Digital Government
Regulatory Framework

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01. Preamble

The Digital Government Authority (DGA) realizes the importance of continuously issuing and updating regulations to keep pace with current and future requirements and to mainly contribute to enhancing digital performance within government entities, increasing the quality of digital services, and improving the beneficiaries experience of these services, in line with Saudi Arabia's ambitious Vision 2030.

The Digital Government strategic directions emphasize the importance of adopting digital regulations by providing an effective and resilient regulatory environment that is adaptive to future changes.

Since DGA is the competent authority for all activities related to digital Government, and because it considered as the national reference to its affairs, and due to DGA's competence to regulate the digital Government's work and to achieve integration among all government entities, Also, based on its competencies and functions set out in Article 4 of its organization stipulating that the organization of the Digital Government's work, including issuing regulation related to the DGA's activity, setting plans, programs and indicators, regulating operations, processes and related projects, and following up on compliance, accordingly, the DG regulatory framework was adopted in order for the government sector in the Kingdom to reach advanced levels of digital maturity.

02. Introduction

DGA has developed the Digital Government Regulatory Framework through a number of phases, including the study of indicators and international principles of the digital government, assessing the current situation and conducting benchmark studies; in order to achieve the highest maturity level in Digital Government.

The regulatory framework is an organizational tool for the work of digital government, whereby the design, development and strategic enforcement are regulations is governed by eight key principles (figure 1). The principles of the framework have been developed on the basis of the questionnaire of United Nations Member States on the E-Government Development Index and the Principles of the OECD Digital Government Policies Framework (DGPF Principles).

The Digital Government policies represent the key pillars of the regulatory framework. They aim to enable and accelerate the sustainable digital transformation of the Government sector in the medium and long term and support the successful implementation of the digital Government's strategic directions.

Each of these policies includes a number of controls, standards and guidelines that support application of the general provisions of the Digital Government's policies and set out requirements for measuring compliance.
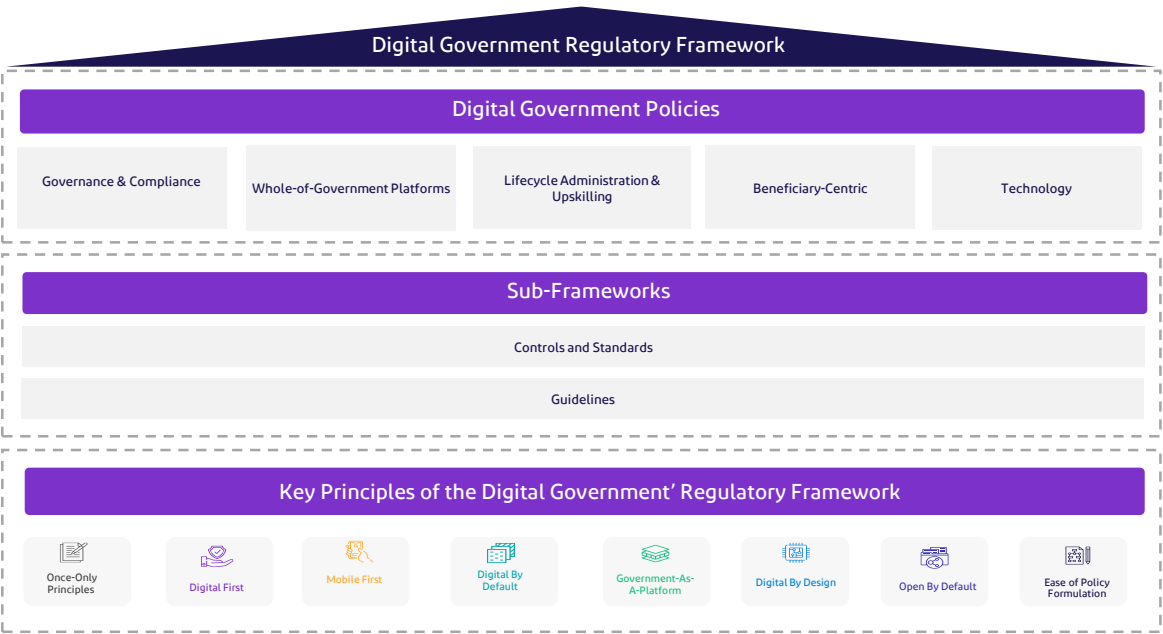

Digital Government Regulatory Framework				
Digital Government Policies				
Governance & Compliance	Whole-of-Government Platforms	Lifecycle Administration & Upskilling	Beneficiary-Centric	Technology
Sub-Frameworks				
Controls and Standards				
Guidelines				
Key Principles of the Digital Government' Regulatory Framework				
Once-Only Principles · Digital First · Mobile First · Digital By Default · Government-As-A-Platform · Digital By Design · Open By Default · Ease of Policy Formulation				

Figure 1: Digital Government Regulatory Framework

03. The Regulatory Framework Key Objectives

The Digital Government Regulatory framework aims to achieve the following:

Unifying and institutionalizing the concept of digital government policies, standards, and guidelines, and guiding government entities during the implementation process.

Ensuring adoption of unified approaches to the development of digital government services and unifying the provision approach thereof.

Ensuring progressive compliance by government entities via continuous assessment of the quality and level of advancement of the digital government, with the aim of continuous improvements in regulatory processes.

Providing a Standardized regulatory reference for the digital government's activities.

04. Applicability

The Digital Government Regulatory Framework applies to:

All government entities.

Non – Profit sector.

All private sector's developers and operators involved in digital government works.

All beneficiaries from the national and shared government platforms.

05. The Regulatory Framework Structure

The Digital Government Regulatory Framework consists of the following:

5.1   The Principles of the Digital Government Regulatory Framework.

5.2   The Digital Government Policies .

5.3   The Sub-Frameworks.

5.4   The controls, standards and guidelines.

All regulations included in the regulatory framework are based on digital Government related laws and by-laws and aims to enforce them (figure 2).
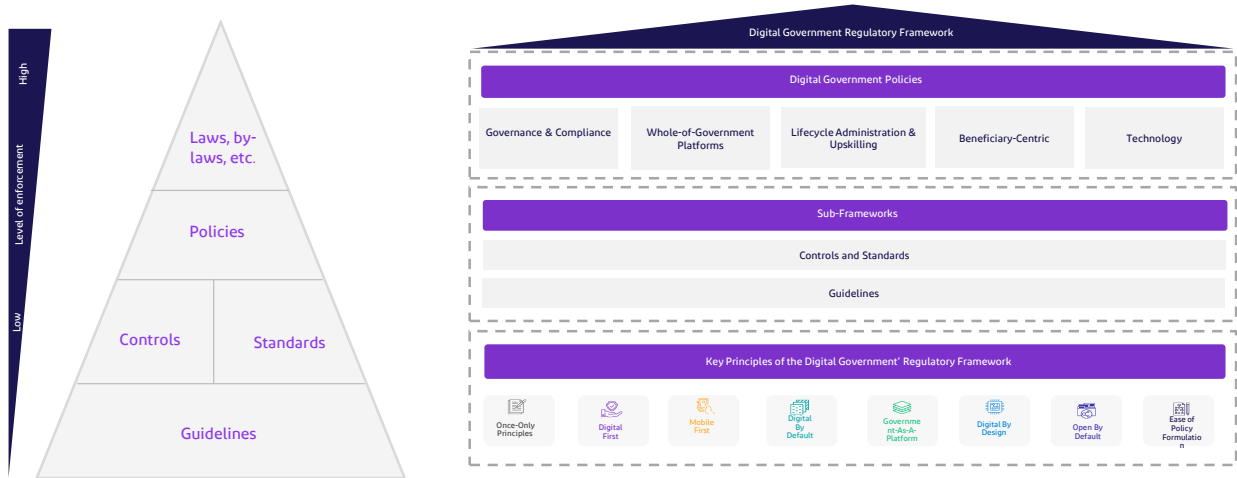

Figure 2: Digital Government Regulatory Framework

5.1. Key Principles of the Digital Government Regulatory Framework

Once-Only Principle

This principle enables all government entities to share citizens' data with each other through a unified integration channel and by relying on a consolidated data file. Thus, beneficiaries of digital government services shall enter their information only once.

