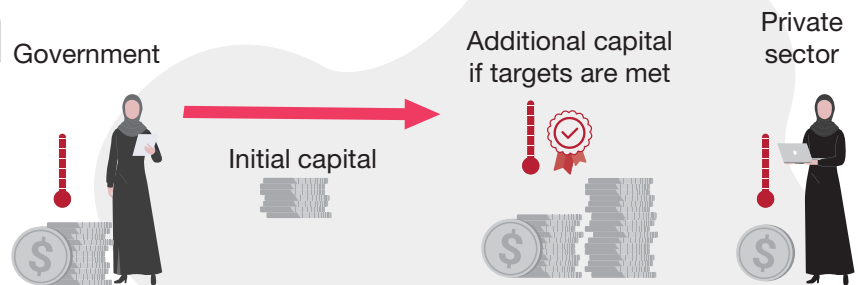
3 DYNAMIC PRICING MODELS

- Adjusts prices in real time to reflect capacity, supply, and demand
- Optimizes and regulates pricing accordingly

Real time

Source: Strategy&
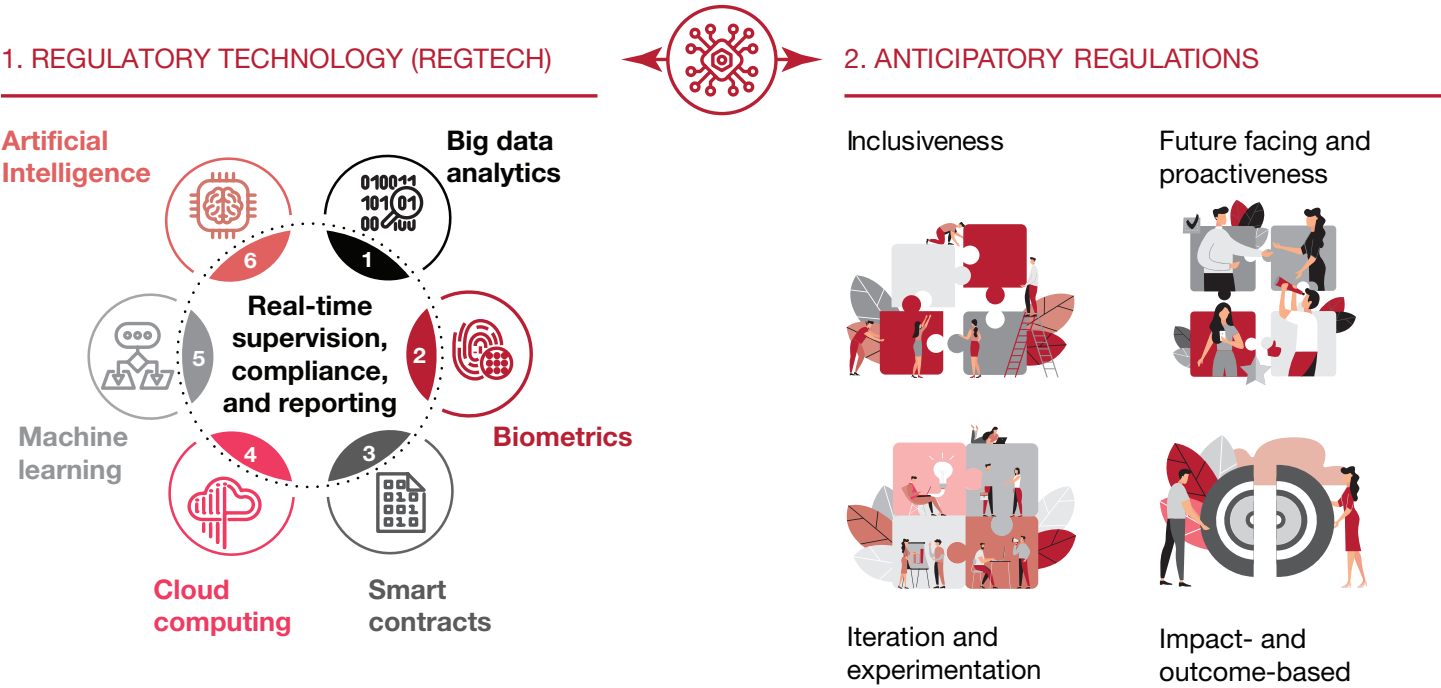
Smart anticipatory regulations

Traditional regulatory approaches are not well suited to the accelerating pace of innovation and technological advancements. Too often, regulations are inflexible, pose administrative burdens, and hamper experimentation and innovation. The Ministry of the Future, in contrast, takes a holistic approach to regulation (*see Exhibit 6*).

