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Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



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2020 E-Government Survey Regional Launch, Webinar Series E-Government Development in the Arab Region 23 September 2020

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia



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**Digital Government Transformation
in the Arab Region: Challenges,
Opportunities & Initiatives**

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Digital Development in the Arab Region

The Arab region is heterogeneous in digital development.

We can identify at least 3 clusters

- 1st cluster GCC: most developed
- 2nd cluster include Jordan, Tunisia, Lebanon, Morocco and Egypt
- 3rd cluster: other countries (crises and least developed)

Information Society in the Arab region



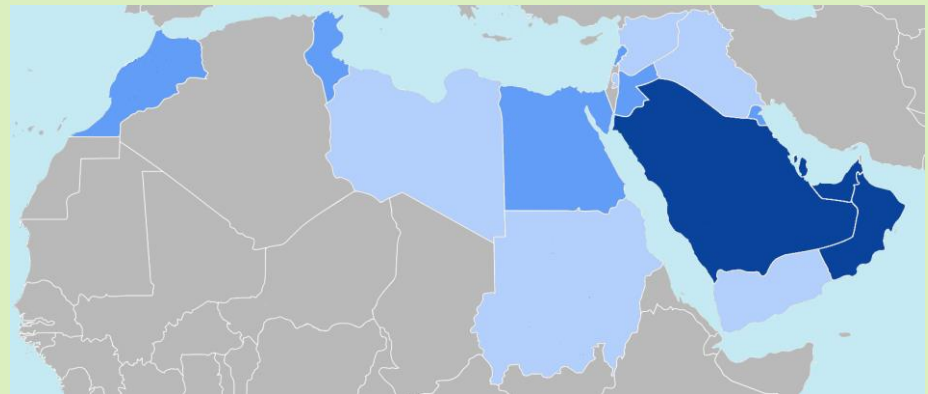
First cluster: most GCC: UAE, Bahrain, KSA, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait



Second cluster: Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon



Third cluster: countries under crises, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Sudan, Yemen and Libya



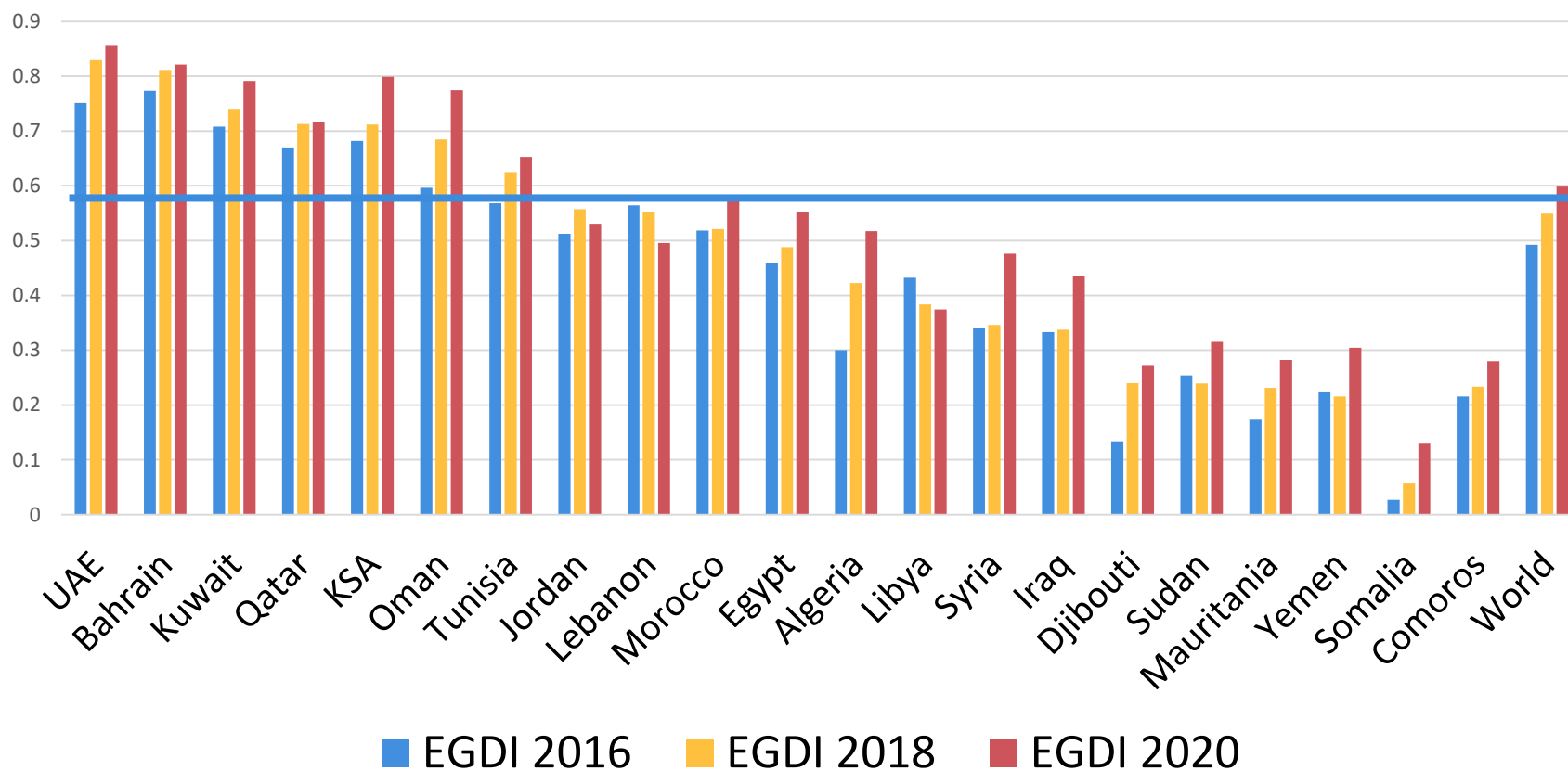
E-Government Development Index in the Arab Region



