

Chapter 8

Building Performance Competencies in Open Government: Perspectives From the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Open government initiatives around the world have encouraged governments to be more transparent and accessible while its partners have found new venues to further participate and collaborate. However, realities on the ground have begun to show the complexities of openness, raising questions on how these initiatives could be sustained. In the Philippines, most of the open government-open government data (OG-OGD) programs are considered top-down. This means that almost all of the activities are initiated by the national government and are often funded by multilateral agencies such as the World Bank. However, due to the changes in political priorities, the future of these programs remains uncertain. Current experiences further highlight the importance of institutionalization as one of the ingredients to sustain these initiatives; thus, the authors believe that building capacities play an important part in such an endeavor. As such, this chapter presents an initial set of OG-OGD performance competencies for local government executives and their civil society partners.

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INTRODUCTION

Opening government to greater participation and scrutiny has resulted to various opportunities and challenges. As a practice, open government has cleared the way for greater transparency and access to public transactions, thus resulting to more participation among governance stakeholders. While as an advocacy, open government has increased the clamor for governments to do more. Civil society organizations (CSOs) and citizens alike have demanded for a more proactive approach. Veering away from the usual “reactive practices” of openness, this approach highlights the importance of improving the ability of non-government actors to source, use, re-use and share data sets. Furthermore, as part of open government efforts, social media often regarded as a popular venue in pushing-pulling information and feedback from constituents. However, due to its volume and the anonymity of users, this bridging capacity of social media has often caused a dilemma among government decision makers as well as their partners and constituents regarding the reliability and accuracy of feedback. Indeed, these events can be seen as part of an ongoing shift from a regime of transparency, access to that of data intelligence, collaboration, and innovation.

In developing countries, open government-open government data (OG-OGD) initially enjoyed a certain novelty, but political and organizational realities are now showing the inadequacies of reactive approaches. Questions on its tangible benefits and long-term outcomes continue to be a controversial topic. While concerns regarding implementation and sustainability beyond political administrations remain a significant issue. Furthermore, another facet of OG-OGD enigma is the need to improve capacities. Developing human capacities on OG-OGD for data providers and users is recognized as one of the important facets of OG-OGD adoption. Moreover, building capacities at all organizational levels guarantee the ability to properly use and ensure the quality of data sets. Enhanced appreciation of OG-OGD principles also ensure the integration to the current freedom of information/right to information regimes and even to national development initiatives.

In this chapter, the authors put forward the idea of developing an OG-OGD competency matrix that can be used in developing capacity building programs. Competency-based training programs are anchored on the identification of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values (KSAVs) that are necessary to accomplish a task. By integrating the KSAVs in the training design, these programs are seen as more responsive to organizational needs, promotes professional development and are cost effective in the long run. Competency-based programs veer away from the usual training for the sake of training approach by providing a set of performance criteria and connects these general competencies that are relevant to an organization.

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