The role of open government in supporting citizen participation in decision making
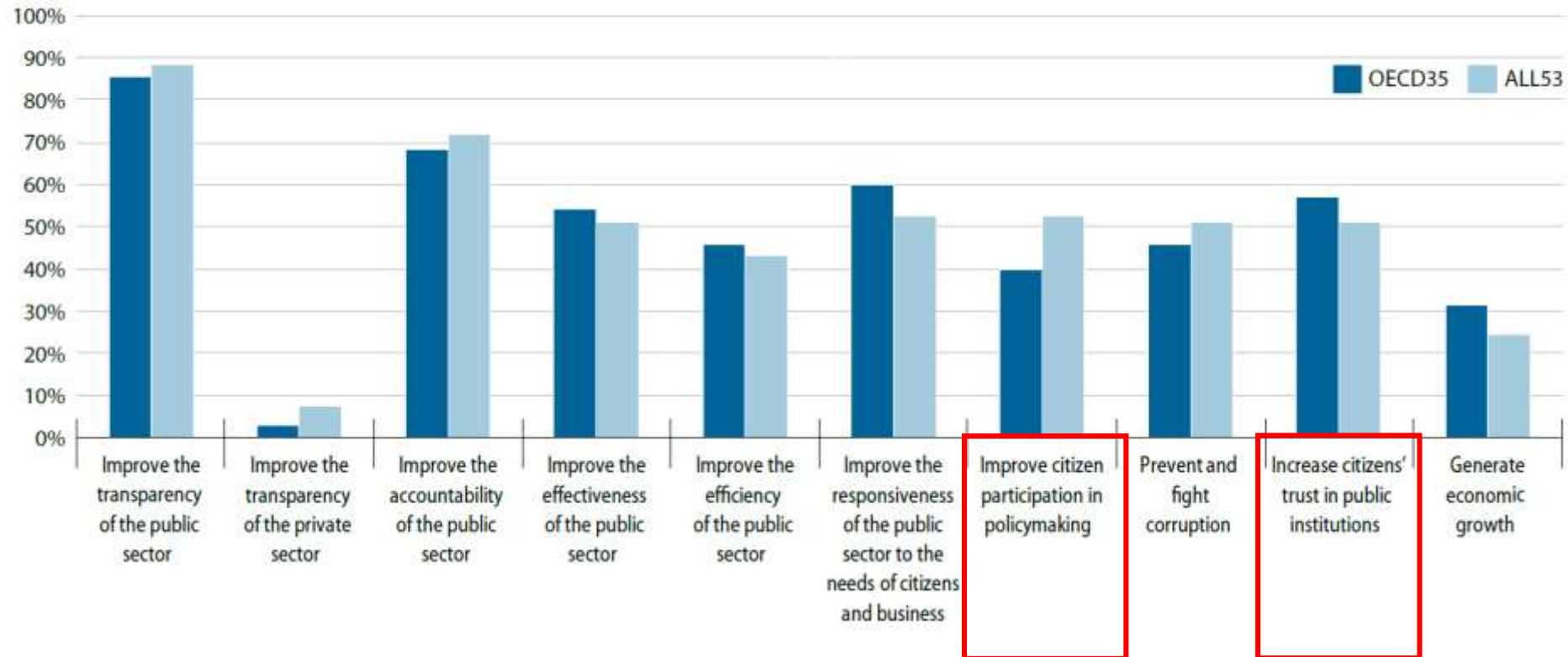
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Open Government

- OECD defines open government as "a culture of <u>governance</u> based on innovative and sustainable public policies and practices inspired by the principles of <u>transparency</u>, <u>accountability</u>, and <u>participation</u> that fosters democracy and inclusive growth."

- The definition of open government may vary and reflect the countries' priorities.

- Research highlights that open government principles are changing the relationship between public officials and citizens, making it more <u>dynamic</u>, <u>mutually beneficial</u> and <u>based on reciprocal trust</u>. And that open government initiatives are a tool to achieve broader policy objectives, rather than as an end to itself.

