

Open Government Project

Promoting emerging technological trends for greater transparency and accountability in the Arab region

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Expert Group Meeting on open government: emerging technologies for greater government transparency and accountability in the Arab Region, 26-27 April 2017



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ESCWA Initiative

Fostering Institutional Development for Participatory Approaches towards the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Western Asia

Objective:

To build the capacity of ESCWA Member States to utilize technology to increase transparency and accountability and to adopt more effective and efficient participatory approaches in order to address root causes of conflict and prevent its potential relapse.

Context of the project: Governance



- The **focus on governance** and **competent institutions** is in the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The experience of the Millennium Development Goals revealed that without **effective, efficient, transparent and accountable government, coupled with national ownership of development goals**, the 2030 goals will not be attainable.
- **Building institutions that can address emerging needs in these countries is of high importance to the region and the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals.**

Context of the project: Participation



- **Participation**, is a process through which **all members** of a community or organization are involved in and have **influence on decisions** related to development activities that will affect them.
- Unfortunately, **most policies in the Arab region have not been formulated through a participatory approach** due to lack of channels of participation and limited involvement of civil society in decision-making processes.
- Complex issues has made it essential for government to find new **innovative ways to engage their citizens in decision-making** and to achieve better outcomes for their citizens and countries.

Context of the project: Technology



New technological trends, such as **access to information, open data, citizen-centric services and social media** are concepts that help government in providing **innovative inclusive participatory services** and enable citizens, NGOs and other stakeholders to use public data for providing services and solutions for sustainable social and economic development and reduce conflict and the impacts of it.

Main Objectives

Build the capacity of Member States to:

- 1) Effectively use technology to enhance transparency and implement the participatory approach to governance through utilization of open government **(Technology for development Division)**
- 2) Assess the damage and overall impacts of conflict **(Emerging and Conflict Related Issues Division)**
- 3) Apply a participatory approach: Government and civil society institutions **(Social Division)**



Links to the Sustainable Development Goals

- **Goal 16:** Promote peaceful and **inclusive societies** for sustainable development, **provide access** to justice for all and build elective, **accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.**

16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.



Links to SDGs

- **Goal 17:** Strengthen the **means of implementation** and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development (**Technology:** 17.6, 17.7)

17.6 Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on.....

17.7 Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on

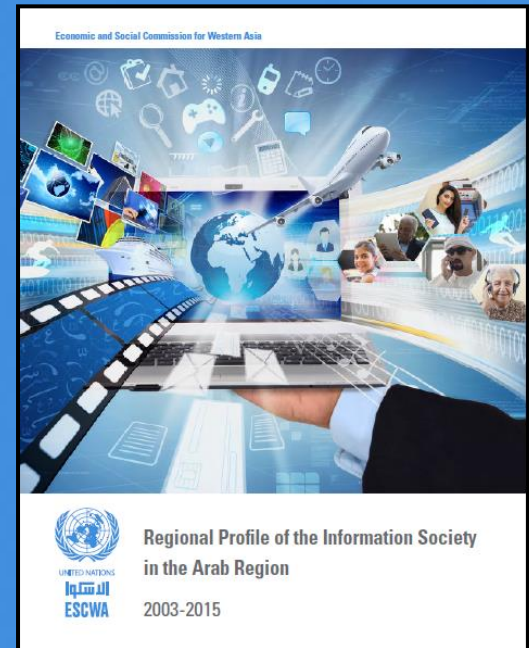
Status of the use of technologies in the Arab Region



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



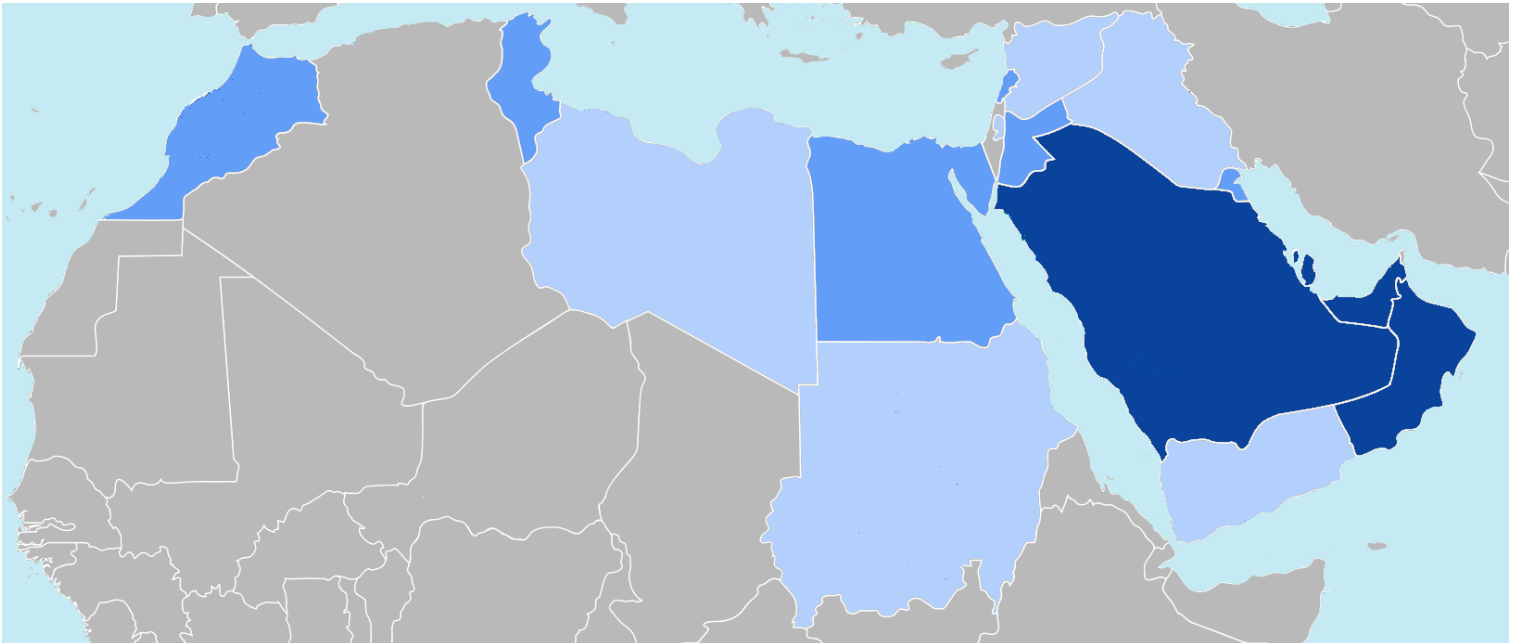
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Grouping of Countries according to their level of development in IS