This principle will help alleviate Saudi Arabia's administrative burden, as the exchange of information already collected is less costly than the collection and storage of such information many times. It will also make it possible to increase the level of protection and privacy of beneficiaries' data, taking into account all relevant organizations and legislation.

The joint technical infrastructure supporting Saudi Arabia's digital government services will improve data sharing and the application of the "one-time user data request" principle.

Digital First Principle

This principle aims to promote the use of multiple digital channels of communication suitable for use by beneficiaries; in order to raise the level of satisfaction with the services provided and access to high levels of communication and participation and enhance confidence to increase the efficiency of the services provided by the government entities. Digital solutions based on this principle are offered via a digital platform or channel, and the beneficiaries are provided with multiple digital options to interact with government entities. These interactions are comprehensive, secure and user-friendly in the beneficiaries' interest. Moreover, Government entities identify opportunities to connect services based on beneficiaries' needs. Considering the provision of an integrated service chain across all government entities, such entities will use a combination of digital communication and interaction channels to improve the level of satisfaction of beneficiaries during service delivery, in order to enable:

- Reach new levels of reliability and engage beneficiaries.
- Increase efficiency and raise beneficiaries' interaction through digital government platforms.

Mobile First Principle

This principle aims to design websites suited to mobile phones and smart devices, focusing on the tasks/services most used by beneficiaries of government websites. It also indicates that government entities will initially design a copy of their sites for small screens for smart devices, which can then be redesigned for use on larger screens such as computer screens.

The principle-based approach will contribute to creating better experiences for beneficiaries by starting the design process under smaller screens, and content owners and designers will make important decisions about content within the development process, considering the limited screen space.

Greater emphasis will be placed on streamlining and improving content, ensuring that the beneficiaries' experience is smooth and streamlined across devices, ensuring that the relevance and impact of government messages are not underestimated.

Digital by Default Principle

This principle aims to develop government digital services in an integrated and simplified manner that is easy for beneficiaries to use, taking into account the ease and accessibility and providing services of the same quality to all beneficiaries including those unable to access them. This principle also enables government entities to identify the needs of beneficiaries who cannot use digital government services for any circumstance. In this case, appropriate support will be provided to these beneficiaries or other appropriate ways of accessing these services, Examples of beneficiaries who do not have access to digital government services include those who do not have widespread access because of their geographical location that obstacles them from accessing the Internet.

Government as a Platform Principle

Government entities shall act as a comprehensive digital platform to meet beneficiaries' needs and provide clear sources of guidance, tools, data and software that will be developed by the technical staff of government entities to provide services that are beneficiary-focused, consistent, accessible and integrated among all government sectors.

Digital by Design Principle

This principle aims to establish clear organizational paths, coupled with effective application mechanisms in which the principle of digitization by design is more than a technical subject, but a compulsory element of transformation and should be included in all relevant procedures.

This principle also refers to the need for government entities to adopt a digital design that includes clear regulatory directions and effective coordination and implementation mechanisms. It is a mandatory element at the level of digital transformation which must be included in the various relevant procedural processes. The principle refers to the need for government entities to use techniques and data to re-engineer their internal business processes and operations. The aim is to facilitate innovative government procedures and services on the one hand and to open multiple channels of interaction between government entities and with beneficiaries on the other.

Open by Default Principle

This principle aims to provide access to data and policy development procedures to participate in their development through public opinion polling platforms, within existing regulations and with consideration of national interests.

Government entities will also provide the private sector and beneficiaries with easy access to private data and policy development procedures (including algorithms).

This principle will enable government entities to enhance their responsiveness, inclusiveness and flexibility. Also, Outreach to external developers and users is a source of knowledge to build other shared value added.

Ease of Policy Formulation Principle

This principle aims to prepare and develop policies, standards or guides that are simple and clear to facilitate their management and application for government entities.

It will also enable the development of digital government's policies, standards and guidance in an easy, accessible and feasible manner.