- Open data provides the foundation to enable citizens to better understand how their government works, how their tax money is spent, and how decisions and laws are made. Better understanding through increased access to information can be beneficial to governments, citizens, and society as a whole
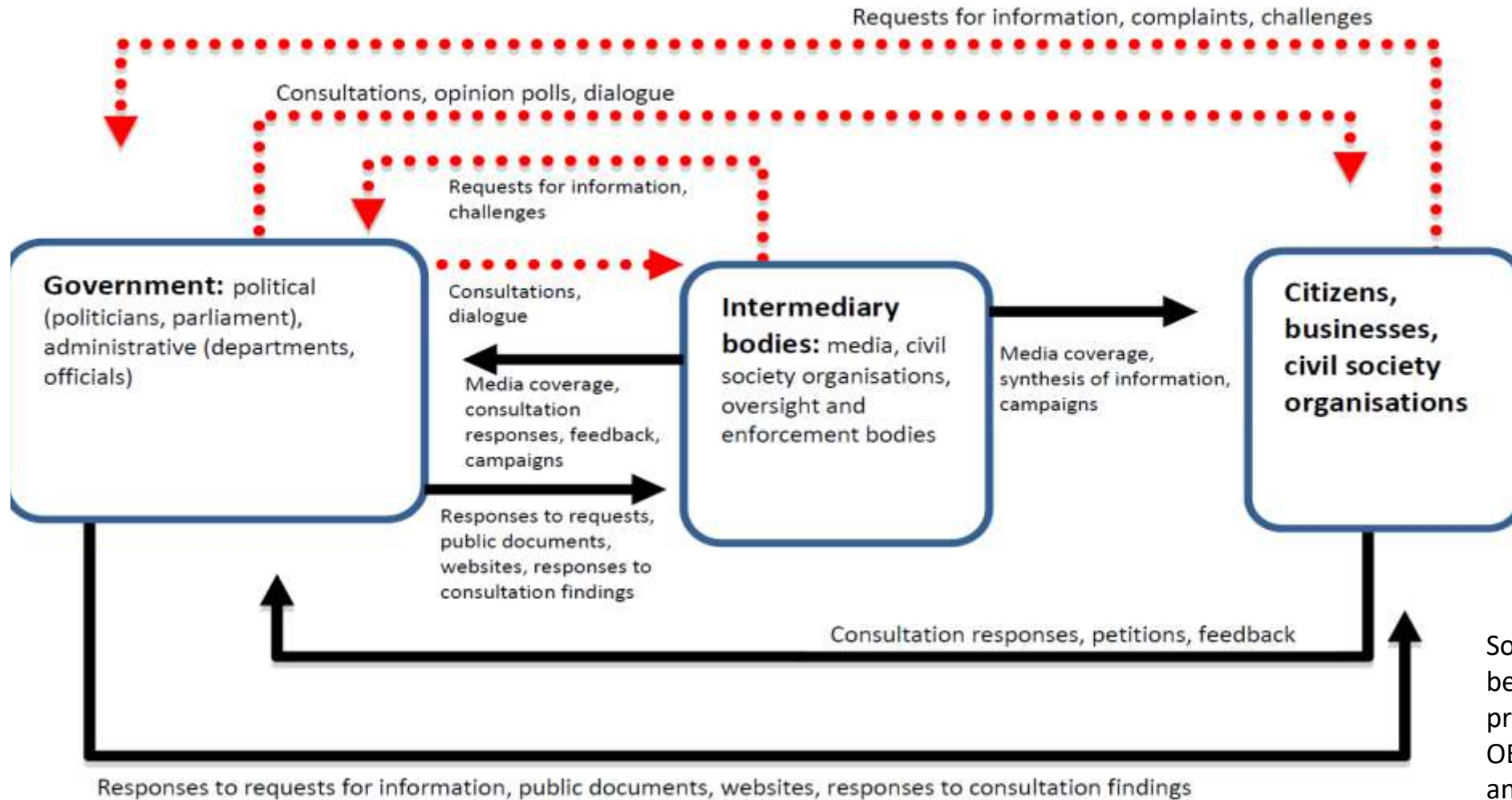
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Open Government Objectives

