TRA
TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY
هيئة تنظيم الاتصالات

United Arab Emirates

2016

Guidelines for
**E-Participation and Social Media
for Government Entities**
of the United Arab Emirates

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1. Introduction

Today, governments around the world face challenges that dictate a number of priorities on top of which is the need for innovation in providing quality government services that meet the aspirations of the citizens and are efficient in terms of output, cost-effectiveness, social justice and distribution. Another priority is to focus on the needs of citizens as the center for the main axis for the services and government policies.

Social networks, as one of the most important aspects of the digital age, have presented various government entities unprecedented opportunities for innovation in policy making and provision of smart services that focus on the citizen by involving the citizen himself in various stages of the design, delivery and evaluation of those services and policies.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, has expressed his vision on the impact of social media and the possibility of employing it positively for the benefit of the citizen and society:

Figure 1- Tweets for His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum on the role of social networking

Aiming to encourage leadership and empower the mGovernment, Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), launched this updated version of the guide which was initially issued in 2011 to assist federal entities to consolidate e-participation practices and develop them systematically.

2. Objective of the Guidelines

Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) published the first edition of this guide in 2011. Since then, many countries around the world (and in the region) applied this practice due to its effectiveness in providing the awareness and practical knowledge required for the success of e-participation practices. This guide also enabled many governments to exploit social media optimally.

Case Study: Britain

The British Cabinet Office issued a new version of guidelines for social media for civil servants (Social Media Guidance for Civil Servant). The guidance aims to encourage and enable civil servants to use social media appropriately to enhance the work of the government.

The introduction of the guidance stresses that "social and digital media can help deliver the civil service to the people served. Gone is the time when an unknown unreachable man in an office of the British government would take a decision on behalf of others. New digital technology is helping government employees all over the country to actively participate with the public. We can promote what we do, lure new ideas, and represent the government's point of view in the debate. But all of these benefits are associated with greater responsibilities; we are being scrutinized more than ever before. It is acceptable that people demand standards when dealing in the digital space just like in the real world."
Source: Arab portal for technology of future government www.01government.com (Twitter: @01Govt)

The first version of this guide proved itself impactful and successful, as UAE Government witnessed many since it started implementing it. On top of these developments is the launch of mGovernment in 2013 and declaring 2015 the year of innovation.

In line with these developments, TRA launched the updated version of the guideline which aims to achieve the following:

• Provide government entities with a documented reference that guides them through to the optimal way of using social networking tools with the aim of providing customers with better service standards, interacting more with them, and increasing their involvement in the service evaluation process.

• Provide practical examples and case studies from around the world to demonstrate how social media contributed to the development of government services and the increase of citizens' happiness.

• Provide a practical guide that explains how to use some of the most important sites and applications of social media such as Facebook, Twitter and others.

• Provide a framework for a practical plan according to a timetable that enables federal entities to achieve the required progress in implementing the document's guidelines.

3. Scope and Target Audience

The scope of this guide can be defined as follows:

• This guide serves all federal entities (ministries, entities, and programs) and also can be used by local government entities in the United Arab Emirates.

• The guide features e-participation and social networking tools as defined in the "glossary" of this document. These tools include, for example, social networks (such as Facebook) and social networking tools such as Wiki, blogs and others.

• This guide has been developed mainly to be a reference for e-participation practices and social networking without focusing on a particular tool or site due to the rapid changes these sites and tools experience. But, in order to offer support to all government entities, specific references for the social networking tools used most in the UAE have been provided (See attached appendix below).

4. Accompanying Documents

The following additional documents are available with the guideline. They aim to help government entities to manage e-participation activities and the use of social networking tools more effectively:

• E-participation for the development of government policies and services (A practical guide for successful planning and implementation of the initiatives of e-participation). It is a document that contains a framework to support the entities in the development of a detailed action plan according to specific stages that any government entity can apply in order to successfully launch and manage e-participation initiatives.
• Basics of using Facebook: Specialized guide for governmental entities' employees
• Basics of using Twitter: Specialized guideline for governmental entities' employees

• Basics of using YouTube (YouTube): Specialized guide for governmental entities' employees
• Basics of using LinkedIn: Specialized guide for governmental entities' employees

5. Basic Definitions

• Social media tools: These are tools allocated for social interaction and communication via the World Wide Web using mobile devices such as phones and tablets. Social media uses these means to enable individuals to produce content and share it with others.
• Government entity: Any federal government entity within the United Arab Emirates, including ministries, entities, departments and programs.
• Social media owned by the government: These are the social networking tools or sites owned by any government entity such as blogs on any site of government websites.
• Commercial social media: Social networking sites that are not owned by a government entity. Examples include social networking sites (like Facebook & Twitter), or blogging sites (such as WordPress).

6. About E-participation

E-participation may be defined as "involving citizens and customers, through information and communication technologies, in the process of government work in terms of designing, implementing and evaluating policies and services, as well as participation in decision-making to make government administration participatory, inclusive, cooperative and purposeful in order to achieve customer satisfaction and happiness of citizens."

These technologies assist government entities in increasing customer access opportunities which help them understand their needs and expectations regarding government services and public policies as well as involving them in the evaluation and rectification of the provided services.

Naturally, there will be both a quantity and quality expansion of e-participation tools that can be used by government entities in order to reach customers and interact with them, but that does not eliminate the traditional channels such as meetings, surveys, telephone interviews, radio advertisements, television and others.

In its study of e-government the UN adopts a model of three stages of e-participation as follows:

• E-Information: In this stage, government entities are using information and communication technologies in order to provide the public with general information, as well as enable them to submit requests for information.

• E-Consultation: In this stage, government entities move beyond the stage where they provide the public with information to engage them deeply in discussions about public services and policies and consult them on how to develop them.

• E-Decision-making: This stage represents the highest stage of e-participation where government entities use information and communication technologies to effectively involve the public in taking decisions about public policies and services as well as methods to present them.

Figure 2- E-participation model of the UN

7. Tools for E-participation and Social Networking

Hundreds of sites and applications in the digital space can be placed under the name of social networking tools many of which can be employed for the implementation of e-participation practices. Due to the huge number and diversity in terms of the nature of the use, the target audience, and popularity, it is useful to categorize these tools.

Here are two ways to categorize social networking and media tools to provide different perspectives. The first classification is an updated version of a classification widely used among specialists and researchers (Table 1)

#	Description	Type	Example
1	Sites or applications that allow users to compile an intro-ductory file about them, publish content and communi-cate with other users.	Social networks	Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter
2	A type of social media that allows users to post images, videos or audios and share it with others.	Multimedia participatory networks	YouTube, Insta-gram, Snap Chat
3	Sites or applications that offer users a system to manage the content and add or publish their own content in order to share it with other users browsing the site or application.	Blogs	Blogger, Tumblr, Word Press
4	Sites and applications that allow users to edit documents in a simultaneous and participatory manner.	Participatory work applications	Google docu-ments, Wiki tools
5	Sites and applications originally designed to facilitate dialogue and discussion between participants.	Tools of discus-sion	Discussion Forums
6	Networks that originally aim to enable the employees of the same institutions to communicate in manner similar to what happens on social networks such as Facebook or Twitter.	Institutional social networks	Yammer

The second classification depends on the distribution of these tools according to the possibility of their use at each stage of the UN Model for e-participation three stages, which was presented in the previous section of this document (Table 2).