- **Regulatory technology (RegTech)** utilizes the power of AI, big data, biometrics, and smart contracts to enable government entities to quickly analyze vast amounts of data, gain insights and oversee marketplace behavior, assess compliance, and report in real time. Its use results in lower compliance costs, enhanced governance, and increased productivity. For instance, the Australian government has been converting its regulations into machine-readable content and publishing them on an open platform ("regulation as a platform"). In doing so, it expects to automate and simplify processes, help businesses easily and quickly identify their regulatory obligations, and support compliance-related decision making and activities.[25]

- **Anticipatory regulations** include a set of tools for identifying emerging regulatory needs, and composing and testing new regulations that are inclusive, proactive, iterative, and outcome-based rather than process-oriented. These tools enable the codesign of regulations. The City of Toronto, for example, partnered with the MaRS Solutions Lab on the Sharing Economy Public Design to rethink its regulatory landscape from a constituent-centric perspective.[26] The tools also include horizon scanning and scenario planning techniques that can help stress-test regulatory alternatives: The European Commission has developed the Scenario Exploration System, a foresight gaming system, to explore alternative scenarios and future paths in various policy areas and to prototype and test regulations prior to deployment.[27]

> " The Ministry of the Future takes a holistic approach to regulation.

EXHIBIT 6
Smart anticipatory regulations help the Ministry of the Future keep pace with innovation

1. REGULATORY TECHNOLOGY (REGTECH)

Artificial Intelligence

Big data analytics

Real-time supervision, compliance, and reporting

Biometrics

Machine learning

Cloud computing

Smart contracts

2. ANTICIPATORY REGULATIONS

Inclusiveness

Future facing and proactiveness

Iteration and experimentation

Impact- and outcome-based

Source: Adapted from Nesta (tinyurl.com/4btdnna8).

Integrated, collaborative, and cloud-based procurement

The current procurement practices and processes in Middle East governments tend to be bureaucratic, fragmented, and rigid. The Ministry of the Future uses more effective procurement practices to achieve more efficient government spending (*see Exhibit 7*).

- **Integrated business services** combine and connect all aspects of procurement in a single shared-services model. This model centralizes procurement planning, management, and oversight, and enhances spending transparency and bidder participation, helping ensure fair competition. Los Angeles, for example, is integrating its purchasing activities through a single portal, Compete4LA, which provides access to all major contracts. The portal is modeled after a system that was developed for the London 2012 Summer Olympics, which registered more than 200,000 businesses and awarded 75 percent of contracts to small and medium-sized enterprises.[28]

- **Collaborative sourcing** supports the centralized procurement of commoditized goods and services, resulting in economies of scale. Scotland uses collaborative frameworks and contracts for commonly purchased goods and services, making it easier for businesses of all sizes across sectors to access and win contracts. The Scottish government has also launched a dynamic purchasing system, which prequalifies suppliers and allows government buyers to invite them to bid on contracts, yielding a faster process, healthier competition, and continuous access to a wide range of suppliers.[29]

- **Cloud-based procurement** uses cloud service providers and cloud computing for all aspects of procurement, including sourcing, buying, payment, and oversight. Its benefits include cost-effectiveness, end-to-end integration (which eliminates data redundancy and manual interventions), a seamless flow of information, enhanced collaboration, and greater visibility into the procure-to-pay process. The U.K. developed the G-cloud framework, which contains a series of agreements with regularly vetted suppliers, to buy cloud-based services via a competitive digital marketplace. The government has purchased more than £2.4 billion ($3.3 billion) worth of cloud services through the system.[30]

EXHIBIT 7
Integrated, collaborative, and cloud-based procurement supports more efficient government spending