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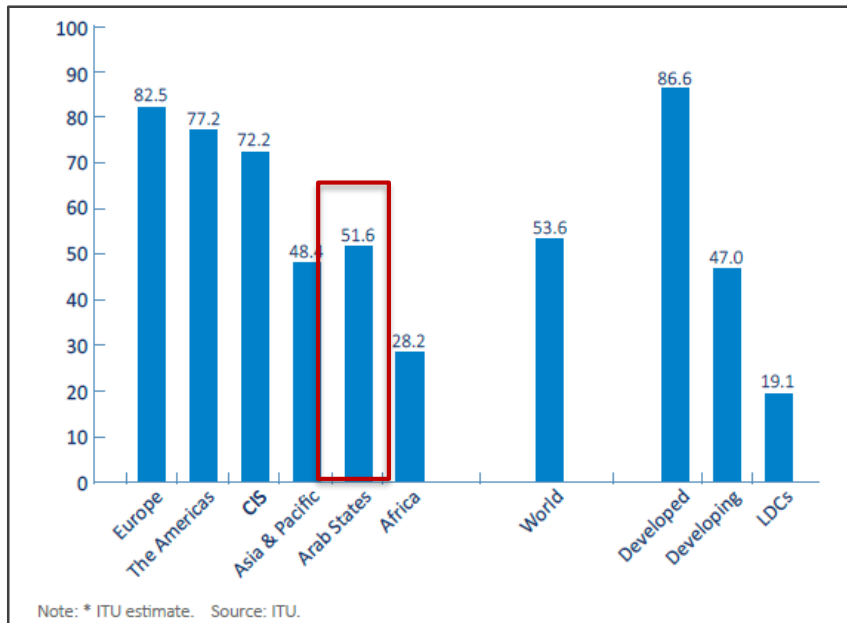
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UN-DESA E-Government Development Index 2016, 2018, 2020