Table 2- Classification of social networking tools according to the UN model for e-participation

#	Phase	Description	Examples of tools
1	E-Information	Supplying customers with information	Social networking sites, electronic bulletins, blogs
2	E-Consultation	Effectively involving customers in dialogue about services and general policies and obtaining their opinions.	Discussion Forums, tools of participatory work, tools of opinion polls, voting tools, electronic petitions.
3	E-Decision Making	Involving customers in taking government decisions	

 It is important here to point out the overlap between these three stages, especially between electronic consultation and electronic decision-making, which means the possibility of using the same tool in more than one stage.

Note: In all sections of this guide, we will mention many social networking tools as examples. We do not prefer one tool to another nor do we recommend the use of a particular tool unless it is clearly indicated.

8. E-participation and Social Networking in the United Arab Emirates

Social media has become increasingly popular in the United Arab Emirates where the number of active accounts on various applications and social networking exceeds 5.4 million representing about 56% of the country's population. This ratio is higher than those in Canada, Germany and South Korea. On average, UAE residents spend about 3.6 hours a day on these sites.

Facebook enjoys great popularity in the country where it is the most commonly used by 90%, followed by the WhatsApp. (Figure 3) shows the most frequently used sites in the UAE as per the sample covered by the survey.

Figure 3- The most frequently used social media apps and websites
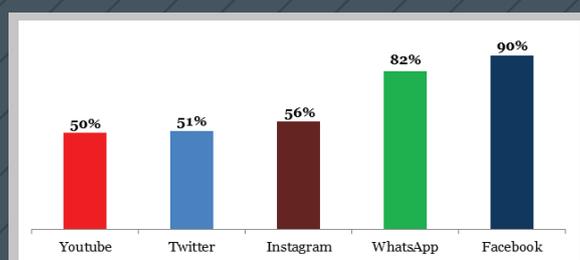
The majority of government entities are using the main sites and applications (the most popular) of social networking in order to communicate with customers and the public.

(Figure 4) provides statistical data on the number of government accounts on four of the tools which have been quoted above. As seen from the figure, (Twitter) is the most widely used by government entities, followed by Instagram, Facebook and then finally YouTube.

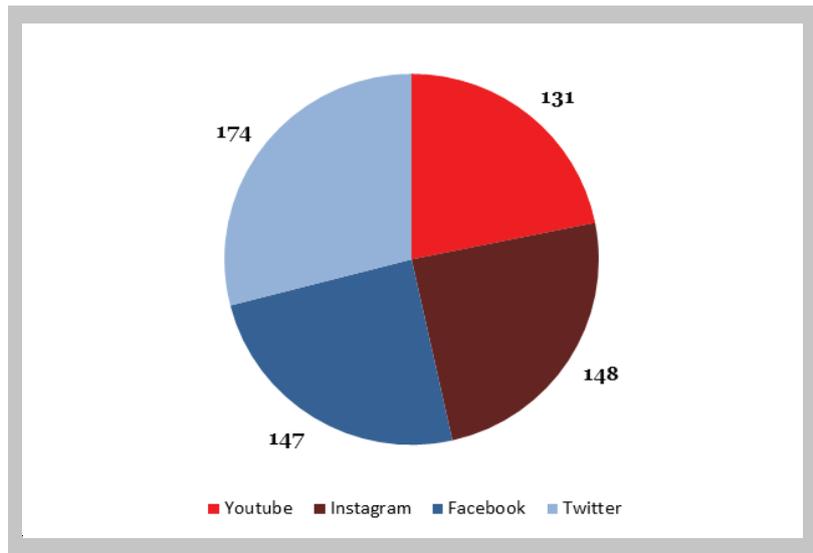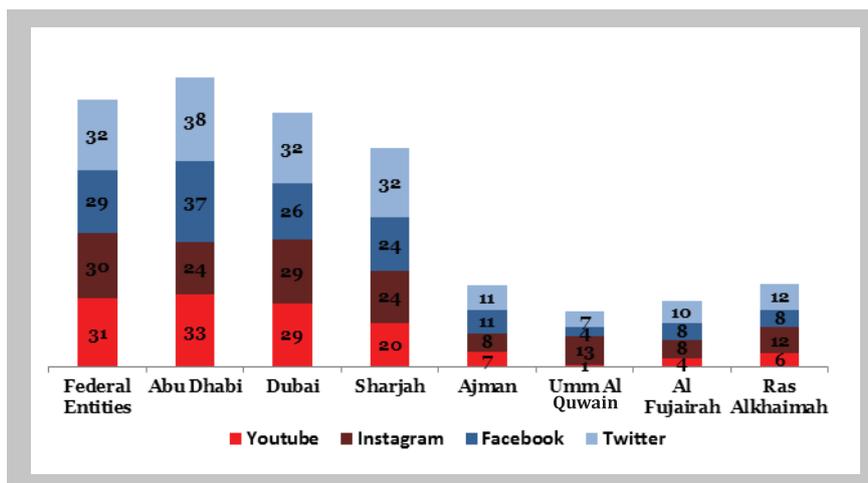Figure 4- The number of UAE Government accounts on social networking

Figure 5 shows detailed distribution of the federal entities and local entities in each emirate.
Figure 5- Number of accounts on social media according to federal and local entities

In general, the public in the UAE regards the use of government entities of social communication for the design and delivery of government services positively. 59% of the population visits government accounts on a regular basis.

UAE Online Brainstorming Session:

The UAE is classified among the world's leading countries in the field of e-participation. It ranks number thirteen on the global scale index established by the United Nations for E-government. This reflects the advanced practices of e-participation for the government sector in the country.

A good example of that is, "UAE brainstorming" campaign which was organized at the end of 2013. His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, launched it via his accounts on both Twitter and Facebook (Figure 6). It was an electronic campaign in which he called for public participation to develop the health and education sectors, and to provide them with ideas and suggestions. He described the meeting as "the largest national brainstorming session to discuss new solutions."

The response of the public to this campaign was remarkable. In few days the number of ideas and suggestions reached 82000 and were discussed in the ministerial retreat allocated for this purpose. Many decisions were taken to develop the health and education sectors.(1)

Figure 6 – The launch of the UAE brainstorming session semicolon HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum on Facebook

＊(1) from council to hashtags- UAE brainstorming session, Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, 2014

9. E-participation and innovation in government work

This part of the guide will tackle how to use the means of social participation to promote innovation in government work as being an essential component in the strategies of state government entities. It is even a daily exercise as announced by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai on his Facebook page.

Government entities may employ a wide array of social media tools to encourage more implementation of innovation in designing government services and policies. The keenness of governmental institutions' leaders to exploit the social media potential is one of its success key factors. Constructive dialogue in the community, workplaces and among individuals, with capacity for data collection and analysis, and immediate work on the basis of this data represent a large and influential opportunities to reach the levels of innovation that were unimaginable before.

The following is a set of guidelines to assist governmental entities in exploiting social media optimally:

• Use social media to incorporate innovation in the government services and policies' development (such as curriculum development in the educational sector) and not only for the purposes of media and marketing.
• Adopt the three-phase e-participation model detailed in this guide.
• When launching e-participation or brainstorming campaigns, it is recommended to follow the detailed action plan featured in the document "e-participation for the development of government policies and services: a practical guide to successful planning and implementation of e-Participation issued by the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA).