Objectives of countries' open government strategies

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Open Government Information flow

Source: Open Government: beyond static measures A paper produced by Involve for the OECD Karin Gavelin, Simon Burall and Richard Wilson July 2009

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Citizen Partcipation

- "…implies the involvement of citizens in a wide range of policymaking activities, including the determination of levels of service, budget priorities, and the acceptability of physical construction projects in order to orient government programs toward community needs, build public support, and encourage a sense of cohesiveness within neighborhoods. (*UN World Public Sector Report 2008*)

- Citizen engagement is seen as the "interaction between governments and citizens in order to share **information** and **power** in policy processes, including but not limited to public service provision and delivery, and more specifically in defining the issues that affect them, identifying possible solutions, and developing priorities for action…."(Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation. Canadian Research Policy Networks: March 2008)

- Previously, the relationship between governments and citizens was characterized by a mere sharing of information with citizens. But Recent initiatives stress the active two-way dialogue among the government.

- Currently, citizens are no longer passive receptors of government information, to the contrary, governments and citizens engage in a joint construction of value.

- Citizen engagement can bring more improvements in decision-making, transparency, and accountability. By involving citizens in joint decision-making.

- Constantly evolving ICTs have made the exchange of information more convenient and affordable, raising people's awareness and expectations of the extent and quality of information available to the public. And open door to the inclusion of the voices of underrepresented constituencies in policy formulation,

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Why Citizen Participation

- Citizen participation should occur at all stages of policy development and be an iterative process. Key benefits include:
  - Increasing citizens' sense of responsibility and understanding of complex issues
  - Understanding of each others' priorities and values and thereby sharing ownership between Public Sector Bodies and citizens for policies and decisions, thereby increasing their legitimacy
  - Developing more informed and more consensual policy choices
  - Possibilities for Public Sector Bodies to tap into the creativity and technical know-how of citizens
  - Increase interaction between governments and citizens in sharing information and responsibility for political decisions,
  - Increasing trust and better acceptance of government public policies,

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Citizen Involvement in decision making

Involvement of citizens in the policy cycle at sector level
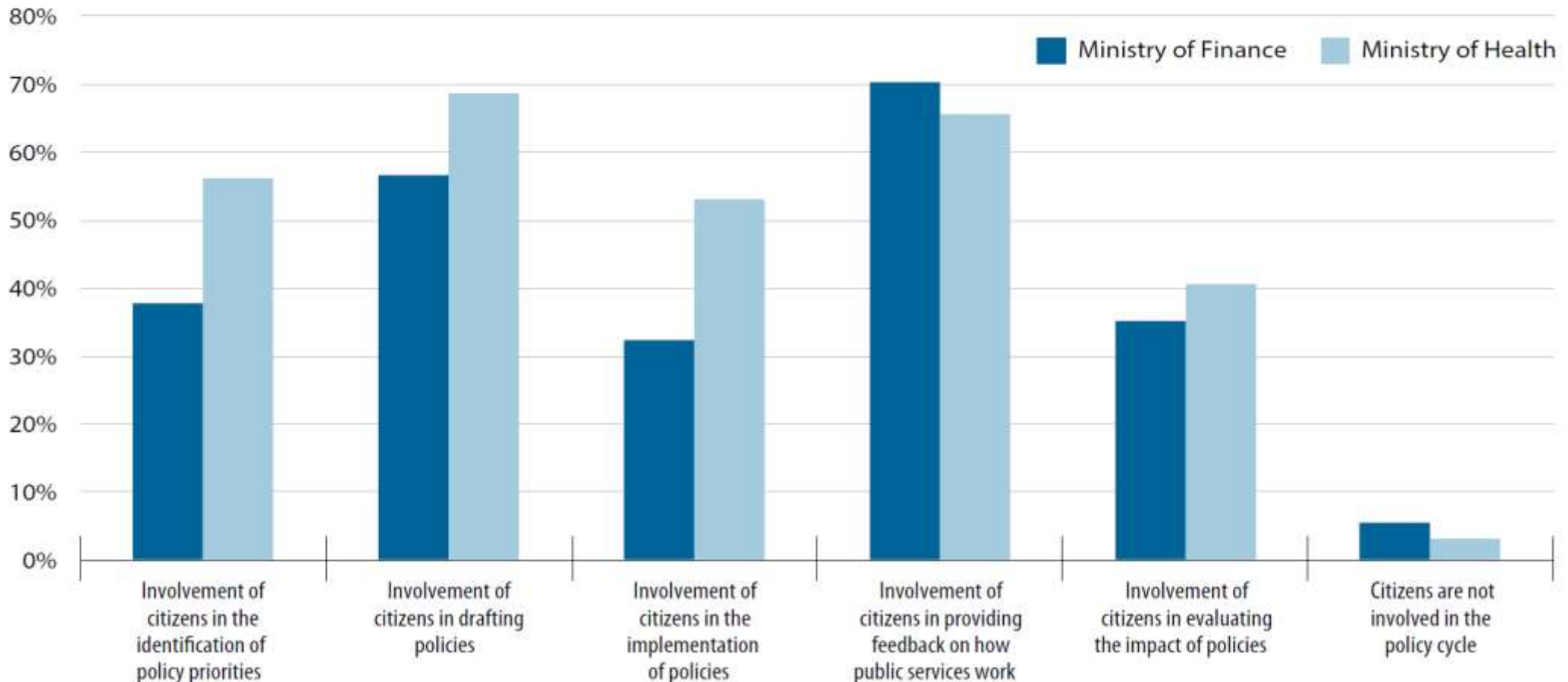
Source: OPEN GOVERNMENT: THE GLOBAL CONTEXT AND THE WAY FORWARD – HIGHLIGHTS (OECD,2016)

