Accelerating the digital transformation of government services

Enabling countries to kickstart their digital transformation journey by adopting, deploying, and scaling digital government services through the digital building block approach.

Context and Challenge

For long time, governments have invested in vertical, monolithic digital solutions where each agency or department builds and maintains its own vertical solutions. This has resulted in a constant reinvention of the wheel and led to the creation of a lot of fragmentation of digital services and user experiences.

Continuing to develop bespoke applications and services that are narrowly scoped around specific user or single agency needs is exponentially increasing the overall cost needed to develop and digitalize government services across all sectors due to the duplication of investments and the inability by different agencies to reuse developed digital assets and resources that have not been developed in a generic manner but for a specific purpose.

In parallel, there is a need to raise the new generation of digital government services to meet new citizens' expectations and to move from a vision of a government that is serving itself to one that is citizen centered. Future digital government services should enable a "ONE citizen, ONE government" model where citizen's overall journey and life "moments" and needs e.g., birth of a child, getting married, etc. are considered as a whole as opposed to be treated as siloed or separate needs and where the citizen can receive and access integrated services based on his/her needs from a government that acts as one as opposed to siloed, multiple and separate agencies and departments.

The GovStack Initiative

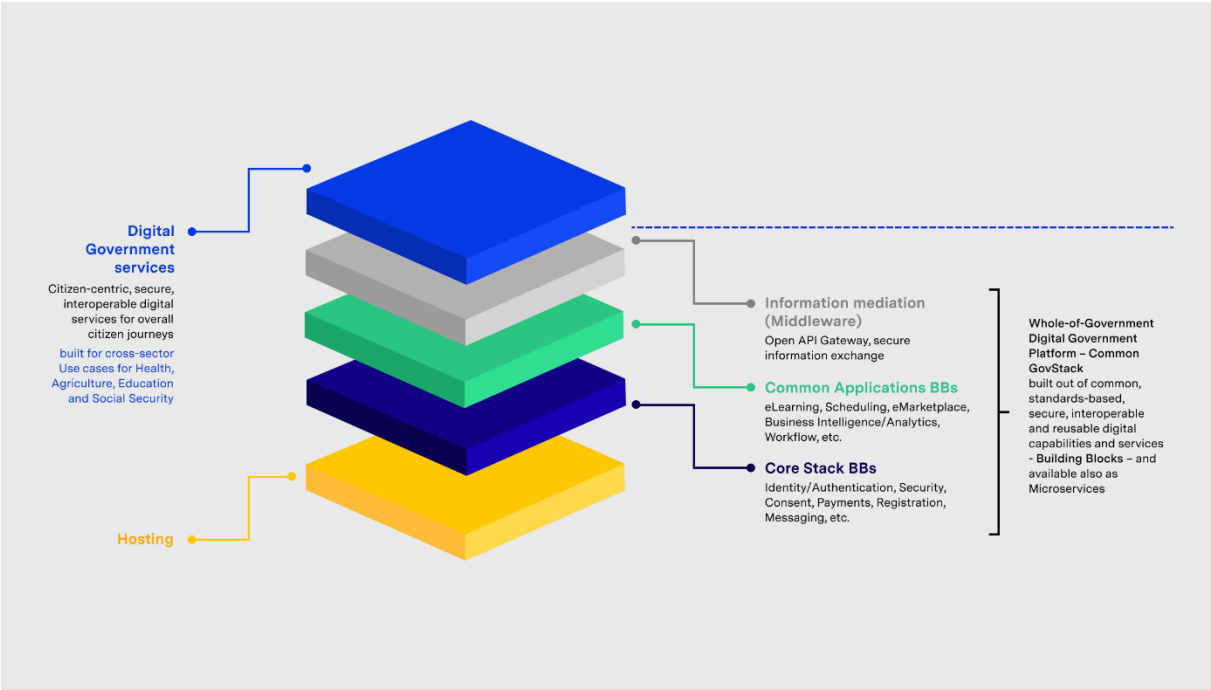
The GovStack Initiative, founded by Estonia, Germany, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL), aims to build a common framework and technical practice for the design of reusable and interoperable digital components – referred to as "digital building blocks" – needed to digitally transform government. By investing in digital building blocks which are easier to design, implement, and scale across sectors, GovStack is set out to help governments simplify the cost, time, and resource requirements necessary to create or modify their digital platforms, services, and applications.

GovStack Initiative vision: Our vision is that in five years, we can empower all governments – particularly those in low-resource settings – to take ownership of their digital futures by building more effective and cost-efficient digital government services. By simplifying the technology needed to build a digital government, we believe we can help countries to create digital government solutions that empower individuals and businesses while improving social well-being.

GovStack Initiative mission: To establish our vision, we aim to develop a secure and standard-based approach to designing and implementing generic digital public goods, which will simplify the costs, time, and resources needed for building digital government solutions. This approach, known as "digital building blocks," will enable any government to easily create and modify their own digital platforms, systems, services, and applications.

We believe that if we take an architectural approach centered around APIs and microservices to help unlock monolithic legacy systems where core data and services are siloed, then we increase the speed of IT project delivery, leading to more effective and cost-efficient digital governments which are also more responsive to the needs of businesses and their citizens.

Digital government as a platform



A digital government platform could be seen as a "Platform of platforms" or a "Government Technology Stack" that is constituted of a set of reusable common digital capabilities and services - also called Digital Building Blocks - that can be used by any government agency, department or other external stakeholder across different sectors to build new government or market-driven digital services and experiences to citizens without having to design, test and operate the underlying systems and infrastructure themselves. Common building blocks can be accessed via simple Open APIs which in turn provide access to the underlying infrastructure and can be easily replaced as needed.

Digital capabilities such as making a payment, identifying a citizen, registering for public services, collecting data or communicating with citizens among many others are all common across different use cases and government agencies and should be built only once but re-used by all and hosted on a common infrastructure. This will enable the “Government to act as a Platform” where the role of the government will transform to be a Service Enabler by moving from development of applications to making available public digital platform and reusable digital building blocks where multiple services can be developed on top of them.

Our Objectives

Our core objectives are:

- Develop Open Building Blocks requirements and API specifications based on selected SDG priority Use Cases and common experiences across countries
- Develop a Blueprint of a model “Whole-of-government Digital Government Platform”
- Implement a model of a mini “Whole-of-government Digital Government Platform” as a learning and sandbox environment. The platform, its blueprint and BB specifications will all be openly available as “Digital Public Goods” (DPG).
- Leverage the model Implementation for learning and capacity development
- Expand the model Implementation to include additional Building Blocks and to be self-sustainable
- Assist pilot countries to build their digital government integrated platform by leveraging and adopting the model implementation digital public goods

For more information and contact, please visit govstack.global