In this context, you can use various methods and tools to incorporate social media communication in fostering innovation, such as:

• **Debate and policy dialogue sessions (on Facebook or Google Hangout)**: In addition to lengthy brainstorming sessions, government entities can use Facebook to organize discussion sessions (Q & A Sessions) between an official and the public. Usually these sessions focus on one specific topic (a service or policy) and can also be a public session on the entity services and its relationship with the public. The session continues for a short and specific period (one hour, for example). The example below illustrates an announcement made by the White House about a dialogue session with President Barack Obama on Google Hangout.

• Collective Brainstorming campaigns (on Facebook, Twitter): Government entities may take advantage of Facebook or Twitter in organizing collective brainstorming campaigns to find solutions to a certain problem or challenge (such as the experiment of the Emirati brainstorming to develop health and education). See the figure below:

Figure 7 – The launch of the online UAE brainstorming session on HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Twitter account

10. Indicative Guidelines

In this section, we provide a set of indicative guidelines that we recommend all government entities to adopt to strengthen their e-participation practices and guarantee an effective use of social networking tools.

10.1. General Guidelines

1. Guideline Implementation Responsibility:
In order to spread and consolidate e-participation practices according to the best international standards and ensure its continuity, and with the aim of encouraging more implementation of these guidelines, it is expected that every government entity will assign the e-participation responsibility to one of its employees under the title "e-participation official". Appendix (1) of this guide highlights the skills and capabilities that the employee should have as well as a list of responsibilities and tasks that must be performed by him.

Additionally, government entities are encouraged to review and update their strategies and decision-making mechanisms, in addition to the operation of designing and delivering service. This is in order to ensure the promotion of e-participation across social media and measure the tool's adoption impact.

2. Integration with the website:
As we have explained in previous sections of this document, social networking tools provide channels for dialogue between the government and the public and enable more interaction between them in a way that allows the government to respond to the public's inquiries more effectively and involve them more in the decision-making, policy formulation and service-designs. These tools made it possible for clients to express their opinions about the services provided, assess quality and submit proposals for development.

It noteworthy to mention that the government's official website is its main communication tool which offers all electronic information and services to customers (including the mobile version of the website as well as smart applications). Therefore, it is recommended that government entities integrate their social media activities with their websites.

(Figure 8- The E-Participation page on the UAE National Portal (Government.ae
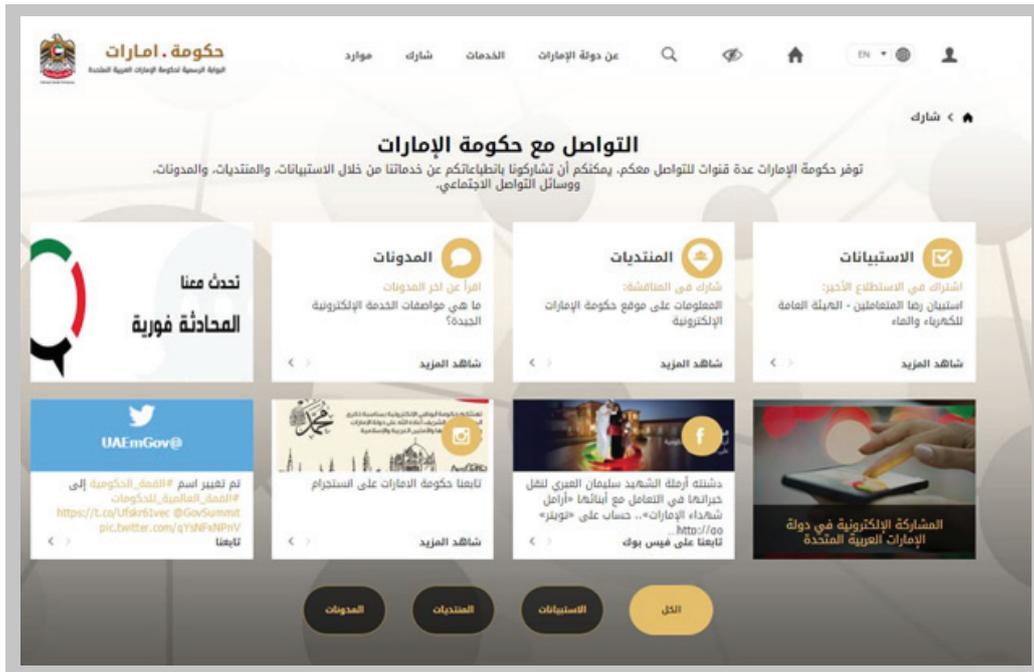
(Table 3) provides a list of websites' key characteristics and uses, in addition to ways to integrate them with social media channels.

Table 3 - 10 key characteristics of official websitse compared with social media

#	The Website	Social media tools
1	Providing detailed information about the entity, its services and policies	Making information and updates available promptly especially in cases of emergency (figure 9)
2	Publishing daily news and press briefings	Sharing the most important headlines with links to their details on the official website
3	Offering full and detailed addresses for communicating with the entity	Interaction with queries of customers directly and immediately
4	Possibility of executing e-services (Figure 10)	Guiding the public to the pages of different electronic services on the official website (Figure 11)
5	Providing a full archive for media material	Making lighter and shorter copies of the images and videos that the public may easily find and check quickly (Figure 12)

#	The Website	Social media tools
6	Offering links to other governmental and non-governmental entities	Interacting with what other government entities publish on social networking sites
7	Providing sources for knowledge such as reports and studies	Providing general advice and guidance to the public in a compact and direct manner (Figure 13)
8	Offering a permanent archive of laws, policies and similar material	Reporting events and incidents live from the site
9	Providing a list of vacancies and their details	Announcing vacancies and interaction with the content of the same entity on other social media sites
10	Providing a central page that covers all e-participation activities for the entity via different channels and tools	Utilizing the social media accounts in implementing the three e-participation phases

Figure 9- Updates about traffic on the twitter account of the Ministry of Interior

Figure 10- The Services page on the Ministry of Labour website[1]

✶ (1) http://www.mol.gov.ae
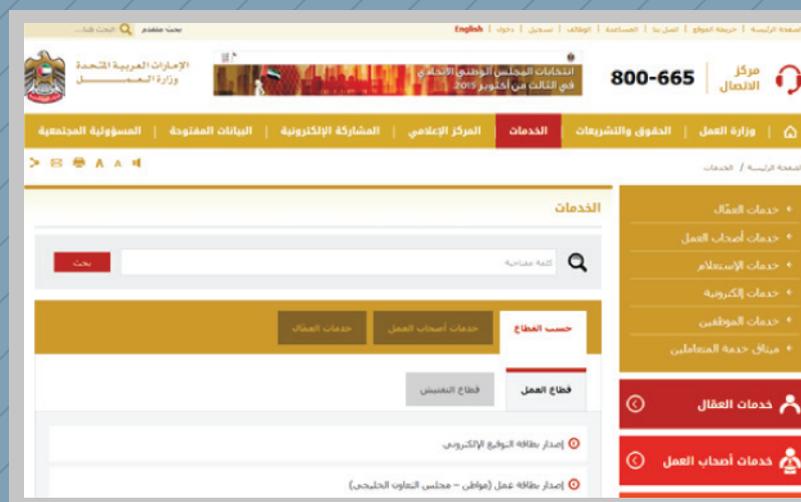
Figure 11- – A Tweet on the account of the Dubai Police providing a link to one of the services on the website[2]

Figure 12- An example of providing shorter and lighter versions of images and videos to make it easier for the public to check it out from the TRA Instagram account[1]

Figure 13- Advice and guidance on the twitter account of the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department[2]

✳ (2) @DubaiPoliceHQ
✳ (1) @TheUAETRA
✳ (2) @ADJD_Official

Case Study: Canada

After a mistake in schedules caused the accumulation of garbage in containers in the streets and homes, authorities in the Canadian city of Vancouver resorted to Twitter and set up a website to electronically notify citizens, after registering in the site, of the dates for garbage collection and recycling. The result was getting the cleanest streets and outstanding customer service at a low cost compared to the use of traditional phones or e-mails. Of course the credit is due to the creative thinking about how to use Twitter.

The service is also available via an application on the Android and iPhone phones
Source: Arab portal for Government of the Future (01 Government.com) (Twitter: @01Govt)

3. Employees use of social networking tools

Employees can use social networking sites   for business and skills' development purposes. To enable them to perform these actions, we must grant them access and permissions as follows:
• Using the federal entity account as the account manager: It is preferable that the employee implements the instructions encompassed in this guideline and other related guidelines issued by Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA)

• Using the official account as the entity's official spokesman: In this case, the employee should follow the instructions listed in the official guide for spokesmen for the use of social networking sites - issued by the General Secretariat of the Cabinet, Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and Future.

• Using his personal account: In this case he should not introduce himself as an employee in a government entity. The use of the site or application should be entirely on his personal responsibility. (This is has to be stated clearly in the definition of the account)

In all cases, the behavior of the government employee should not be any different when using e-participation tools and social networking than when using any media or communication tool which is subject primarily to the document "Principles of professional conduct and ethics in public office of the federal authorities," published in July 2010 and the UAE Human Resources Law (Federal Decree law no. 11 for the year 2008).

Additionally, all federal entities' employees should comply with the following rules when using these tools:

• Demonstrate honesty and sincerity when communicating with the public, care to reply to their questions and meet their demands in the best and fastest way possible.
• In all cases demonstrate proper manners when addressing the public.
• Behave in a manner that preserves the reputation of the government in general, including the entity where he works.
   An employee can mention his occupation in the personal identification files on his personal account on social networking sites. But in this case he has to clearly state in the disclaimer that what is written in the comments on this site represents his personal opinion and is not linked to the government entity.
• He should not enter offending sites, contribute to them or download files from them, including, for example, but not limited to, sites that promote racism.
• He should not use the information obtained during performing the job in matters not related to work
• He should not use the username or password of the official government account to create personal accounts in social media.
• He should not download or install any software from the Internet without the consent of competent authorities.
• He should not to publish the official communication information in personal accounts on social networking sites. This information includes e-mails, phone numbers and others.

In all cases, the employee has to remember that he is a sort of digital ambassador for the government entity where he works and hence he has to represent it in the best way possible. The employee is responsible to ensure that his personal behavior does not affect the governmental entity's social networking sites negatively.

4. Managing Official Accounts of Government Entities:
• Creating an account for the government entity on social networks:
when making a decision to create an account for a government entity on any of the social networks, you must choose a site or social networking application that will be consistent with the e-participation strategy. This strategy helps to ensure the appropriateness of this account to the objectives of the entity and the needs and characteristics of the target audience. In addition, it is necessary to consult other sections in the entity; on top of which is the IT department which should provide an advice about the risks or requirements related to the technology, such as security or privacy settings.

The decision to establish the account should be documented according to the internal regulations of the government entity, and should specify that - in addition to the name of the social communication network – the name and position of the employee (or employees) who will be responsible for managing this account. It also preferable that the decision defines the topics or services that the employee can discuss with the public through this account.

• The employee in charge of managing the entity's account on social networks
Take the following factors in consideration when assigning the responsibility of managing the account to any of your employees:

• Awareness of topics that he\she will discuss with the public
• The language skills he/she has
• They should be familiar with social networking sites
• The willingness of the employee to communicate with the public through social networks outside official working hours, and his/her ability to handle situations that may require an immediate response in these times.

After creating the account, it is preferable to follow the instructions included in various sections of this document for the management of the account in an effective and safe manner.

• Halting the government entity's social media account

The government entity may decide to stop using a social networking site by either deleting or disabling the account on that site. This might occur for several reasons, such as lack of citizen's engagement on the site or as a result of the decline in popularity of the site itself.

When a government entity decides to delete or disable the account, it is recommended to perform that gradually as per the below:
• Inform the users on website about the decision to delete or disable the account in advance.
• Make necessary arrangements so that other social channels deal with the services and information that used to be provided through this account.
• Encourage users to move to the new channel to ensure continuity of service.
• All these points are included in the plan approved by senior management prior to their implementation.

5. Managing public ePArticipation
The e-participation success ingredients are public's engagement with the content, and interaction with the entity through sharing their opinions and commentaries.

The entity should develop an adequate mechanism that can handle these commentaries clearly and encourage more public participation. To do so, we recommend that you draft the "supervision policy" (Appendix 4) and post it on the e-participation page on its website.

Case Study: Malaysia

The Malaysian government launched a new web portal enabling citizens to provide ideas as well as vote on different projects related to the general state budget for 2015.

This new platform hosted by the personal site of the Malaysian Prime Minister Mohammed Najib Razak enables citizens to discuss a wide range of projects and ideas in the field of government services such as health, education and others. Citizens can click on the "like" or "unlike" button for any of the ideas put forward by other citizens in a manner similar to the use of social networking sites. The site does not clarify the mechanism by which it will adopt or not adopt any of the ideas put forward.

The site also includes a page providing pictorial graphics (Infographics) for the requested information, and links to sources related to the projects and relevant government pages.

Source: Arab portal technology future government (01 Government.com) (Twitter: @ 01Govt)

6. Use of Mobile Phones:
Mobile phones are the main channel for using most of the social networking sites and applications such as Twitter, Instagram and other applications. Therefore it is very common to use mobile phones (smart phones) by government employees who are responsible for the managing the accounts on those applications.

We advise these authorities' staff to follow these instructions when using mobile phones as well as all relevant guidance featured in the Council of Ministers Resolution No. (21) for the year 2013 about the list of information security at federal entities:

• Ensure that the phone is used only by authorized personnel.
• Take into account the general manners when taking photos and video clips.
• Activate the feature of security lock (password controlled) on the phone. The device should be adjusted to automatically lock itself in less than 5 minutes.
• Do not leave the mobile phone unlocked and without censorship.
• Report to the concerned department in the entity before selling it, giving it to someone or losing it for any reason.

7. Security and Privacy
The risks related to security and privacy are among the most important and main risks and challenges concerning the use of social media by government entities and other institutions. Therefore, a number of those institutions keep track of many of these policies and procedures to limit the chances of facing these risks.

All federal entities should abide by the relevant provisions of the Council of Ministers Resolution No. (21) for the year 2013 concerning the charter of information security at federal Entities. In addition, the federal authorities should continuously do the following:

- Activation of the internal information security policies and ensuring that they are compliant with the guide-lines included in this guide, as well as the controls featured in the Council of Ministers Resolution No. (21) For the year 2013 on the charter of information security at federal entities especially the articles on the following points:

o Password creation controls when creating passwords for government accounts on social media.

o Controls for the use of the Internet.

o Controls for the use of information assets and what is related to the commitments of to the appropriate unit.

o Degrees of confidentiality and identifying information of the "general" label that can be published and shared across social networking sites.

- Taking necessary technical measures for the application of these directives, including, for example, block access to technical operations of the phone and unneeded applications (such as electronic games) in some social networking sites, in order to avoid potential security and hacking risks.

