FAST FACTS

UNDP's CivicTech and GovTech Work in Asia - Pacific

Introduction

The Asia-Pacific region is home to over 4.3 billion people and some of the world's fastest-growing digital economies, offering significant opportunities to leverage digital innovation for governance and citizen engagement. But it is also witnessing a worrying trend: civic space is shrinking, and public trust in institutions varies widely across countries in the region. This contraction manifests in various forms, including restrictive legislation, suppression of dissent, and limitations on freedom of expression.

UNDP has long recognised that accountable, inclusive and effective governance is crucial for achieving sustainable development. Without principles such as accountability, transparency, participation, and inclusion, development efforts risk being undermined, as weak or corrupt governance remains a major driver of persistent underdevelopment. What is changing today is the growing role of technology in shaping governance and citizen participation. CivicTech and GovTech provide new possibilities for civic engagement, overall transparency, and government efficiency.

The region is also home to over 750 million young people aged 15 to 24, accounting for nearly 60% of the world's youth population. This demographic potential presents a unique opportunity: youth can drive change, contribute fresh ideas, and participate actively in shaping governance systems. Harnessing this potential requires institutions and development partners to create inclusive spaces for participation and to ensure that young people's contributions translate into tangible outcomes. UNDP is committed to strengthening and promoting inclusive, effective, and accountable governance through a people-centred, systemic approach that is innovative and draws on the opportunities offered by digitalisation.

What is CivicTech and GovTech?

Various international organisations and institutions have developed complementary definitions of CivicTech and GovTech, and UNDP has adopted the following.

CivicTech refers to digital tools that enable citizens to access, engage with or influence public information and governance processes. Such tools primarily focus on one or more of the three dimensions: (1) providing access to and understanding of public information; (2) engaging citizens in policy, decision-making, or feedback processes; and (3) facilitating front-end access to public services. Across these

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CivicTech and GovTech in Asia-Pacific

- CivicTech and GovTech initiatives have **expanded rapidly since 2012**. A total of **103 initiatives** were mapped.
- **CivicTech is more widespread than GovTech**, and many adopt **hybrid citizen–government approaches**.
- **Youth are key drivers**, leading **35% of initiatives**, though only **10% target youth directly** revealing an opportunity to better engage young, tech-savvy populations.
- **UNDP led 15 initiatives** across **9 countries**, working at subnational, national, and regional levels.
- **Eight UNDP initiatives directly engaged youth**, strengthening citizen–government connections, improving public services, and enhancing transparency through technology.

Source: UNDP (2025), A Stocktake and Review of CivicTech and GovTech Initiatives in the Asia-Pacific

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areas, the emphasis is on enhancing transparency, accountability, citizen participation, and accessibility of public services, with the broader aim of strengthening trust in governance and democratizing access to decision-making.

GovTech, on the other hand, focuses on supporting government service delivery and modernising internal systems and processes to improve efficiency. GovTech initiatives and tools primarily target two areas: digitising and securing access to government services for citizens and businesses, and digitising workflows, integrating systems, and enhancing core administrative processes. Across these areas, the focus is on improving government performance, scalability, and reliability, while often intersecting with citizen-facing functions.

They are complementary tools that can enhance the effectiveness of government, through empowering citizens to engage with and influence public decision-

making, fostering transparency and accountability, and through equipping governments with the tools to streamline operations and respond efficiently to public needs.

UNDP in Action

Following an extensive mapping of CivicTech and GovTech initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region, with a particular focus on youth-led efforts, this 2-pager details UNDP's previous and ongoing efforts to support Civic Tech and GovTech in Asia-Pacific.

In **Nepal**, UNDP supports democratic governance and digital civic engagement at both national and local levels. Through the *Election Support Project (ESP)*, UNDP and the Election Commission of Nepal launched the *My Vote Matters* campaign, mobilizing 400 online volunteers to encourage first-time youth voters and reaching over 200,000 people nationwide. The initiative also led to the launch of the *Nirwachan Sikshya* mobile app to promote electoral education. At the subnational level, in *Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City*, UNDP helped strengthen grievance redress systems like *Hello CM* and *Namaste Mayor*, resolving over 300 complaints and improving transparency in local governance. These hybrid CivicTech–GovTech initiatives enhanced accountability, inclusion, and service delivery, with a focus on women and marginalized groups.

In **Timor-Leste**, UNDP is advancing digital democracy and local governance through the *Timor-Leste Parliament Project* and the *Strengthening Integral Local Development Project*. The Parliament Project promotes youth engagement through tools like Tetun-language WhatsApp stickers, the *Uma Komunikasaun* (Communications House), and the *People's Parliament* app, improving public understanding of parliamentary processes. Complementing this, the local governance project—supported by the EU—enhances decentralization and transparency. It has trained over 300 local officials on the *Municipal Portal*, a national data platform used to build youth capacity in data analysis and public participation. Together, these initiatives are creating a more open, youth-inclusive, and tech-enabled governance ecosystem.

In **Indonesia**, UNDP is promoting accountability and citizen participation through the **SP4N-LAPOR!** system, the country's national complaints-handling platform linking 34 ministries, 96 institutions, and 493 local governments. The platform allows citizens to submit feedback via mobile phone and has earned strong public confidence, with an 84% user retention rate and 82.9% recommending it. SP4N-LAPOR! strengthens transparency and citizen trust by enabling responsive, data-driven public service delivery nationwide.

In the **Philippines**, UNDP and the Ministry of the Interior and Local Government (MILG) of BARMM are implementing the **Localizing e-Governance for Accelerated Provision of Services (LeAPS)** program to strengthen digital governance, transparency, and citizen engagement. Its key tool,

DevLIVE+, allows local governments to collect and visualize data on community vulnerabilities, informing evidence-based decisions. Currently used in multiple municipalities, DevLIVE+ has guided local assistance programs and planning. The initiative also supports the development of the **#DigitalBangsamoro Portal**, a one-stop digital platform for citizen-centered services and open governance in the region.

In **Bangladesh**, UNDP's **Aspire to Innovate (a2i)** initiative, in partnership with the government, has transformed public service delivery and governance through digital innovation. By integrating citizen voices into policy and promoting youth participation, a2i has expanded access to digital public services through thousands of service centers and the National Portal. The *KYC Study (Know Your Citizen)* and *E-Participation Platform* allow citizens, especially youth, to contribute to policymaking, budgeting, and project planning. The initiative also builds digital and future-ready skills among young people, creating a more inclusive and participatory governance model that is now being shared internationally through South-South cooperation.

Across Asia-Pacific, UNDP's CivicTech and GovTech initiatives are bridging citizens and governments, improving transparency, accountability, and youth engagement to build more responsive and inclusive governance systems across Asia and the Pacific.

More recently, in May 2025, UNDP, in partnership with the **Open Government Partnership**, **Accountability Lab**, and **CurveUp**, launched the **Regional Civic Tech Innovation Challenge** to identify and support **youth-led technology solutions** that strengthen governance across Asia and the Pacific. The initiative received **251 applications from 30 countries**, reflecting strong regional interest in using digital innovation to enhance public participation, transparency, and accountability.

The Challenge showcased a diverse range of youth-driven ideas—from citizen feedback tools and digital petition platforms to AI-powered service improvements and inclusive access to local government systems. These solutions demonstrate how civic technology can advance open, participatory, and responsive governance while also addressing areas like climate resilience, digital inclusion, and local development. The initiative also revealed a need to **support more women-led teams**, highlighting UNDP's continued commitment to building **inclusive innovation ecosystems** that empower all young people to shape more transparent and accountable governance.

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