Collaborative sourcing

Cloud-based procurement

INTEGRATED BUSINESS SERVICES

E-sourcing

Suppliers database/E-catalog

E-invoicing

Automated spend analysis

Standardized contracts

Tender evaluation/ negotiations
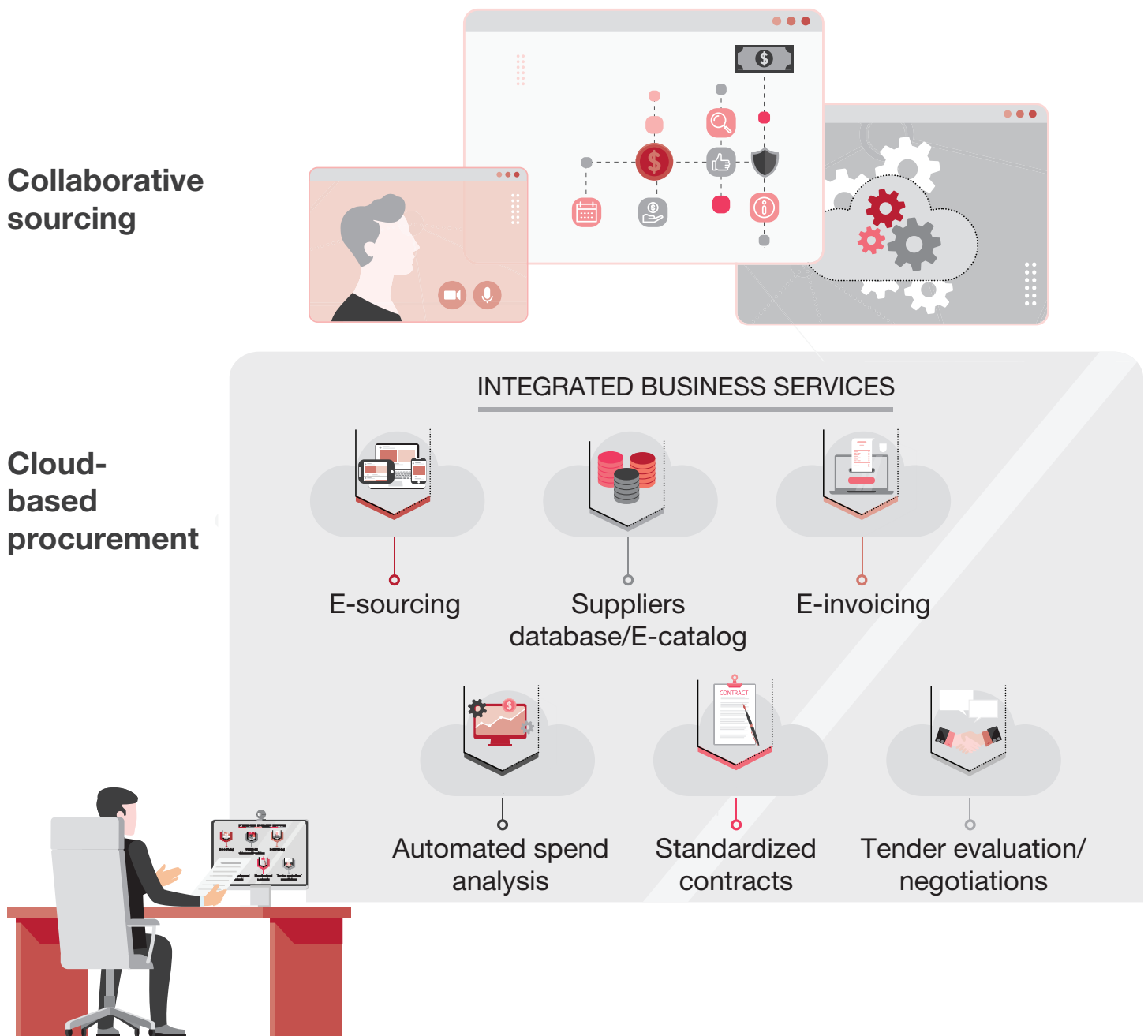
Source: Strategy&

Impact-driven accountability for customer outcomes

Conventional frameworks for performance management and accountability are becoming increasingly irrelevant because they are often focused internally, particularly on processes. The Ministry of the Future will turn the focal point of performance to the outcomes it delivers to its customers and the impact it makes on the customer's experience and life. It will nurture a culture of impact-driven accountability, proactively sense and respond to customer needs, and measure the outcomes it produces with an eye to refining and improving them.