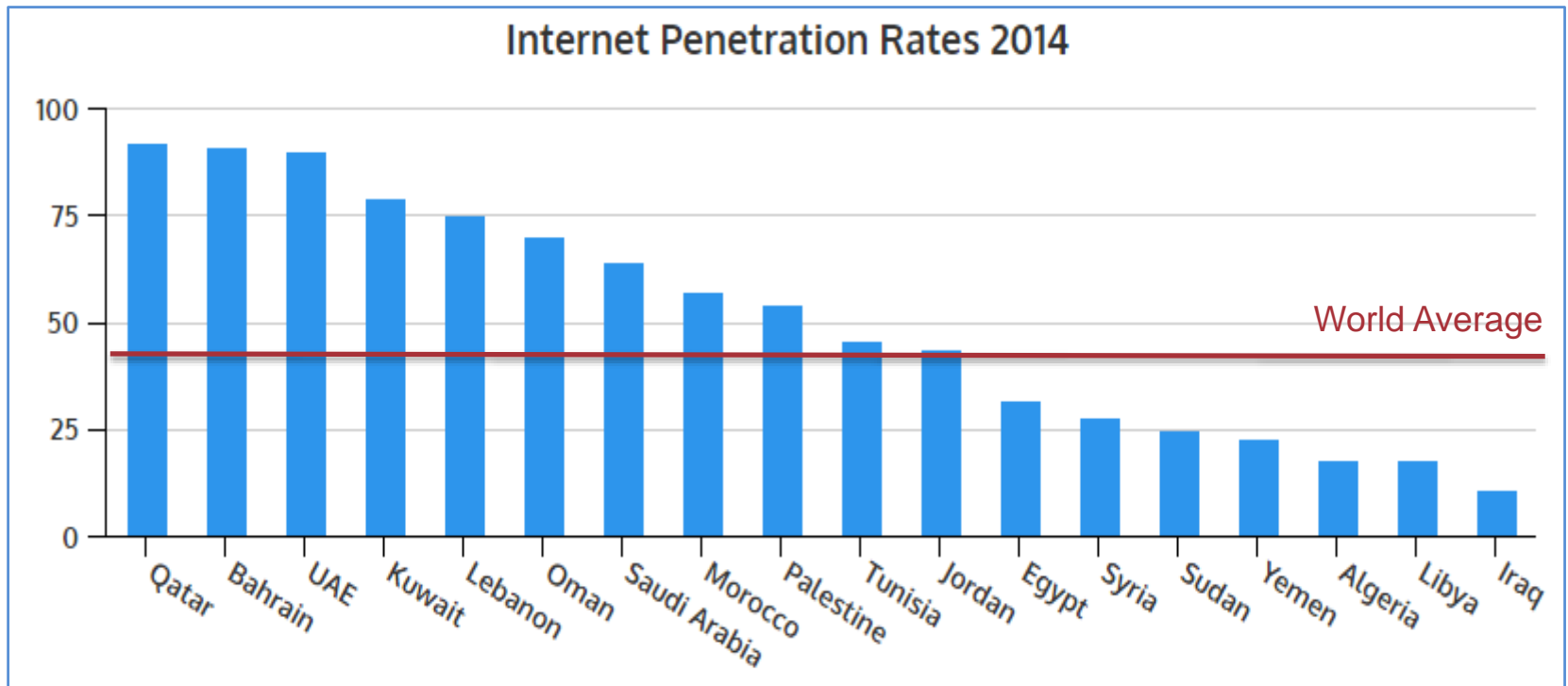
-  **First cluster:** most GCC: UAE and Qatar then Bahrain, KSA and Oman
-  **Second cluster:** Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Kuwait, Lebanon
-  **Third cluster:** countries under crises, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Sudan, Yemen and Libya





ICT Infrastructure: Internet Penetration

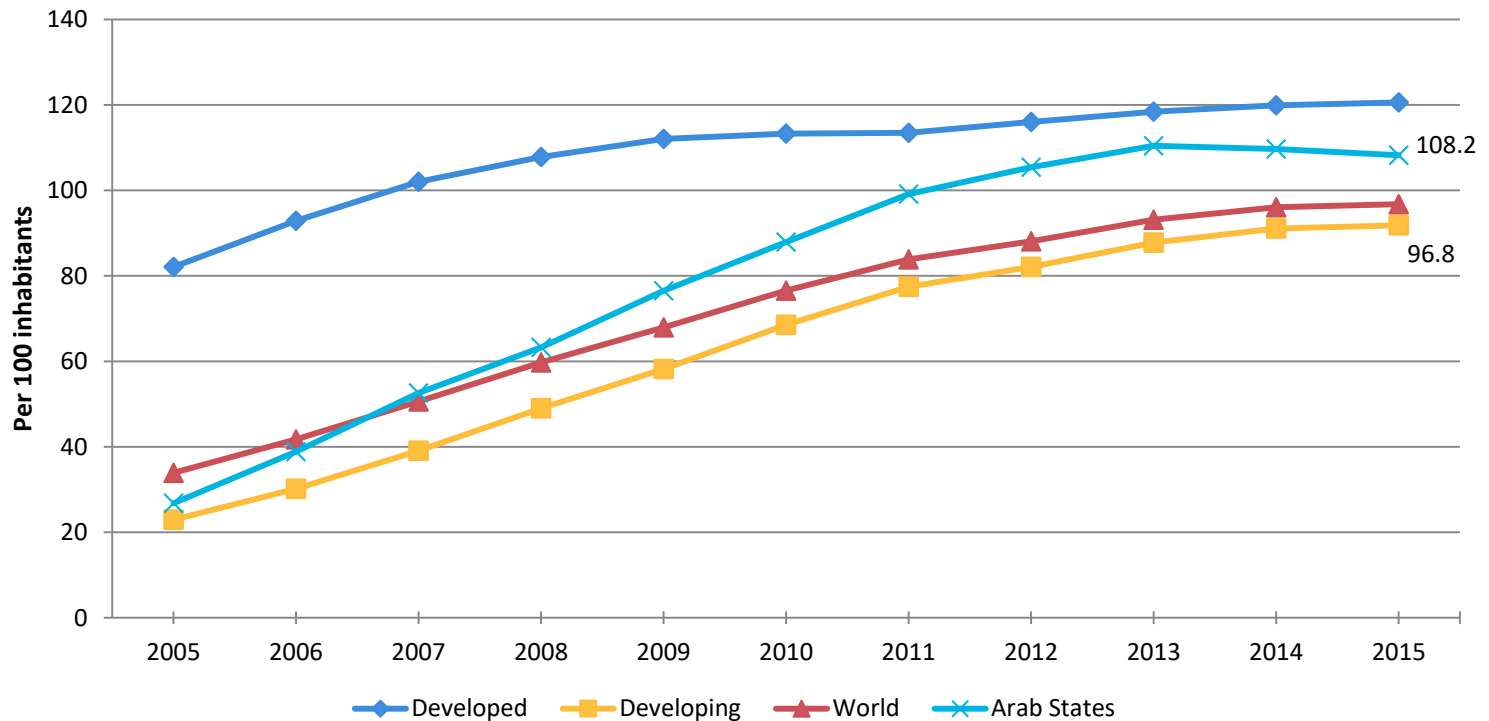
- The average penetration rate is 37% in 2014 which is lower than the global average at 43.4%