In line with this principle, policies, standards and guidelines for digital government will be as follows:
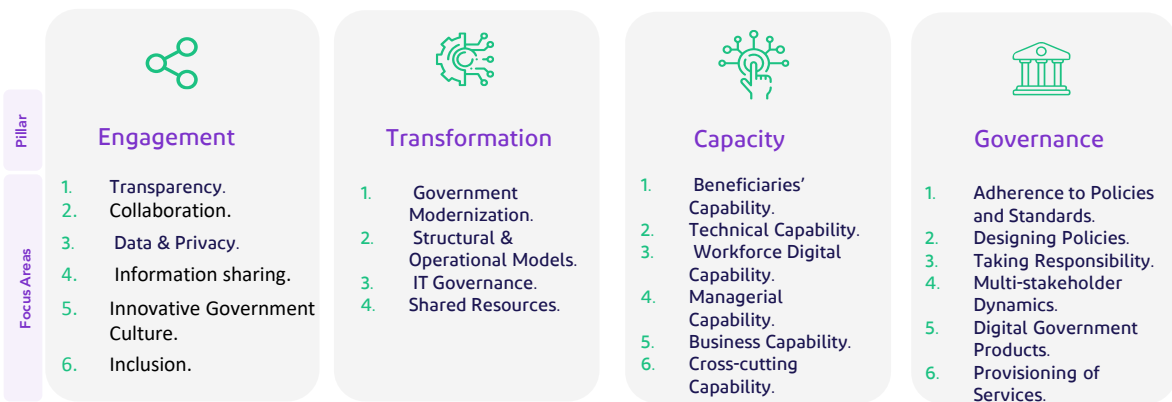
- Available online to all government entities via the website: www.dga.gov.sa

- Written in a simplified and clear language, and in both Arabic and English.

- Clearly explain how government entities comply through specific and easy-to-understand procedures.

- Determine benefits of compliance for government entities and beneficiaries.

- Provide options - as far as possible - for government entities in terms of steps, techniques and possible participation strategies.

5.2. Digital Government Policies

5.2.1 Pillars of Digital Government Policies

Digital government policies are based on **four pillars**, each with a number of components as indicated in (figure 3). The main objective of the development of the pillars of digital government policies is to create a comprehensive government system that focuses on beneficiaries that are citizens, residents and visitors and facilitates the digital transformation of the government sector by enhancing its capacity, effectiveness and responsiveness to meet beneficiaries' needs and priorities.

The pillars of digital government policies identify a wide range of enablers, drivers and governance models needed to achieve the digital government's strategic goals and objectives; This enables it to address challenges related to emerging technologies and the role of the private sector and others in the digital transformation process.

Pillar	Engagement	Transformation	Capacity	Governance
Focus Areas	1. Transparency. 2. Collaboration. 3. Data & Privacy. 4. Information sharing. 5. Innovative Government Culture. 6. Inclusion.	1. Government Modernization. 2. Structural & Operational Models. 3. IT Governance. 4. Shared Resources.	1. Beneficiaries' Capability. 2. Technical Capability. 3. Workforce Digital Capability. 4. Managerial Capability. 5. Business Capability. 6. Cross-cutting Capability.	1. Adherence to Policies and Standards. 2. Designing Policies. 3. Taking Responsibility. 4. Multi-stakeholder Dynamics. 5. Digital Government Products. 6. Provisioning of Services.

*For more information, see the digital government policies

Figure 3: Pillars of Digital Government Policies

The Digital Government Policies define general directions of the Digital Government, encompassing the most important areas related to the Digital Government. They aim to govern and manage its services, promote participation of the beneficiaries of these services, develop the skills necessary to achieve the directions of the Digital Government, adopt modern technologies and related methodologies for development of the services provided, etc., and such policies are respectively as follows:

5.2.2 Governance and Compliance Policy

The Governance & Compliance Policy encompasses the methodologies by which the Government Agencies are controlled and operated, and the mechanisms by which they, and their people, are held to account in the conceptualization, development, procurement, deployment, and management of government digital services. This leadership and oversight of all digital government activities by Government Agencies, and their compliance with published regulations, policies, standards, and guidelines. These include oversight, privacy, security, licensing and accreditation, funding, and a clear governance model, and strategy is required to be in place as it is a key driver for digital government. A digital government governance model defines the responsibilities of the various actors in the digital government implementation and operation process.