- Educating staff on the potential threats of using social media and the prevention methods, as well as intro-ducing them to the contents of this guide and the Council of Ministers Resolution No. (21) for the year 2013 about the charter of information security at federal Entities.

8. Enabling people with special needs of e-participation

People with Special Needs are an integral part of the society, and they should not face any barrier when practicing their e-participation rights, and we should pave the way for them to participate in developing governmental services.

Governmental and non-governmental entities are increasingly relying on ICT tools to connect with their public, and this may deprive people with special needs from having an effective contribution, therefore, we must adapt technology in a way that enables them to practice their e-participation right easily.

Regarding the use of social networking tools and e-participation tools -the subject of this guide - it is up to governmental entities to exert effort to ensure that people with special needs can access the information published and are able to contribute effectively in the e-participation activities. The following benefits must be provided at least in the official website of the entity:

• Ability to enlarge the font size (AAA).

• The possibility of converting text-to-speech feature (Text to Speech).

• Provide a description of the non-text content, such as providing a description of the images as well as text of the speech included in the videos.

• Provide the possibility of browsing the site and performing all tasks through the keyboard.

It is also recommended that government entities provide adequate benefits to their electronic channel users.

Figure (14) features an example of the UAE official portal (Government.ae), which provides the enlarging text and reading text to visitor's features.

Figure 14- Enlarging the font and converting the texts to audio for disabled users (Government.ae)

9. Legal issues

The use of social media sites raises justified concerns related to legal concepts of copyright and intellectual property. The ease of publishing content and its distribution in social networking sites makes it very easy to breach copyright laws unintentionally.

It is necessary that all governmental entities publish a clear disclaimer on their social media pages to retain copyrights and publishing rights. It should also refer to the Law of copyright of the United Arab Emirates No. 7 in 2002.

Finally, government entities must always be aware of the difficulty to protect the copyrights of printing and publishing content onto social networking sites. Therefore the content should be carefully chosen and revised before publishing.

City keeper is a program that works on mobile phones and is available free of charge for all residents of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi including citizens, residents and visitors. The program allows the public to report and file complaints about issues that concern the Emirate of Abu Dhabi directly to the government. It aims through its motto "guard the city / your city - your community" to activate the participation of the public and increase their cooperation with government Entities in order to enhance the emirate at all levels.

The program seeks to achieve a number of goals including to contribute to the efforts made by the government of Abu Dhabi to be among the list of the best governments in the world, employing the emirate's advanced technical infrastructure in the absorption of new applications to enable the Emirate to achieve its goals and aspirations and contribute to support the government's efforts in achieving Abu Dhabi's Economic vision 2030.

The program adds several new and advanced meanings and connotations for the security concept that is based on the idea that the citizen has become a contributor to strengthening the security situation and the state of public safety in the emirate as well as that of Abu Dhabi, which has become a magnet for tourists and businessmen and investors who need such initiatives to raise the level of services provided by the government.

The mechanism of the program depends mainly on the cooperation of the public, where the user takes a picture or a video or audio clip by his mobile phone about the situation he wants to report. Once the picture is taken, the program identifies the location of the case accurately through an interactive built-in map and sends it directly to the call center of Abu Dhabi government after the program having automatically filed a complaint with the Abu Dhabi Government Center which in turn communicates with the concerned authority to address the case. The user can follow the progress of the communication starting from its inception until it closed either by the "City Keeper" program itself or through the electronic portal of the Government of Abu Dhabi or direct communication with Abu Dhabi government.

Source: Arab portal for technology of future government (01 Government.com) (Twitter: @01Govt)

## 10.2. Directives for each stage of E-participation

Launching a targeted e-participation campaigns is one of the very common practices, where governmental entities launch a campaign that focuses on a certain service, policy, or a program that the entity supervises. The entity launches the campaign with the aim of involving the public in the decision making process and exploring their satisfaction and happiness levels.

The United Nations model of e-participation which we previously discussed in Section 6 divides this process into three stages. In the following three sections of this guide, we provide more details about each one of these stages including social networking tools that can be used by the entity at each phase.

It is useful to mention the document (E-participation for the development of government policies and services: a practical guide to successful planning and implementation of e-participation initiatives)[1], which provides a practical example of the five steps that can be implemented by any governmental entity seeking to launch an electronic participation campaign (Figure 15).

＊ [1]   A copy can be obtained from the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority: tra.gov.ae

Figure 15 - Stages of implementing e-Participation campaigns
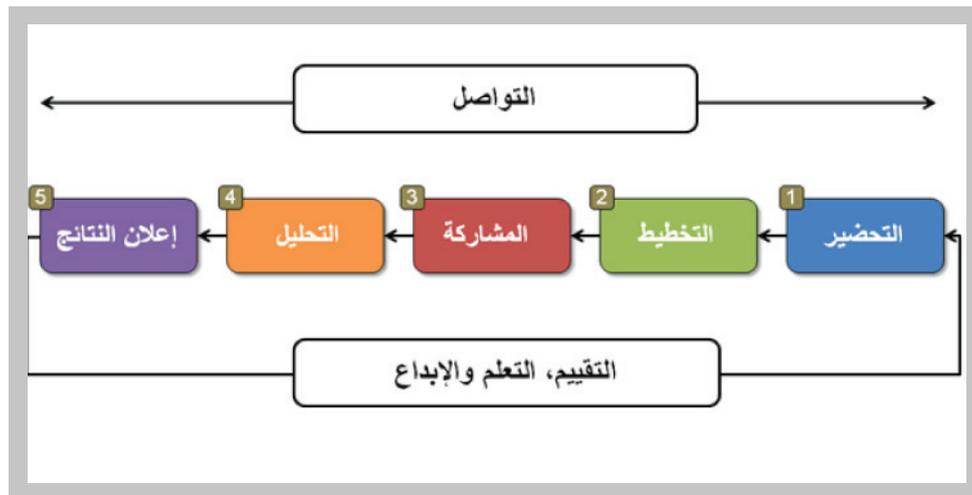
E-information Phase
As explained in section 6, the main objective of this phase is to provide general information to the public about the entity and its activities as well as enable them to submit requests for information. The dissemination of information and making it available to the public via the means which ensure they can clearly access it is the basis for the success of any campaign or practice of e-participation, as it is the simplest electronic participation patterns according to the United Nations model.

How can the government entity effectively disseminate information?
The dissemination of information through the media, newspapers and radio has been a daily exercise for all government entities for a long time. A number of entities have mastered the principles of providing information to the public through these means. But, due to the difference between the social communication channels and the traditional media, dissemination of information through social communication channels has different rules that are preferred to be taken into account by entities in order to deliver their message clearly and successfully to their intended audience.

Besides the detailed steps described in the attached document (e-participation for the development of government policies and services: a practical guide to successful planning and implementation of the initiatives of e-participation), we present a set of guidelines that we suggest to take in consideration when disseminating information through means of social communication channels:

• Make sure that this information is classified within the "General" rating on the confidentiality of information degrees (Table 4), and that it is authorized to be published by the management of the entity.

Table 4 - The degrees of confidentiality of documents and information of federal entities [1]

Degree of Secrecy	Information
Top Secret	To label strategically important information to the state and federal entities and needs the highest degree of protection. Access to this information is given only to a small number of specialist users.
Secret	To label information that might negatively harm the federal entities. Users who can access to this information are limited (exclusive to a certain department or post).
Banned	To label information which can be exchanged with different departments in the federal entities.
General	To label information which the public can access

• Make sure the information is correct and prompt; the dissemination of false or outdated information could hurt the credibility of the entity in front of the public.