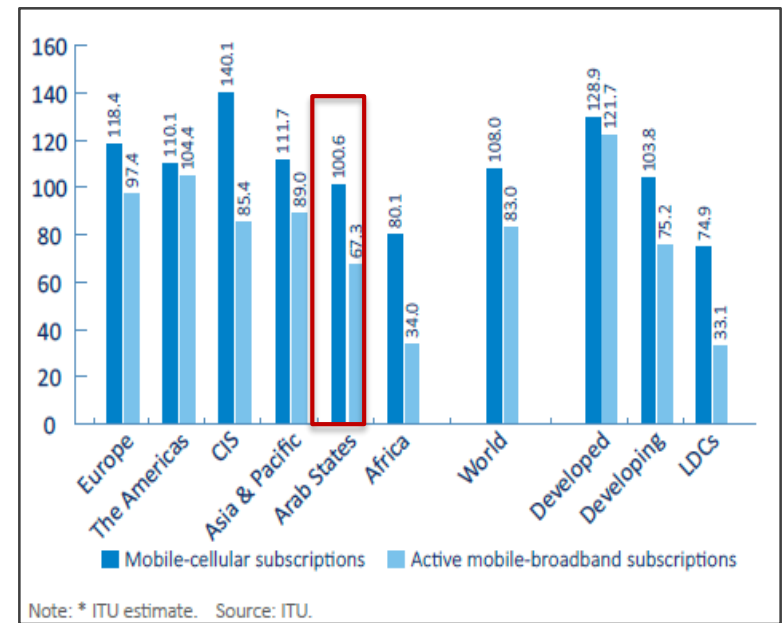


Challenges: ICT Infrastructure in the Arab Region

- Digital infrastructure **varies among countries** : very well developed, acceptable, to under re-construction, but mobile technology is on the rise in all countries
- **Only few countries have plan for broadband in the Arab region**
- **Affordability** is rather low in most countries
- **Gaps are increasing** in the Arab Region: Gender, Rural-Urban



Percentage of individual using Internet, ITU, 2019*



Mobile-cellular and mobile-broadband per 100 inhabitant, ITU, 2019*

Main Challenges related to digital government in the Arab Region



- **Cyber security, privacy and personal data protection require special attention in the Arab region.**
- The use of emerging technology is still nascent in many countries. Only few countries have plans for AI, Blockchain or Big data.
- **Reliance on Data: big data, open data could be developed.**
- Citizen-centric approach, citizen participation and engagement should be enhanced.
- **Human capabilities still needs development in the Arab region**, especially among: government employees & citizens and among experts for the exploitation of emerging technology.



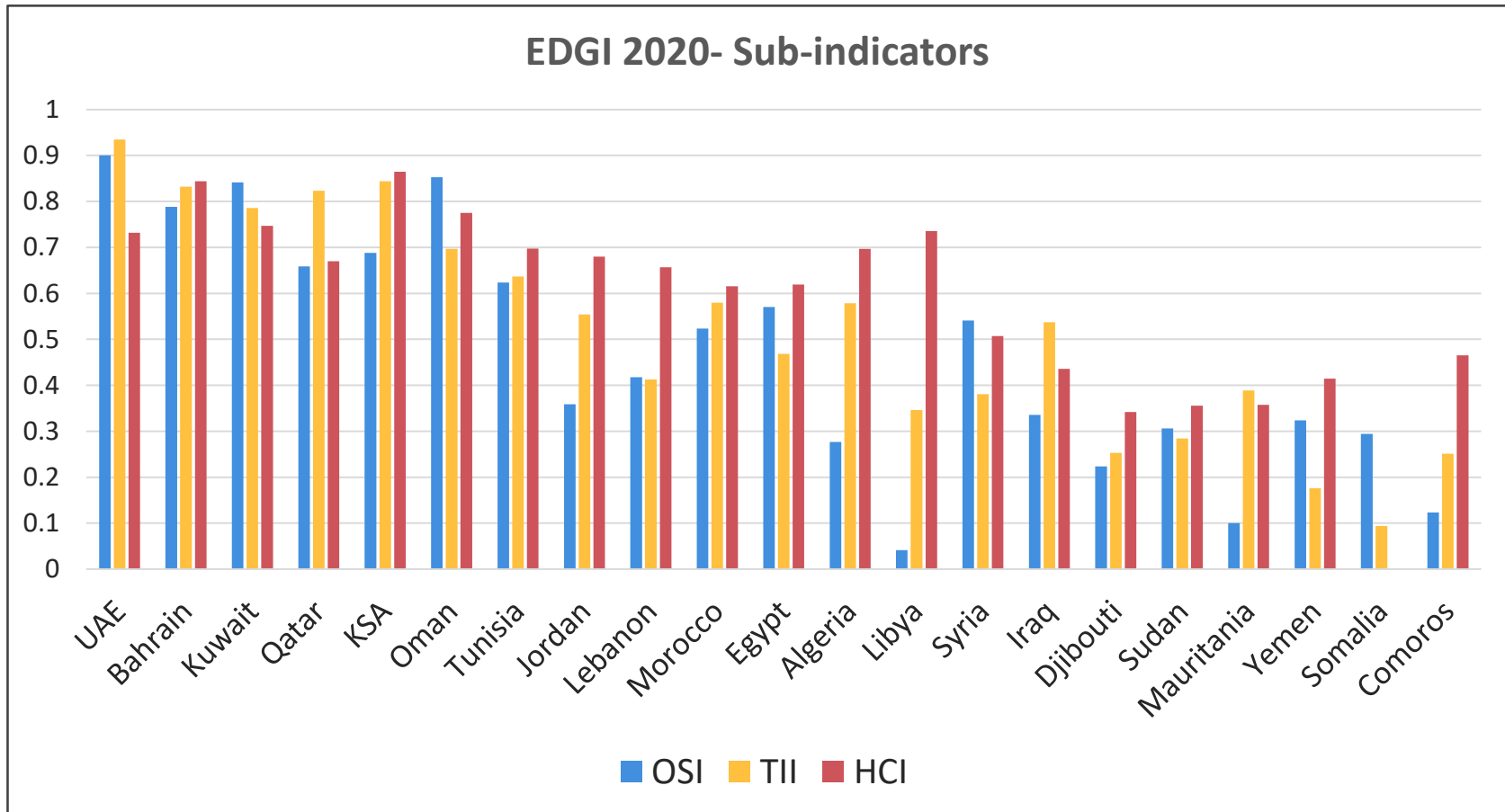
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EGDI in the Arab Region:

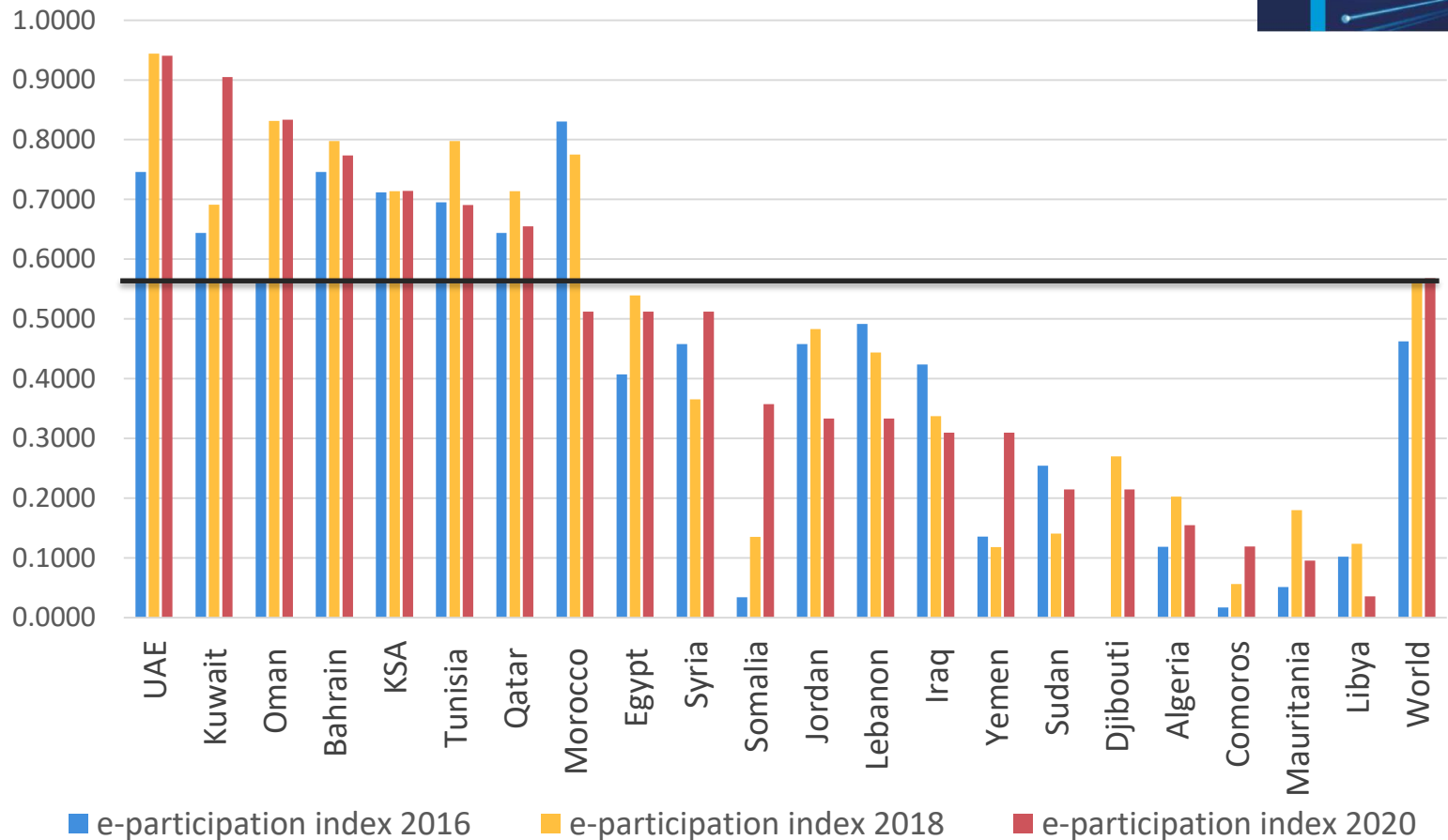
OSI is weaker than other sub-indicators in most Arab countries except for Kuwait, Oman & Syria,