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Data Sets

- The opening of data can facilitate cooperation with stakeholders at the local or national level and with partner governments (including donor governments) as well as trans- and multinational institutions. (Fioretti, 2010)

- Some datasets that are clearly relevant for citizen engagement are:
  - **Parliamentary data and legal data** (of use to parliamentarians themselves, watchdog organizations, media covering parliament and voters)
  - **Public expenditure and budgeting data** (of interest for example to public sector and civil society oversight organizations, media, donor institutions)
  - **Environmental data** (of interest to affected citizens, research institutions, commercial service providers, environmental CSOs, public health administration)
  - **Demographic data** (of use to, for example, planning and development agencies, research institutions, public and commercial service providers) 30
  - **Socio-economic indicators** (of interest to research institutions, public and private service providers, planning and development agencies)
  - **Healthcare data** (of use for citizens, research institutions, watchdog organisations, public and commercial health care providers)
  - **Geographical data** (of use to planning and development agencies, commercial companies, end users relying on geographical applications such as navigation and map applications)
  - **Local transportation data** (useful for public and private transport service providers as well as for consumers)

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Levels of Stakeholder Engagement (OECD,2015)

Process	Intention
Communication	Make information and data available to other parties Make targeted audience more knowledgeable and sensitive to specific issues Encourage stakeholders to relate to the issue and take action
Consultation	Gather comments, perceptions, information and experience of stakeholders No obligation to take stakeholders' view into consideration in final outcome
Participation	Provide opportunities to take part in the policy process Does not entail that participants have an influence over the decision making
Representation in decision-making bodies	Structural level of engagement with the objective to develop collective choices. Often embedded in the organisation's structure.
Partnership	Agreed-upon collaboration between stakeholders Characterised by joint agreement
Co-decision and co-production	Balanced share of power among stakeholders involved

the OECD has developed a typology to map the different existing relationships between citizens and governments.

- basic provision of information, which is the weakest form of participation,
- full engagement forms such as co-production, co-delivery and coevaluation, which involves a balanced share of powers among stakeholders.
- From information to co-decision, an increasing level of citizen involvement and influence on policy making can be noted and the influence citizens exert on policy making rises.

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Challenges to Implement Citizens Participation

- identified the lack of or insufficient citizen interest to be one of their five main challenges for involving them in the policy cycle.

- identified the lack of or insufficient capacity of non-governmental (NGOs and private sector) stakeholders involved within their five main challenges.