• Ensure choosing the right communication channel for the target group. For example, if the information is directed to the business sector, you can focus on LinkedIn (LinkedIn) more than others.

• Always put the channel in mind when preparing your information. For example, if the information is formulated in the form of an article, it is appropriate to publish the full article on the entity's blog and then publish excerpts from it in the form of Tweets on Twitter.

• Choose the appropriate language. It is noteworthy to mention that Arabic is the official language, but content must be published in other languages based on the target group. In Figure 16 we see UAE Government Official Twitter account tweeting in Hindi to reach a wider segment of the public.

Figure 16 - Tweets in Hindi on the twitter account of the government of the UAE[1]

• In addition to selecting the appropriate language, you have to choose the wording and phrases that fit the target audience[2] . Here, you can use the guideline for electronic content issued by the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA).

• To secure more engagement, make sure that your content is designed in an attractive and innovative way

• When needed, a combination of social media may be used to deliver the message. For instance you can produce a video and post it on the entity's YouTube channel, and then post a link to this clip on Twitter with an explanatory sentence. (Figure 17).

• Employees have to bear in mind that what is published on the Internet will remain accessible to all for a long time.

• If employees are doubtful regarding the content that is going to be published, they must consult their superiors.

Figure 17- A tweet form the TRA Twitter account including a link to a YouTube video[1]

The key social networking tools for the stage of electronic communication (E-Information):
Among the numerous available sites and applications, the tools listed below are best suited to assist government entities in disseminating information and sharing it with the public.

﹡(1) @UAEmGov

Table 5 - Tools that may be used in e-Information

#	TOOLS	Most prominent use	Examples
1	EMAIL LISTS	Provide government entities with the ability to send information in the form of a newsletter to e-mail addresses of a large number of people at once.	Mailchimp.com
2	BLOGS	The possibility of publishing articles that contain all the information about a particular topic with the possibility of including multi-media images and video clips.	(Word Press) (Blogger)
3	MICROBLOGS	A special type of blogging characterized by small size so that it can deploy concise and focused messages.	Twitter, Tumbler
4	social media networks	The possibility of disseminating information in different formats depending on the nature of the network and sharing the formats with the public.	Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn
5	Multimedia networks	Specialize in the deployment of content consisting of photos and video clips.	YouTube, Instagram, Snap Chat

It is noteworthy to mention that most of the content management softwares (Content Management Systems) used by government entities to manage their websites provide many of those tools. It is better to use them instead of using other external tools.

Case Study: The United Arab Emirates

The UAE government launched a platform for government policies that include a website and an application that combines 339 decision-makers and senior government officials involved in the field of government policies. The aim was to exchange experiences and knowledge and provide training and interaction on issues of government work.

H.H Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, announced the new platform via his Twitter account. According to "Emirates News Entity" the "policy platform" includes 118 strategic studies and policies, some of which were developed internally or in collaboration with some of the most prominent global institutions of experience such as the "Economist" and "Nesta". The platform includes various sections among which are government experience, guide for professionalism, and ask an expert.

Source: Arab portal for technology of future government (01 Government.com) (Twitter: @ 01Govt)

E-Consultation
The previous electronic communication stage (E-Information) is part of the daily work for government Emirates news Agency and it focuses on the flow of information often in one direction. As for the electronic consultation phase (E-Consultation), it is based on two-way dialogue between the government entity and its audience. Additionally, the e-consultations occur in campaigns which stretch for a specific period of time and focus on addressing an issue with the aim of reaching a certain result.

The list of the most important government practices that can be incorporated under the title of e-counseling includes:

• **Public Consultation:** Public consultation is an excellent tool that enables government entities to conduct surveys with the aim of exploring the public and stakeholders views, lure their ideas about the formulation of a policy or law, design a new service or develop an existing service.

•**Polls:** A poll aims to find out an option or options regarding a particular topic that is favored by the target segment. Often the poll is one question accompanied by a number of answers the participant can choose from.

• **Surveys:** Unlike polls, the survey usually consists of a number of different questions on the same subject. This gives the government the opportunity to compile a deeper understanding of the perceptions of the category contributing to the survey.

• **Public debates:** is a window for continuous dialogue between the government entity and all categories of users on various services and policies that fall within the scope of the entity's work.

The implementation guidelines for each of these practices, as well as social networking tools and other technical tools that can be used for implementation are listed below:

• **Public consultation:** In order to conduct a public consultation in an easy, systematic and effective manner, we suggest the following steps which are illustrated in Figure 18:

Figure 18 - Stages for conducting a public consultation
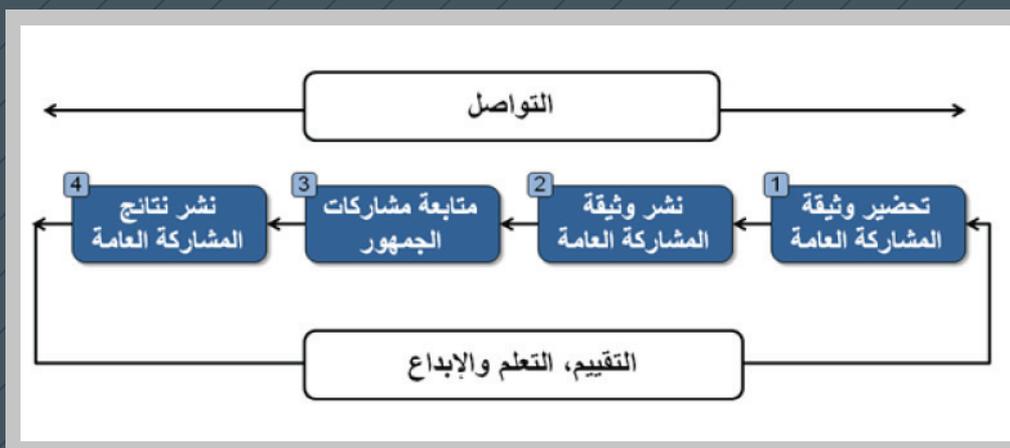
Preparation of the public consultation document:
This step includes a set of measures aimed at the formulation and preparation of the document that the government entity wants to consult the public about. Most of the times, this document is a draft of a policy or law, or a design for a new service. We suggest government entities do the following:

• Identify the topic related to the policy which the entity wants to consult the public about. Normally, it is expected that the entity chooses a topic that enables a sector of the public to at least express an opinion about and hence improve the vision of the entity. It is useful to remind here that the entity can only raise issues classified under the "General" degree on the rates of confidentiality of federal entities' documents and information (Table 4).

o The audience sectors or target groups for this public consultation.
o An explanation of the policy or the service topic, as well as how is it expected to affect the audience and the related parties and the state in general
o A list of questions which the entity seeks opinions about.

1. Publishing a document for general consultation:
• When the entity is done with preparing this document, it is recommended to publish it on the e-participation page on its official website. We suggest the following steps in order to guarantee that it is published correctly and reaches the largest number of recipients:
• Publish the document in both Arabic and English (and any other language appropriate to the target audience) if possible, according to the language preferred by the target audience.
• Publish a summary of the document contents.
• Provide basic information that will help the public to participate, such as: open electronic channels through which observations may be offered and the deadline for submitting comments.