E-Participation Index in the Arab Region:

Seven Arab countries have higher EPI than the World average.

EPI 2016,18,20

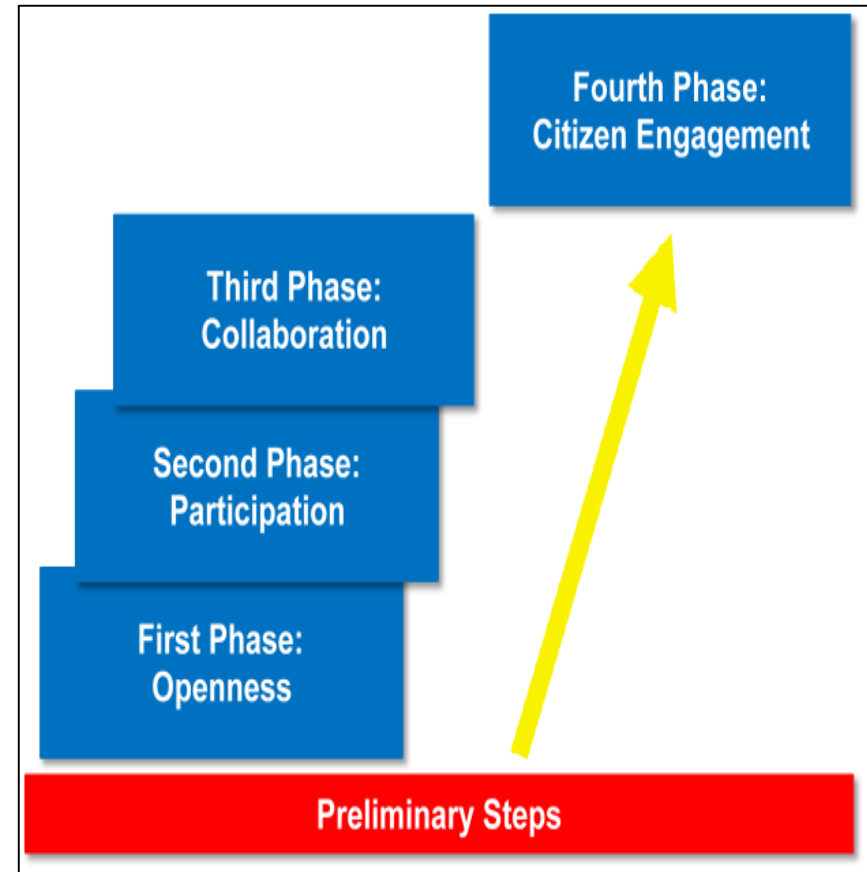


Regional Initiatives:

1- Fostering Open Government in the Arab Region

Open Government Principles:

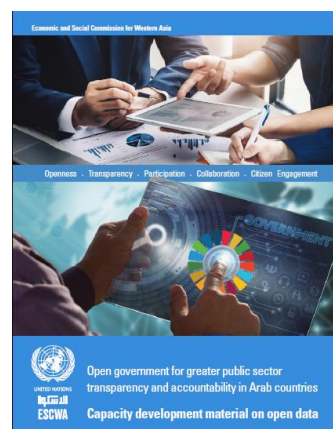
- **Openness:** better transparency and accountability
- **Participation and Collaboration:** enhanced interaction between government and citizen
- **Engagement:** Public can contribute ideas and expertise. Government can make more informed decision and policies.