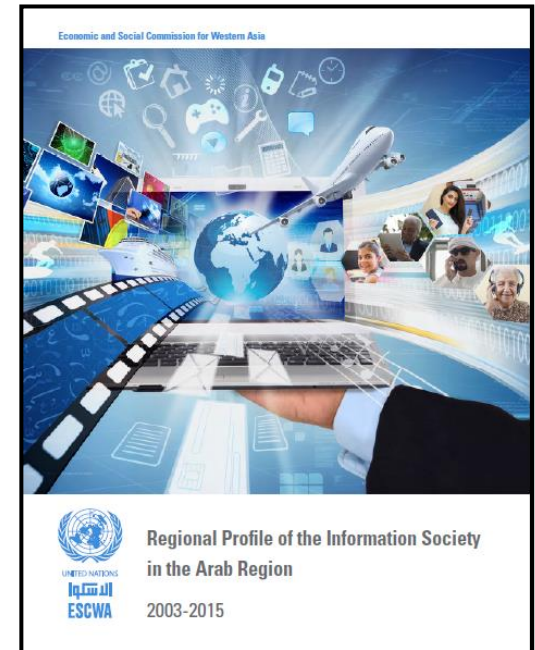
Mobile Penetration

- Strength:** The average penetration rate of mobile services reached 108.2% in 2015, which is higher than the global average at 96.8%