5.2.3 Whole-of-Government Platforms Policy

The Whole-of-Government (WOG) Platforms Policy encompasses common technology platforms that enable Government Agencies to build easy-to-use, adaptable, and relevant digital services quickly and effectively. The suite of tools and services hosted on a common infrastructure in the WOG Tech Stack ensures consistency and high quality of their digital services. This policy also includes the use of the WOG Platforms by the Private Sector. The WOG Platforms include but are not limited to, enablers (e.g., Digital ID, Payment Gateway, Digital Signature, GSB).

5.2.4 Lifecycle Administration & Upskilling

The Lifecycle Administration & Upskilling Policy covers activities across the Digital Government Services Lifecycle and Digital Capacity building that is the responsibility of each government agency and includes the service design process, digital content, Omni channel (mobile and smart devices) digital services, uptake of digital transactions within and across Government Agencies, qualifications and upskilling of the workforce, and alignment with UN assessment areas (required digital content and beneficiary services).

A digital service lifecycle plays an important role in maintaining the quality of digital services introduced by the digital government. To continue providing a high-quality digital service delivery, an efficient mechanism is required to maintain digital service lifecycle activities. Digital Service lifecycles and digital capacity building is handled by the government agency. Each government agency in the digital government ecosystem should contribute its efforts in continuously enhancing and providing digital service processes, digital content, and service delivery operations, whilst investing in the people upskilling to deliver these activities innovatively.

5.2.5 Beneficiary-Centric Policy

The Beneficiary-Centric Policy covers the effectiveness of digital services to meet beneficiary needs and expectations and includes accessibility, user experience, engagement, adoption, and being proactive.

A world-class digital government adopts a more user-centric and transparent approach in order to not only meet the user's demands rather engage them in the decision-making process. Beneficiary engagement plays a role in strengthening the relationship between the government and beneficiaries through citizen engagement, communication, participation, open government data, and actions to increase the use of services by beneficiaries. A user-centric digital government ensures everyone can use the service with no one left behind. In addition to adopting an easy-to-use, efficient UX/UI in service delivery

5.2.6 Technology Policy

The Technology Policy covers the common technologies and their methodologies that are used by the government to deliver digital services including architecture, big data, analytics, innovation, and emerging technology, as well as operations and resilience. This Policy will also include engagements with the ecosystem including driving innovation and adopting emerging technology.

Technology is a core of digital government. It supports the digital government by exploring innovative opportunities to address public needs whilst supplying the government with the tools required to develop an efficient and innovative service delivery. The digital government relies on the use of emergent technology to support digital service innovation, such as big data, data analytics, artificial intelligence, the internet of things, blockchain, gamification, and robotic process automation (RPA). Digital Government is also more successful with the participation of the private sector and academia in a thriving digital economy.

5.3 Sub-Frameworks

Where a number of controls, standards, and guides are developed within a specific theme, the flexible structure of "the digital government regulatory framework " supports the creation of sub-frameworks with an internal structure that clarifies the dependencies and relations between these regulations, facilitating their understanding and supporting their effectiveness in guiding government entities.

sub-frameworks are part of the regulatory framework and covers a specific theme related to a digital government policy to create a Common reference that contributes to the harmonization and governance of regulations.

5.4 Controls, Standards, and Guidelines

DGA works to implement digital government policies by issuing controls and standards and monitoring the compliance of government entities therewith. DGA supports government entities in applying controls and standards through the guidelines issued thereby.