ESCWA Project on Open Government, 2017-2019

<https://www.unescwa.org/sub-site/open-government-arab-region>

- Fostering Open Government in the Arab Region
- Capacity Development Material on Participation, Collaboration and Engagement
- Capacity Development Material on Open Data
- Legal Framework for open government and open data



Meetings, Workshops and Advisory Services

- An Expert Group Meeting (April 2017, Beirut)
- 2 Regional Workshops (September 2018 & June 2019, Beirut)
- 4 National workshops: Sudan (2018) and Jordan (March 2019), Syria (July 2019), Palestine (Jan 2020)
- Three advisory services related to national plan for open data: Jordan, Syria and Palestine.





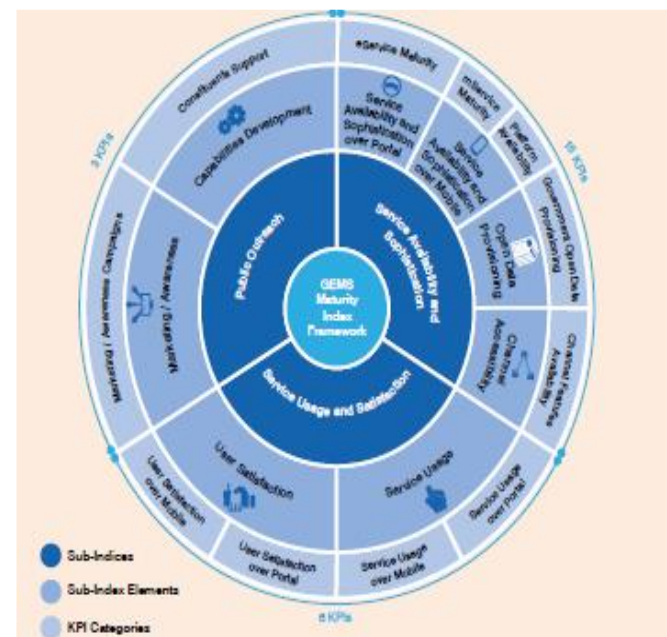
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Regional Initiatives:

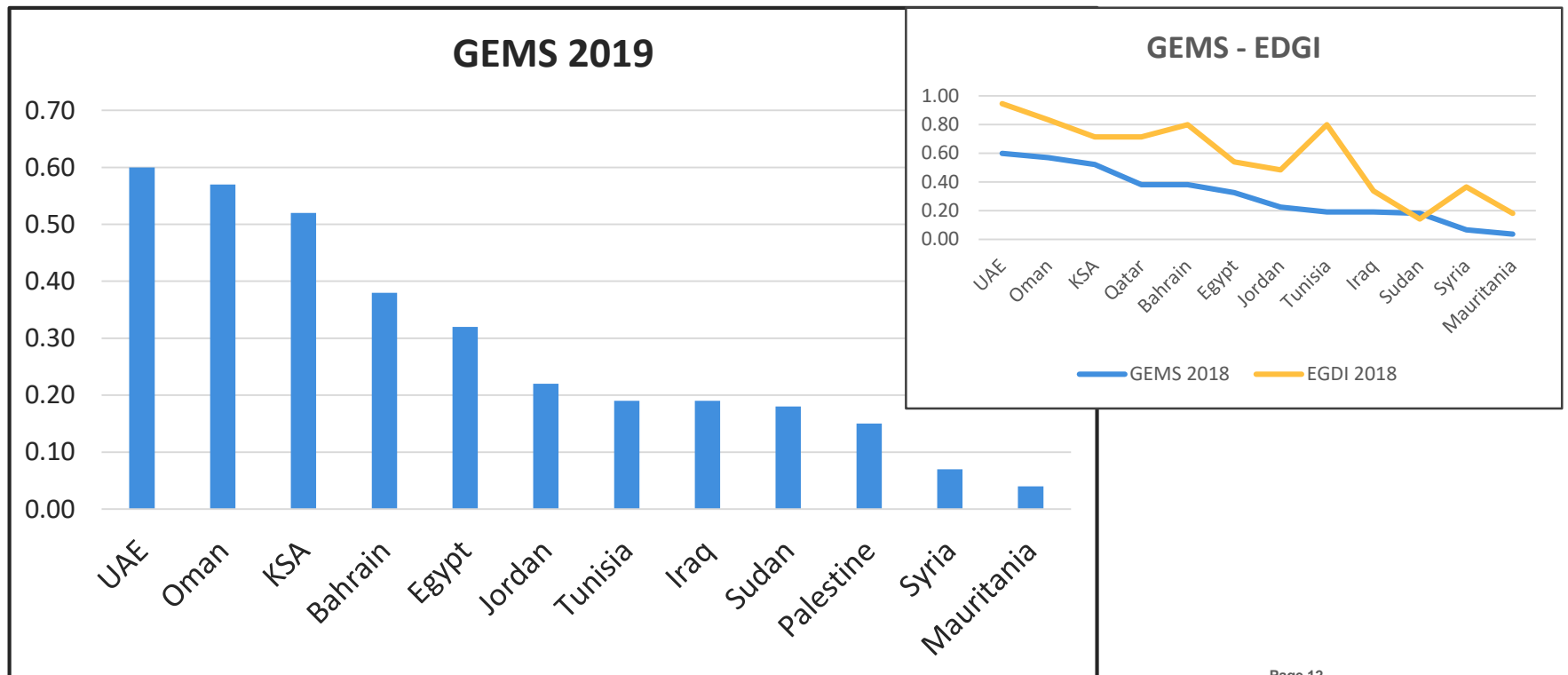
2- Government Electronic and Mobile Services

- Developed in collaboration between ESCWA and the Prime Minister Office in the UAE.
- A tool for **measuring progress** achieved at the national level in achieving the **transformation towards digital government**.
- Index that measure the maturity of other
 - Service **Availability and Sophistication**
 - Service **Usage and Satisfaction**
 - Public **Outreach**



Government Electronic and Mobile Services

- ESCWA started the deployment of GEMS in collaboration with its member countries in 2016
- In 2018, **12 Arab countries measured GEMS**
- A report summarizing the outcomes of this measurement was published in 2019.





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Regional Initiatives:

3 - Arab Digital Development Report

The ADDR and Process (links with WSIS and SDGs):

- Reviews the spread of digital technologies in the Arab countries
- Allows the identification of gaps and the areas for further development.
- In 2019, 10 countries participated in the process which enables the production of a regional report on digital development.
- The process will continue in the coming years



Arab Digital Development Report / Process



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The **ADDR** include **5 clusters**:

- Digital strategic framework
- Infrastructure, governance and legal environment
- Digital economy and economic development
- Digital transformation and social development
- Culture and media





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4 - Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders in the ESCWA Region (AIGLE)

Project Activity

Developing the AIGLE OnLine training Platform (AOLP)

<https://www.unescwa.org/sub-site/aigle>



Summary of Achievements

- Four modules in Arabic language.
- Distant and auto-learning.
- Two training of trainer's (TOT): Attended by 104 trainers from 14 Arab countries.
- 1573 government officials were trained.
- A hub for countries and regional case studies.

Opportunities for the Arab Region

1. **COVID-19** is a real opportunity for accelerating the transformation to Digital Government.
2. **Emerging Technologies** and new trends and applications
3. **Data** and its important role in digital government
4. **Reconstruction** in post-conflict countries
5. **Development Agenda 2030** and its SDGs

Priorities for the Arab Region

- Formulation of **strategy/plan for digital government**
- Development of plans for improving **infrastructure/broadband** and enhancing affordability
- Bridging **digital gaps**: Gender, Rural, Content, Disability
- Accelerating the development of **online government services**
- Adopting **Data-Centric** services
- Enhancing **Legal & regulatory framework** related to data
- Developing **e-Participation and e-Engagement**
- Continuing the improvement of **measurement**
- **Building capacity** especially on emerging technologies

Thank you

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