Main challenges to implementing citizen participation in the policy cycle (CPPC) initiatives at the sector level
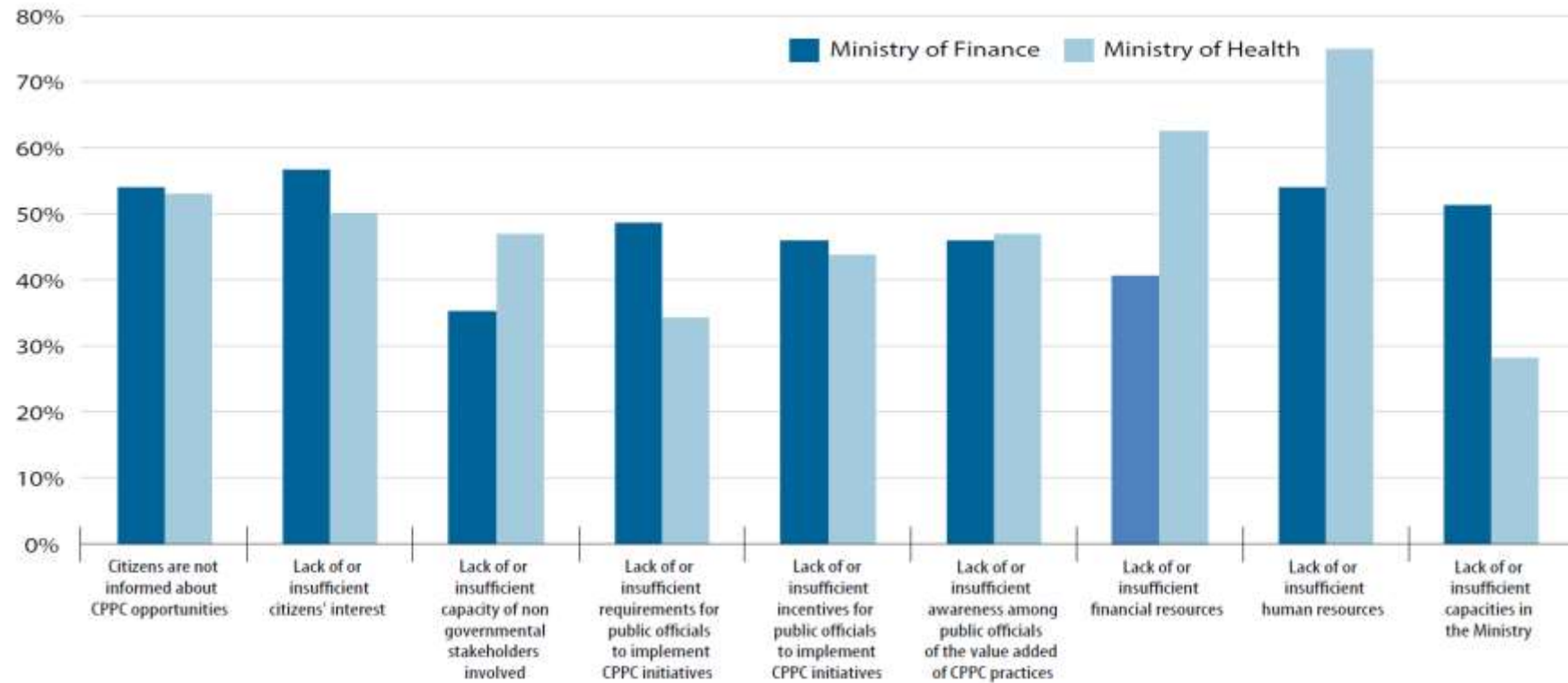
Addressing the Challenges of Citizen Participation

- Leverage legal **frameworks** to encourage and facilitate stakeholder engagement.

- Clarify the **objectives** of stakeholder engagement, the **process** of engagement and the scope of stakeholder engagement.

- Identify and reach out to those groups who have a stake in the outcome, including under-represented groups.

- Mainstream stakeholder engagement in the entire policy cycle. To shape better outcomes, engagement should be mainstreamed throughout the policy process, including: i) identifying policy priorities; ii) drafting the actual policy document; iii) implementing the policy; and iv) evaluating its impacts.

