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## OpEd: The Transformation of the Public Sector Is a Challenge Facing All Governments; Saudi Arabia Is an Example of Huge Change

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The root and branch modernization and professionalization of the public sector happens—required to usher in an era of diversified economic growth and increased opportunities—is a change almost as big as Vision 2030 itself. It will have implications for the global discourse.

This week the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman started his American state visit in his vision for the future of Saudi Arabia and the opportunities it provides beyond it is an ambitious plan to liberalize the economy and introduce social reform and is an socio-economic change in the country's history.

The scope and reach of these reforms demand a rapid modernization of the way Saudi Arabia is administered. And they raise interesting points to consider for all governments and countries.

now to harness technology and data to drive transparency, accountability and efficient decision making.

The Saudi Vision's governance model promotes efficient planning within government and enables coordination among them to achieve common national goals. The Crown Prince's Office for Economic and Development Affairs has introduced a series of new government bodies and efforts, encouraging a culture of greater efficiency. These bodies include the National Performance Measurement (Adaa), the Delivery and Rapid Intervention Center (DRIC) and the Management Office of the Council of Economic and Development Affairs—all focus on supporting change.

Adaa was established to measure the progress and delivery of public entities within the Kingdom to achieve greater efficiency. Adaa tracks progress on initiatives, programs, and internationally established measurements, supporting all ministries working towards the goals set out in Vision 2030. However, Adaa is also looking outwards and has created a digital platform that collects and visualizes global data to help support better data-led policy in the global community.

The International Performance Hub (IPH) captures 1.2 million data points from leading sources such as the OECD and the World Bank, using technology developed with Microsoft and Google, ranging from education and energy to society and industry. It is aimed at helping governments and multi-lateral agencies make the transformation towards data-driven decision-making. Data-driven decision-making is key not just for fast-developing economies, but for long established ones that can help empower institutions and individuals to get one step closer to addressing the most pressing worldwide development challenges.

Importantly, Adaa has been praised by the World Bank on its ability to build a strong and extensive expertise on performance measurement. In some areas, such as quality of data collection, presentation and visualization, the Bank views Adaa's expertise as "astonishing, saying what could be found in many OECD governments". That indicates our journey may have made a significant contribution to the discourse on public sector reform, from Boston to Beijing.

Easy, intuitive data delivery is key to making sure that the Saudi population is kept at the center of which is essential for Vision 2030. That is why Adaa is also capturing citizens' feedback to make sure that the voices of the different communities are heard in the evaluation of government performance. Beneficiary Experience employs several methodologies including evaluation applications, mystery shoppers, public satisfaction polls and focus groups—something that governments across the world are increasingly focused on.

There are early, encouraging, signs that reform is already working in Saudi Arabia. For example, the number of women in the workforce went up 11 percent in the last quarter due to deregulation and

Government online services have drastically increased. The WEF Global Information Saudi Arabia now ranks 18th globally, compared to the less stellar 73rd position in 2 Kingdom is moving towards its goal to augment SME contribution to GDP: in the third operational income for the segment increased 11% compared to the same quarter of million). We aim to improve the private sector contribution to GDP from 40% to 65%. The only way we will know if we achieve that, and the Vision 2030 program more broadly and measure progress, regularly and transparently.

The task at hand is monumental. We want to move away from an economy based on must completely transform the way we look at our resources and evaluate our economic geographic, cultural, social, demographic and economic advantages are all conducive to a diverse and sustainable economy. But we need a public sector built on technology, not established metrics to get there.

It's easy to talk about scale and change, but people don't believe talk, they believe in measuring a broader sweep of indicators than ever before. We understand the work we understand our citizens are watching. As we change, we hope to share the lessons with others—the complexities of the modern world will demand much of our public sector a similar transformation from government agencies and development communities across

**About the author:** *Husameddin AlMadani is the Director General for the National Center for Measurement in Saudi Arabia (Adaa). He is at the forefront of the performance revolution. The Center he leads is tasked with measuring the impact and delivery of the Kingdom's 2030 agenda. He is also a member of the Vision 2030 Strategy Committee headed by Mohammed bin Salman. In his capacity as a leader of Adaa and the country's foremost performance measurement, Al Madani has been featured in media including NPR, USA and the World Bank blog.*

