# eGovernance, communication, media

## Advisory Service

### The challenge

Information technology has changed our world considerably. The way we communicate and manage data resources has a great impact on political, social and economic processes. Spaces in which opinions are formed can be opened up or restricted. Data can be used to make processes more efficient and effective, but they can also be misused in order to exert control and weaken others. How can citizens, civil society and the private and research sectors participate in the processes of communication and data use, and how can they help to shape these processes? How are digital technologies and communications applied in order to make political, social and economic processes more needs based, participatory, transparent, efficient and effective?

### Our approach

We assist our partners in integrating policy communication and eGovernance according to need and adapted to the relevant context in reform and transformation processes, and to strengthen the media as an independent entity in this context. We are guided in our actions by the principles of good governance, that is, the value-led design of governance systems based on human rights standards. Through this approach, we are seeking to achieve transparency, participation, and freedom of information and opinion. In conjunction with this, we are looking to make processes, such as the service orientation of administrations and the use of digital infrastructure to optimise resource use, more efficient. We support state and non-state actors, the former by preparing and empowering them to create general conditions for analogue and digital communication, that is, by assisting with disseminating and using information and data and by unlocking opportunities for dialogue and participation. We help citizens and organised civil society in making use of these opportunities for participation and effectively contributing their own topics and interests to the policy-making process.

### Our services

#### Media for development

Independent and robust media play a key role in the democratic development of societies. Given the growing significance of digital data and social media, media outlets and media professionals have a role to play as the 'Fourth Estate' within the state by using information, analysis and debate to support and critically examine societal change. Additionally, the media have a major responsibility to build constructive relationships in conflict situations and fragile contexts. We advise our partners on media ethics and their application, and on applying and analysing information about the risks and opportunities of data use by the media. The goal is to ensure proficient and balanced reporting. We advise our partners on the foundations and implications of the right to information. We also support work to establish networks of journalists, citizen reporters and civil-society organisations and to create platforms for dialogue between the media and the state.

#### Politics is communication

Every government and administration wishing to implement reforms effectively needs to inform, explain, clarify, listen and respond in order to gain trust, acceptance and legitimacy. This ideally allows them to strengthen the ability of citizens, civil society and the private sector to actively and critically support reforms. Target group specific messages and communications instruments are used to communicate the need for reforms, repeatedly show the overall direction of those reforms, address uncertainties, and use dialogue to create space for the reconciliation of

interests. Initiatives teaching people how to use methods and instruments of policy communication also address the organisation of civil society. Support is provided to help individuals articulate their interests effectively, assert those interests and take part in the political process. On an overall level, we advise our partners on integrating communication into the political process as a core and management task from the outset, and on developing and employing communications strategies and instruments which also facilitate pro-active dialogue and, by extension, feedback from the different public spheres of policy-making and society. We support the establishment of effective communications departments, and develop programmes for media-related and communication needs.

### eGovernance – eGovernment and eParticipation

eGovernance helps to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of governments and administrations and to make relationships between state and non-state actors more transparent, needs based and participatory. eGovernance therefore covers eGovernment and eParticipation, which are mutually influencing. We advise our partners on integrating digital applications into government and administration work and on interacting with citizens, civil society and the private sector. This includes the development of specialist electronic procedures, information and knowledge management systems, open data portals, and eProcurement and eRecruitment systems. Added to this are digital services for citizens and the private sector which make contact with administrations simpler, more time efficient and more transparent. We also provide support with the development and design of digital participation platforms in the policy cycle as

a whole, from agenda setting to evaluation. Participation portals, petitioning platforms and crowd-sourcing initiatives work hand in hand with offline offerings to provide a low threshold for participation. We are informed here by the guiding principle of open government. In this context, we view open data and data protection as a building block and a means to an end when it comes to promoting transparency, participation and collaboration.

### The benefits

Citizens, civil society and those involved in policy-making and administrative work benefit from the specialist knowledge and application examples, as well as methods and instruments in the areas of media, communication and eGovernance. The impact of reform and transformation processes is strengthened thanks to fair, participatory and inclusive discourse between policy-makers and the general public. Analogue and digital processes are interlinked and shaped to make them coherent in this context.

### An example from the field

Armenia is undertaking a comprehensive process of territorial reform which has its proponents and opponents. Like the public, specialist groups and civil society, these individuals are being informed and consulted as part of a strategic communication process. At the same time, digital services are being improved, internal work processes made more efficient and transparent, and citizens given the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes.