Creation of a GovTech Open Lab

POLICY BRIEF

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What is a GovTech Open Lab

A GovTech Open Lab is a laboratory for the development of digital and innovative solutions in the Greek public administration. It utilizes specially designed techniques for the development of digital solutions and the co-design of human-centric innovation policy. With fresh thinking through a co-design approach and a range of standard tools and original techniques, the GovTech Lab is an open space that facilitates the - seamless - cooperation of different public administration teams with external experts, civil society and the public.

Why?

A modern public administration should strive to proactively design digital solutions and pilot projects tailored to the needs of citizens and businesses within a shared space of collaboration that brings together public servants, the academia and research community, civil society organizations and the wider private sector.

Today, citizens, businesses and public administrations are dealing with policies that are highly complex. Societies are changing very quickly and as a result, the ways to draft rules and policies need to evolve at the same pace to

ensure that they are updated and address the fast-changing needs. In the digital world, societies require effective administration of new or revamped policies. To formulate such policies, policymakers should consider digital aspects across the whole policy cycle to ensure that the new policy proposals are ready for the digital age, future-proof and interoperable.

Aims

• To promote the delivery of innovative public services with reusable open-source solutions and interoperability by default

• To introduce open government processes and open data sets for tackling specific policy challenges of high social impact

• To promote collaboration, partnership and networking of multiple stakeholders

• To encourage the participation of 4-helix cooperation i.e. collaboration between public authorities, private sector, educational sector (universities and research) and the civil society in the elaboration of the solutions.

The approach

The Open GovTech Lab uses techniques, digital tools and open data to act as a canvas for experimentation and a flexible field for developing digital solutions and testing innovative policies across the whole spectrum of government action and public administration. Policy development groups from ministries and public administrations turn to the GovTech Lab for support in addressing immediate technological needs as well as complex, intractable systemic policy issues that require renewed approaches. The Open GovTech

Lab approach is flexible, adaptable and repetitive. Each project is individualized, always having as its main goal the better understanding of the people's needs and perspectives and the joint design of innovative digital solutions of applied policy to address them.

Services

The GovTech Lab provides digital solutions in ministries and public bodies and practical guidance to better understand the needs of the people trying to reach and in exceptional cases comprehensive support for the flexible development of implemented digital policy solutions.

Develops tools for designing digital solutions, policy making and the knowledge and skills to be used by central government officials and the wider public administration.

Focuses on three types of services:

- **GovTechStart - Quick diagnostic labs**: When a team from a ministry or public administration approaches the OpenGovTech Lab, a quick diagnostic short lab will take place in order to give everyone a chance to get to know each other better. The team of each public policy body learns more about the Open GovTech Lab and respectively the team of Open GovTech Lab will diagnose the implemented policy challenge that they will all be called upon to face together.

- **GovTech Sprint - Collaborative Policy Workshops**: These are intensive one- to three-day workshops aimed at either developing ideas and proposals to address a policy challenge identified during a LabGovStart or to design a larger project. Different groups of people will be brought together for the rapid production of new ideas and the cultivation of understanding and common commitments.

- **GovTech Pro** - **Integrated solution implementation**: These are larger projects that can last from three months to a year or more and involve intensive collaboration with service designers, ethnographers, data scientists and policy experts. We follow a complete process in which we define the problem, discover all its dimensions, develop test solutions and implement them.

The Advantages

According to a recent policy report by the Joint Research Center about GovTech Practices in the EU there are 4 main advantages for governments to invest their resources in the Gov Tech Labs:

- **Increasing agility and innovation in government**.By working with start-ups and SMEs, academia and research and civil society and by adjusting processes to facilitate this interaction, GovTech is expected to increase agility and innovation in government.

- **Modernizing their digital infrastructure, and hence becoming more efficient and user-friendly.** With Govtech labs governments are engaging with stakeholders that are considered innovative and engaged in developing frontier technologies. The results of an GovTech Lab can reduce the constraints of legacy IT infrastructure, prevent vendor lock-in, and increase the user experience of the public sector's infrastructure.

- **Intervention in a quasi-monopolistic market.** Existing government IT solutions tend to mostly come from a handful of large and established providers. An investment into GovTech from the side of the government might be to increase market dynamism. This could be done by creating competing products to introduce more competition into the market and reduce complacency, as well as increase innovativeness of the market participants.

- **Incentivize Local and European innovation.** Investing in Govtech leads to a more robust economy. By creating acceleration programmes and incubators for domestic start-ups and SMEs in GovTech, governments attempt to build a counterweight to the observed market dominance of non-EU companies. These considerations are similar to aims for digital sovereignty at EU level as part of the Digital Single Market.

Interreg
Mediterranean
+RESILIENT

www.plus-resilient.interreg-med.eu
E-mail: plus-resilient@regione.veneto.it
Tel. +32 2 743 7013
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Project partners