- Line up institutional resources and delivery tools. Example: online platforms, social media and open data to broadly engage different segments of the population.

- Build effective feedback loops into policy making and with engaged stakeholders, by using the feedback received to inform decisions and by providing feedback to stakeholders on the use of their inputs.

- Strengthening administrative capacity

- Prepare citizen for engagement: coaching, tools, intuitions, …

- Engaging with **YOUTH**.
    - The voice of the youth is not always heard in policy debates, despite their high stakes in their outcomes and their potential input to find innovative solutions to shape a better future.
    - governments are not very successful in linking up with young people over the Internet

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Recommendation for Citizen Participation

- Citizen participation in its different forms (ranging from simple access to information, to consultation and engagement) is a key part of an open government and should take place at all stages of the policy cycle.

- When designing and implementing citizen participation initiatives, countries need to be
    - clear about their objectives,
    - define the correct scale,
    - identify the appropriate stakeholders,
    - choose the right mechanisms and tools, and
    - inform stakeholders about the possibilities to engage as well as about the eventual outcomes.

- Countries must also develop a solid foundation for participation initiatives by building an adequate institutional framework and providing the capacities needed by civil servants to implement them.

- Greater efforts need to be made to evaluate citizen participation initiatives and analyse their costs and benefits, under which conditions they provide the best added value and, last but not least, their limitations in terms of representativeness and contribution to the democratic life of the institutions that implement them.

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Citizen Stakeholders Engagement

- Stakeholder engagement requires thorough identification of the relevant stakeholders.

- Knowing who is responsible for what and at which level is an essential starting point to identify conflicts, grey areas and trade-offs to be managed.

- Stakeholder mapping can shed light on the core and influential players and bring attention to the interactions with, and the impacts of, stakeholders in other areas that influence a given sector or policy area.

- Important aspects need to be taken into account in mapping stakeholders, including:
  - identifying the relevant players (primary decision-maker, influential actors in the area, actors with power to obstruct decisions, etc.);
  - Identifying potential stakeholders to contribute
  - identify the categories of stakeholders that are often excluded.

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Linking Public Value with Open Government

- Public value can be described in terms of general types of value that capture the range of possible results of government actions.
  - **Economic** – impacts on current or future income, asset values, liabilities, entitlements, or other aspects of wealth or risks to any of the above.
  - **Political** – impacts on a person's or group's influence on government actions or policy, on their role in political affairs, influence in political parties, or prospects for public office.
  - **Social** – impacts on family or community relationships, social mobility, status, and identity.
  - **Strategic** – impacts on a person's or group's economic or political advantage or opportunities, goals, and resources for innovation or planning.
  - **Quality of Life** – impacts on individual and household health, security, satisfaction, and general well-being.
  - **Ideological** – impacts on beliefs, moral, or ethical commitments, alignment of government actions or policies or social outcomes with beliefs, moral, or ethical positions.
- Source: Delivering Public Value Through Open Government, © 2011 The Research Foundation of State University of New York, Center for Technology in Government

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Lattanzio is a leading Italian management consulting company with offices in (Rome, Bucharest, Brussels, Washington DC, Astana). Operating since 1992, LATTANZIO Advisory is specialized in capacity building and institutional competencies development, monitoring and evaluation, provision of policy advice and technical assistance to Public Administrations.

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- Over eighteen years of professional experience in Government Technology and Project Management.

- External expert for the European Union Parliament, at the Parliamentary Research Services for Impact Assessment and European Added Value.

- Regional advisor for Lattanzio Group.

- Worked as Cairo Governor Advisor for Projects Management and Development.

- Senior Associate at Institute for European Studies in Brussels (Belgium)

- Fellow researcher at Center for Technology in Government in New York (United States).

- Adjunct Professor at the American University in Cairo, for Public Policy & Administration.

- Jury member in different government excellence awards to evaluate best government practices, such as Dubai Award for Smart Government and Sultan Qaboos Award for Excellence in E-Government.

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Thank you

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