- **A culture of accountability** for customer outcomes is required to support the achievement of targets and strategies that are clearly defined and customer focused. This culture features values that empower employees by granting them a license to innovate, experiment, and share knowledge, and that support evidence-based decision making. To strengthen this culture, leaders align it with enablers that also are driven by customer outcomes, including employee compensation, performance-based budgeting, and real-time performance reporting systems.

- **Tools to evaluate customer needs** are required to create customer-centric solutions. The Ministry of the Future will use sensing tools, such as social media analytics and surveys, to gain understanding of customer needs and sentiments. It will use cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analytics to evaluate proposed solutions. It will use randomized controlled trials to improve solutions and maximize their impact. For instance, governments are using Predictiv, an online platform developed by U.K.-based Behavioural Insights Team, to run experiments intended to evaluate and improve new policies and interventions before they are deployed.[31]

- **Metrics to comprehensively track and assess constituent impact** are needed to judge the outcomes delivered by government products and services. The Ministry of the Future will adopt new metrics to complement commonly used, economics-focused measures such as GDP. These metrics will help governments track the well-being of citizens in holistic terms, including physical and mental health, job security, living standards, social inclusion, social protection, and social cohesion, along with trust and confidence in government. In 2015, for example, the Welsh Parliament passed the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, which imposed a legal obligation on the Welsh government to enhance its citizens' well-being as defined by cultural, economic, environmental, and social metrics.[32]

> The Ministry of the Future will turn the focal point of performance to the outcomes it delivers to its customers and the impact it makes on the customer's experience and life.

ENABLING THE MINISTRY OF THE FUTURE'S CAPABILITIES

The capabilities of the Ministry of the Future are dependent upon a set of enablers: human capital, data, systems, tools, and processes.

Human capital: To rapidly mobilize talent and deliver it across the organization as needed, Ministry of the Future leaders will need to ensure that workers are physically and emotionally healthy, and properly equipped for the jobs they perform. They will develop workers so that they possess so-called T-shaped skills—deep expertise and knowledge in specific areas accompanied by a broad base of cross-functional competencies related to areas such as data analytics, innovation, agility, behavioral economics, and design and systems thinking. They will support and empower employees with e-learning platforms that help them attain new skills as needed.

Data: The Ministry of the Future will establish channels for real-time data gathering and formal data sharing agreements to secure the data needed to enable evidence-based decision making, proactive and innovative service delivery, and impact evaluations. These channels and agreements must ensure data security, privacy, and protection.

Systems: The digital backbone that will enable the capabilities of the Ministry of the Future will include a wide variety of technologies. Among them are AI and virtual reality, the Internet of Things (the network of connected devices), advanced connectivity (e.g., 5G), digital twinning and the cloud-based representation of physical assets, machine learning and cloud computing, and blockchain management systems, along with 3D and 4D printing.

Tools: Advanced analytical tools include predictive analytics, real-time and statistical analysis, data mining, deep learning, and optimization. They enable the Ministry of the Future to scan the horizon to identify new opportunities and challenges, track and understand mega-trends, and sense customer sentiment.

Processes: Processes in the Ministry of the Future are agile, streamlined, and digitized. They support the real-time assessment and adaptation of policies and solutions, self-governance, and clear accountabilities needed for rapid decision making and flexible leadership. These processes enable cross-entity and cross-functional coordination and continuous citizen engagement.

CONCLUSION

The transition to fit-for-transformation government requires a willingness to abandon long-established hierarchical structures, leadership models, processes, and organizational cultures. Leaders will need to question the roles and remit of their ministries and agencies, along with the capabilities, operating models, and services that enabled them to fulfill their mission in the past. The Ministry of the Future will possess a new vision and capabilities. It will also require new investments in teams, technology, and systems. Most importantly, it will demand a soundly structured and manageable approach to change. Such an approach must customize the design blueprint described above, fitting it to the specific mission and needs of each ministry or agency, and the outcomes that it will be accountable for delivering to its customers.

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