

EXAMPLES OF MODELS OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN DSIS' AND GOVERNMENTS:

Fellowships/internships.

These are periodical collaborations between IT/civic tech activist and government on tools/user experience analysis/process of opening data/creating public services. See examples from Code for America Fellowship Program or experiences from Code for All Fellowship Program.

Recommendation:

You should put attention to:

The willingness of the fellow and their supervisor, as this model of collaboration needs to be driven by enthusiasm and openness towards innovation. Sustainability of the project, as fellowships end after a fixed period of time (often only a few months), and government officials should be prepared and trained to carry on with the work.

Preparing the work for a fellow, as a fellowship starts long before the day of its official launch. If the government is committed to run a fellowship, it should invest in informing fellows on possibilities, priorities and challenges beforehand.

Providing services to governments

(in different legal forms including public procurement) which it's about using regular procurement channels for civic tech projects. Some articles show that for procuring IT projects governments need flexible procuring rules as "complex requirements cannot be fully identified at the beginning, so instead focus on continuous collaboration with suppliers to solve problems." See also exam-

Recommendation:

Be aware that very often when governments want to purchase product they are not looking for the "increase of democracy". Therefore, you have to behave more as business entity. There is also an existing challenge in combining the role of advocate or watchdog with providing services.

Hackathon

as defined by J. Tauberer is any event of any duration where people come together to solve problems. According to opinions gathered in the course of our peer learning meetings, hackathons very often do not generate sustainable solutions for different reasons including the lack of capacity on the side

Recommendation:

It is important to have a plan beforehand for how to engage government officials after the hackathon. They should bring real problems and challenges letting attendees to “come up” with the solution. It is also important to evaluate the impact of the hackathon by asking public officials what they got out of it. It is crucial to do monitoring and evaluation of hackathons. Think also about organizing Design Sprints which concentrate less on the technical side of the project.

Scaling/Replicating

This is a model of collaboration which engages civic tech organizations who decided to replicate a tool to another environment. It is not only “copying” of the tool but also requires adapting it to different legal, political or social circumstances. See lessons learnt from scaling Monitorizare Vot from Roma-

Recommendation:

Check your capacity. Both in terms of IT specialists and other experts engaged and the timeframe. Scaling can take some time and you may find surprising obstacles on the way. While scaling, communicate with the team who originally built a tool and treat the collaboration also as a mean to improve the product.

Trainings

serve as the mean to increase competencies of public officials, build relations with them and create mutual understanding by being “on the same page”.

Recommendation:

Preferably start with the people who are excited to learn. This is a great opportunity to help “reformers” within the government by creating opportunity to acknowledge their work, for example by inviting them to co-host the training. It is also an occasion to learn about practical challenges faced by public officials for example while opening data.

Improving open data policies.

Open data is yet another tool to support public officials. By helping them in elaborating successful policies you are narrowing the internal obstacles and supporting public officials in their day to day work. As the result, the institu-

Recommendation:

While building open data policies search what citizens ask about using FOI requests. This is an important indicator of what information is worth sharing in a more user-friendly way. You can also analyze other channels used by citizens to ask for data, information or services. Based on the above analysis, select some of the most important data bases on which you will focus first. This can be a win-win situation. Public officials will have less work with responding FOI requests and citizens will have an access to timely and updated information.

Labs

are central or local government innovation centers which are partnership spaces where government and other organizations experiment with new ways of solving old problems. They have a different kind of membership to the rest of government. They bring public servants together with wider teams of designers, researchers and developers, just as research about innovation sug-

Recommendation:

Labs are great place when you are looking for engaging with public officials and meet various stakeholders. Having a direct cooperation with public officials can increase the impact as seen for example in Dublin. On the other hand its success is dependent on political decision and even once successful Labs can be closed, as shown in the case of MindLab from Denmark.

OTHER SPACES/MEETUPS/HACKNIGHTS/CONFERENCES - LET THEM ALL MEET!

Knowledge is the key to collaboration. People need to know you and your project. There are more and more examples of successful collaborations that started accidentally after the presentation or “backstage” networking.

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