2. Follow-up public participation
During the period allocated for the public to participate and comment on the document, it is necessary that the government entity follows up on the posts by the public on different communication channels whether on its page, via e-mail or other channels. Additionally, it is useful to consider the following points:

• Interacting with posts including, at minimum, confirming they have been received.
• Publishing a summary of the posts without disclosing the identity of participants without a permission in order to preserve privacy and confidentiality requirements.
• Publishing any updates regarding the public consultation process, such as any amendment to the closing date for participation.

Figure 19- Section allocated for general consultation within e-participation page of the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority
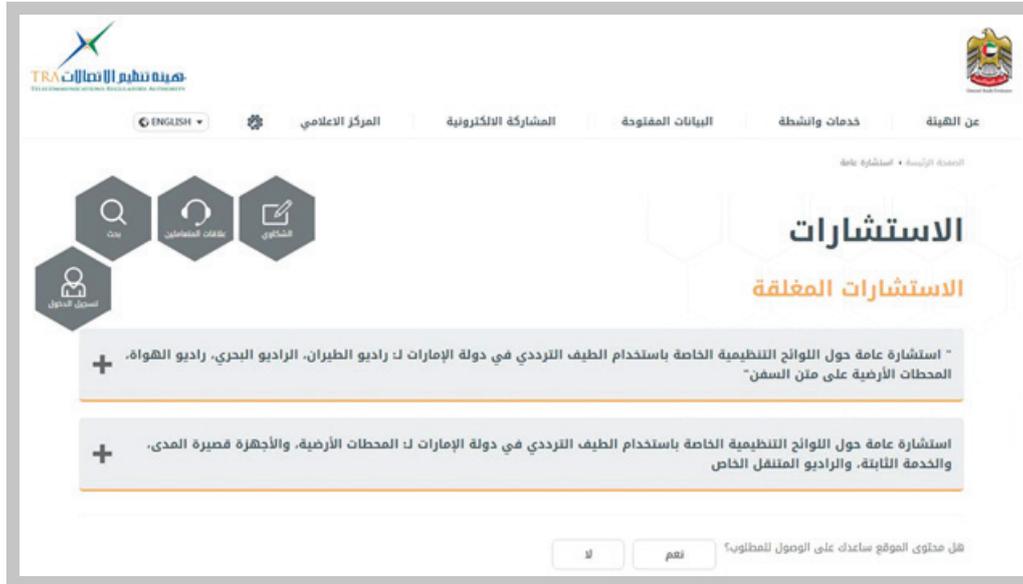
3. Publishing results of public participation

Once the period of public participation is over and no further proposals or comments are received from the public, it is time to publish the outcome. This is done through updating the e-participation page with the following information:
• Publishing the final version of the document which has been updated according to the comments by the public.
• Publishing the entity's responses to some participants' comments, with highlighting the reasons for rejecting any proposals if any. Within this context, the entity may select a sample of the responses if it is not possible to respond to all the proposals presented.
• Allocating a section of the page that contains all the documents that are no longer subject to consultation and add the new document to that list.

4. Polls:

Opinion polls are one of the easy applications which enable government entities to form an idea about the views of the public in respect of certain part of its services or programs. When the government entity desires to implement a poll, place the following guidelines in mind:
• Allocating part of the e-participation page on the entity's site for polls. In this part, new polls would be published along with an archive of previous polls and their results.
• A poll consists of several questions and answers the participant choses from. When formulating the poll questions, it is preferable that the question is clear and easy to understand and far from technical jargon (except when necessary).

• For answers, it is preferable to give all possibilities that the participant can think of. It is also necessary that the answers be clear and easy to understand.
• Every poll has a specific period that may extend to weeks after which the public cannot participate. It is necessary to clarify the closing date of the poll.

Figure 20- Example of poll on the e-participation page on the Emirates Identity Authority (1)

Technical tools to implement polls:
There are many commercial tools available on the Internet that can be used by government entities to publish and manage polls on their sites. However, most, if not all, include Content Management Systems which are used by government entities to manage their e-publishing and poll management, so it is not desirable to use other commercial tools.

Surveys:
Different from polls, a survey usually consists of a number of different questions on the same topic which gives the government entity the opportunity to form a deeper understanding of the perceptions of the category covered by the survey.

Figure 21- Example of a survey on an e-participation page on the site of the The General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA)

* (1) http://www.id.gov.ae/ar/e-participation/poll-archive.aspx

As the case is related to opinion polls, make sure that your design is very attractive to secure public partici-pation. Here are several tips we recommend when drafting the survey:
• The survey should contain a brief introduction (about 50 words) about the entity publishing the survey, the objective, the time needed for the participant to complete the survey, as well as participants' confidenti-ality rights.
• The aim of the survey should be clear and specific.
• Choose the language of the survey (Arabic, English or others), according to the language preferable for the target group.
• Questions should be formulated achieve the objective of the survey. There are many types of questions such as multiple-answer questions, open-ended questions, etc. The entity should choose the suitable type for each question.
• Reduce the use of open-answer questions. Participants usually tend not to answer them as they need more time and effort.
• If the survey includes demographic questions related to age, gender, and nationality and so on, it is neces-sary to reassure the participant that this information will be used for statistical purposes only and will not be shared with others or used for purposes that are not specified in the survey.
• The time needed to reply to the survey should not exceed 10 minutes.
• Send a thank you message to the participants at the end of the survey.

General Discussions:
In addition to the previous practices such as public consultation, surveys and opinion polls, there several ways that the government entities can use to open the door for e-participation of their audience audience. It may also use a number of designated technical tools.

Table 6 shows the list of these practices and techniques.

Table 6 - Tools that may be used to run a general discussion with the public

#	Task	Examples of tools
1	Discussing various topics	E-forums
2	Establishing and managing blogs	Blogger, WordPress
3	Establishing and editing documents through the internet with the possibility of simultaneous participation	Google Docs
4	Tools to discuss ideas and suggestions as well as vote for them	Idea Scale
5	Visualization	Debate Graph

According to the report of the United Nations for e-government in 2014, the governments of 91 countries - of 193 countries- provide their citizens the ability to comment on electronic services and submit proposals to develop them. We note that the social networking tools are the most commonly used by 71 countries, followed by electronic forums and electronic surveys.

Case Study: United Arab Emirates

The "Federal Authority for Government Human Resources" in the UAE launched its e-forum on the professional "LinkedIn" network at end of July 2015. The forum aims to provide a platform for dialogue on the most important issues related to human capital management, and successful experiences in this field.

The e-forum of the Federal Authority for Government Human Resources on "LinkedIn" started the discussions by asking about job satisfaction. The team working on the Forum will work to publish articles and scientific papers periodically about the latest research and global best practices in the field of human resources. The entity also will announce, through the activities of the Forum, events of the Human Resources Club and conferences that will be organized by some of the international institutions that are leaders in the field of human resources.

Source: Arab portal for technology of future government (01 Government.com) (Twitter: @ 01Govt)

E-decision Making

This is the most advanced stage in the model of the United Nations of e-participation, as the government entity does not only publish and share information with the public as in the first phase (the e-information stage), or even start a dialogue and debate with the public, as in the second stage (the e-consultation phase) but goes beyond that to give them the opportunity to directly contribute in the decision making about a service or policy.

Of course, the involvement of citizens in decision-making within this stage necessarily requires providing information so that they can take an information-based decision. It is very possible that this phase will be within a broader context of dialogue and debate, as in the previous phase.