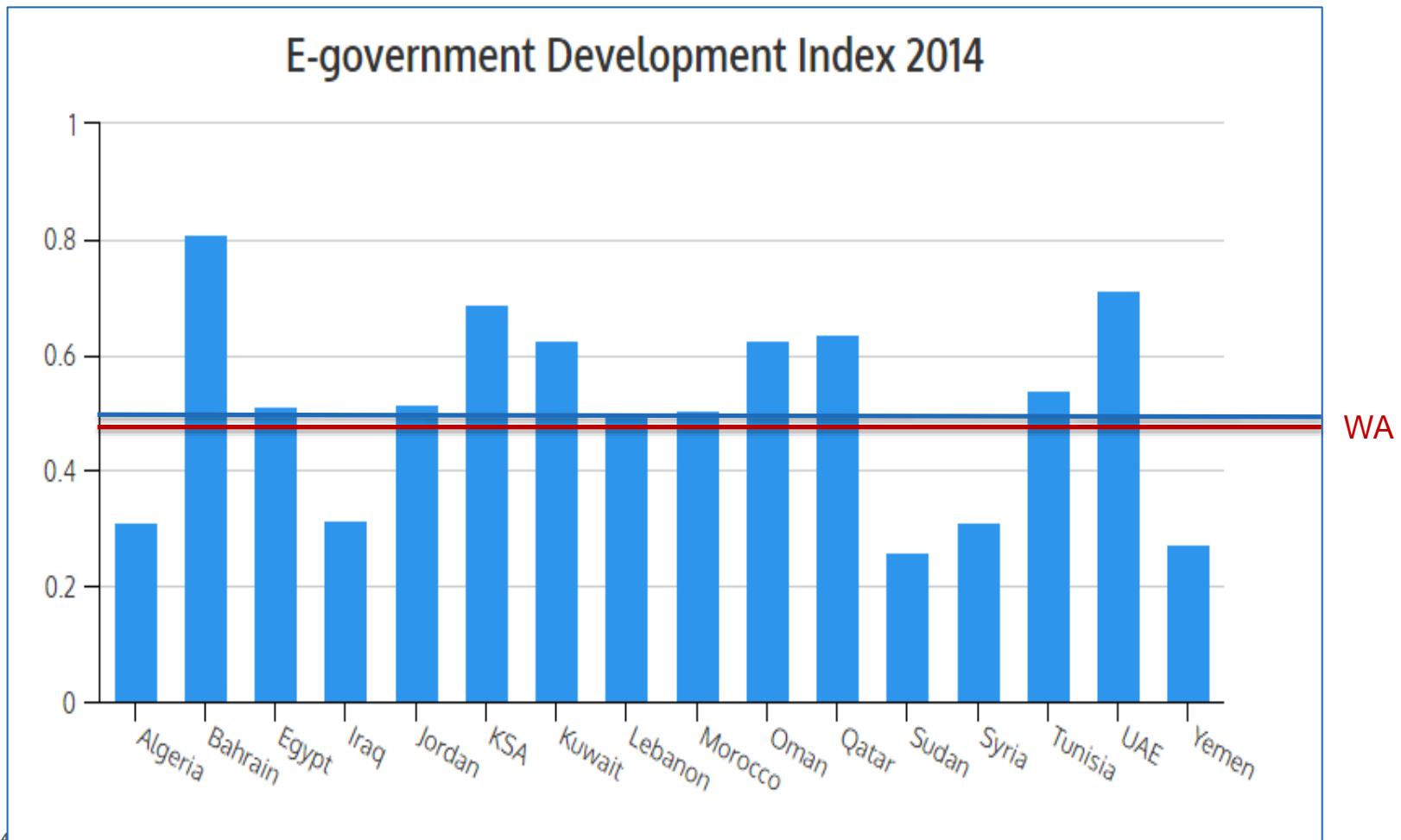
Arab Information Society Evolution 2003 - 2015

- The development, adoption and use of e-government has been **steadily evolving** in the past years in most countries.
- **Many factors helped the progress of e-government:**
 - growing number of Internet users,
 - rapid uptake of mobile devices and
 - social media.
- However the **political instability** has negatively affected the development of e-government in many countries.