The type of the regulation to be issued takes into account the purpose of its issuance and the nature of the topic that it covers, in accordance with the hierarchy of the regulations described in (figure 4).
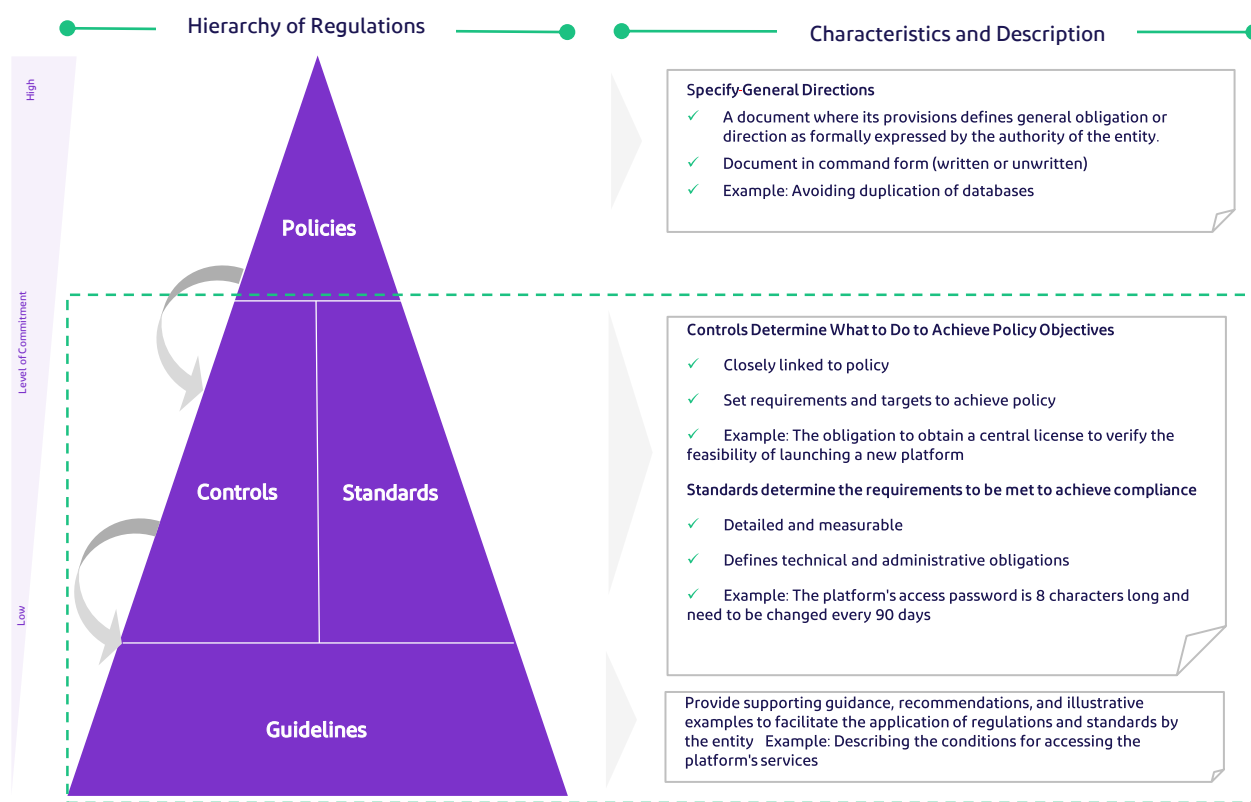

Figure 4: Hierarchy of Regulations and characteristics of each of them

06. Table of Definitions

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

Term	Definition
Digital Government	Promotes administrative, organizational and operational processes within and among government sectors to achieve digital transformation and develop, improve and enable easy and effective access to government information and services.
Digital Transformation	Digitally and strategically transforming and developing business standards and models that would rely on data, technologies, and ICT.
Government Entity	Ministries, authorities, public institutions, councils, national centers including any additional form of a public entity.
Regulatory Framework	An organized tool for government sector business related to digital government whereby the design, development and strategic implementation of regulatory documents are governed.
Principles	Basic and integrated pathways for determining key regulations of government entities relating to the digital government.
Policies	A Policy defines the course or principles of action to guide and determine present and future actions and it specifies what government entities are required to do. Policies can have related standards that provide more information for entities.
Sub- Framework	An organizational tool linked to the regulatory framework of the digital government's work, which is part of the digital government policy, to govern the design and development of a number of controls, standards and guidelines within a specific subject.
Controls	The controls specify the conditions that government agencies must comply with and what they must do to achieve the objectives and general provisions stated in the policy associated with them.
Standards	A set of rules and controls regulating the operations and tasks related to the digital government that are approved by DGA.
Guidelines	Provides examples showing the implementation mechanism of the of policies and standards in place for government entities.
Beneficiary	Citizens, residents, visitors, government entities, private sector or non-profit organizations within and outside Saudi Arabia that need to interact with a government entity to obtain any of the services provided.
Stakeholder	Parties and entities that affect and are affected by decisions, directions, procedures, objectives, policies, and initiatives of the Digital Government share some of their interests and outputs and are affected by any change that occurs. in them.

هيئة الحكومة الرقمية
Digital Government Authority