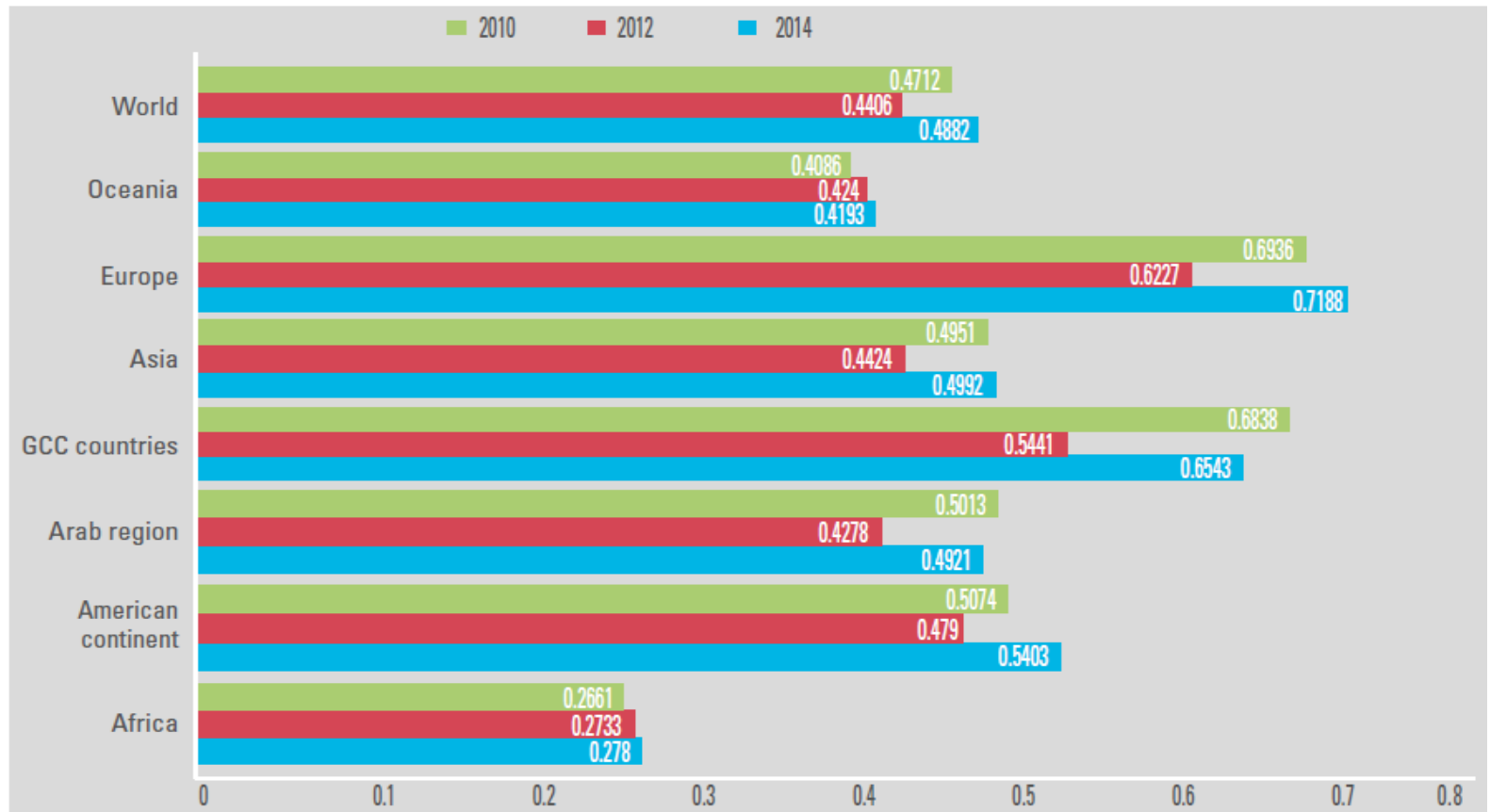
e-Government in the Arab region

The average of e-Government index in the region is 0.5 which is a bit higher than the world average at 0.49



e-Government in the Arab region

The GCC is ranked second as sub-region just after Europe



Open Government Project Activities



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Studies and reports

- **The Status of Open Government in the Arab region**
(Advanced draft April 2017)
- **Policy framework for promoting Open Government in the Arab region** (Advanced draft April 2017)
- **Innovation in Public sector** (Planned for September 2017)
- **Practical Guidelines** for promoting open government in the Arab countries (Planned for September 2017)



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Meetings and Workshops

- **Expert Group Meeting on Open Government** to discuss the draft of Policy framework for open Government and the status of open government in the Arab region (April 2017)
- **Two sub-regional Capacity Building Workshops** on the application of proposed Policy Framework for open government at national level (Sept 2017, November 2017).
- Capacity Building **Workshop on Innovation in Public Sector** (2017)



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National Activities

- **Three National Capacity Building Workshops (2018)**
- **National reports** for the application of Open government Framework in specific ESCWA member countries.
(Based on advisory service requests 2018)
- **Advisory services:** based on advisory service requests from member countries (2017 & 2018)



Open Government project Implementation Considerations

- Interaction/survey with member countries to customize the outputs & activities according to the needs of the Arab countries
- Interaction with other divisions at ESCWA to maximize the benefits and the impact of the project
- Collaboration with other International and Regional Organizations when possible
- Interaction with NGOs, private sector and Entrepreneurs



Open Government project

Sustainability

- The projects objectives will be sustained through the establishment of an on-line Community of Practice composed of standing group of experts and government officials.
- ESCWA will incorporate, in its advisory services program, the implementation of the ESCWA Guidelines on open government and innovation in public sector.
- ESCWA will promote the publication, studies electronically and in international and regional events.

Thank you



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