As a result, we advise government entities to think about how to apply all the practices and use the tools that we have mentioned in the last two stages within this phase as well.

Figure 23 below shows the most important issues that governments' entities around the world discussed with their citizens, according to a survey by the United Nations of e-governments along with the number of governments in each topic.

Figure 23- The most important areas of practice of governments for e-decision making
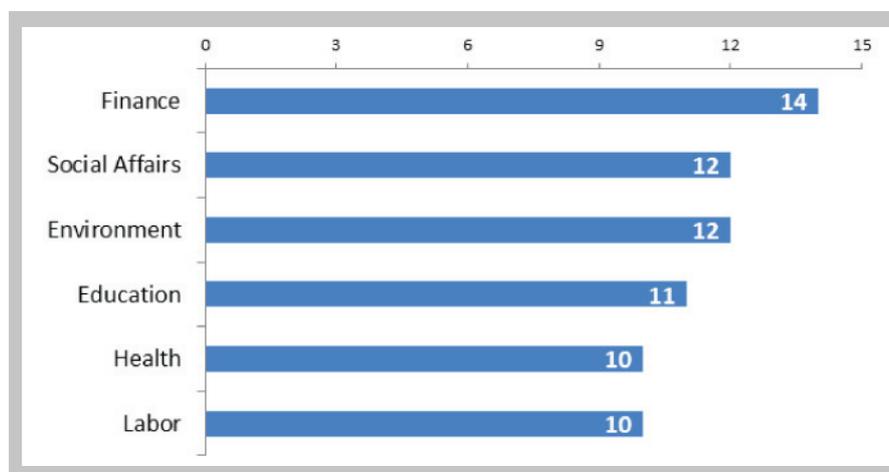
In addition to the list of tools mentioned in table (5) and (6), there are some tools that can be used at this stage, including voting tools such as:
• Tools to discuss ideas and suggestions and vote on them such as the site idea Scale

In the following case study from Australia, we see an example of the involvement of citizens in government decision-making through the use of wiki technology:

Case study: Australia

While the Australian city of Melbourne put its plan for 2020, about seven years ago, it chose to allow the population access to the plan and the ability to edit and adjust it based on "wiki" technology that allows users to add content to internet sites and easily adjust it from browsers such as "Wikipedia "and others.

Over the course of a month, Melbourne allowed the public to edit the plan to develop the city and comment on it under the "Future Melbourne wiki" program, which included different sections of the plan including the overall vision of the population and prosperity, creativity, knowledge and environmental terms, transport, and strategic areas for growth, and the main objectives, and monitoring and review.

Model "Future Melbourne" included a variety of authors from within the city and outside it. Each one of them could present knowledge and distinguished ideas. The "wiki" technology allowed those authors to cooperate in the formulation of the draft of the plan.

During the period between the seventeenth of May and the fourteenth of June 2008, the site "Future Melbourne wiki" was visited more than thirty thousand times by about seven thousand people and received more than two hundred edits which varied between checks for spelling and grammar and thoughtful posts about the future of the city.

∗ Source: Arab Portal for technology for the future government (01 Government.com) (Twitter: @ 01Govt)

11. Appendix
11.1. Appendix 1 – E-Participation Officer

Every government entity should appoint an employee to perform the functions of an "e-participation official". The entity should give the employee sufficient powers to perform this role in the best manner possible.

When selecting employees for this role, the government entity should consider that the following capabilities and skills, at least, are present:
• To have excellent knowledge about the government entities' fields, the services each provides and the categories of clients it deals with.
• To communicate fluently in written and spoken Arabic, as well as in other languages, if necessary, according to the nature of the work of the government entity and the main languages spoken by its clients.
• To have the skills and experience in using various e-participation and social networking tools.
• To have the ability to communicate and coordinate with departments and divisions within the government entity as well as other entities.

The "E-participation official" shall in every government entity perform the following tasks:

• Supervise the implementation of guidelines contained in this document in all e-participation activities and the use of social networking tools in the entity.
• Communicate with the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority as well as with other relevant entities and institutions with the aim of developing the e-participation practices and methodologies continuously.
• Build a work group to implement the daily tasks of e-participation and use of social networking tools in the entity. This team can follow the media departments, public relations, human resources, and information technology or knowledge management. The work group has to include representatives from various departments and relevant sections of the government entity.

Table (7) shows a list of basic e-participation tasks and the use of social networking tools, which must be carried out by the team under the leadership of the e-participation officer.

Table 7- List of main tasks of e-participation and social networking.

Task	DESCRIPTION
Planning	Leading the design and implementation of strategies as well as policies of e-participation and use of social networking tools including the application of this guide.
Managing accounts	Managing the official accounts of the government entity on various social networks on a daily basis.
Production of content	Production of content that will be used in various e-participation activities, with an emphasis on multimedia content such as photos and videos. It often requires communication with different departments and sections within the government entities in order to gather the necessary information to produce the content.
Marketing and communication with the public	Managing the e-participation page on the website of the entity and effectively communicating with the public, as well as updating the content of the page on an ongoing basis in order to promote all e-participation activities implemented by the government entity.
Internal communication	Most of the e-participation activities (such as public consultation) include involvement of the public to express opinion, provide information or make decisions about some of the policies or services provided by the entity. Hence, the team under the leadership of the e-participation officer should develop a methodology to work jointly with the other department of the government entity responsible for the design of these policies / services, or submitting them in order to jointly and successfully implement e-participation activities.
Training and awareness	Working on training the entity staff on various concepts and e-participation tools to ensure they are aware of the relevant policies and guidelines in the entity and understand them.
Monitoring, measuring and analysis	Following up the entity's activities with community e-participation tools, as well as what the public posts about the entity and its services. In addition to the analysis of what was monitored and measuring the progress in the implementation of e-participation plans according to indicators that measure performance, and report to management along with proposals for development.

Naturally, it is not necessary to assign each task from the tasks set out in this table to an employee or department, as the same employee or department can carry out more than one task. The matter mainly depends on how tasks are distributed within the entity and its organizational structure.

11.2. Appendix 2 – charter for E-participation

This charter represents the government's commitment to its audience across social networking sites and tools to deal with them with respect and professionalism. Each entity should publish this charter on its e-participation page on its website, as well as on its accounts on social networking sites, if possible.

E-participation charter:
The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) is keen to interact with clients across social networking sites and applications with respect and professionalism that meet their satisfaction and exceeds their expectations.

First: Our Commitment towards you
• We will always address you with respect and friendliness.
• We will communicate with you through helpful staff has the knowledge, understands your needs and can answer your inquiries.
• We will respond to your inquiries in a timely manner.
• We will provide you accurate information and procedures for proper service.
• We will be present to communicate with you in the time and across the channels and sites that are most suitable for you.
• We will welcome your comments and suggestions to be partners with you in the development of our services.

Second: What we are hoping to find when communicating with you:
• Appreciation of the efforts of our employees serving you and dealing with them with mutual respect.
• Do not ask or discuss personal topics.
• Commitment to proper conduct and laws.
• Do not post comments that contain inappropriate language or violate the privacy of others or abuse them.
• Do not post any comments that breach security.
• Do not post any information or comments that violate intellectual property rights of others or disclose confidential information.
You may communicate with us via the following social media channels: (Add the entity's pages and accounts on social networks.)

11.3. Appendix 3 – Supervision Policy
(Name of federal entity) welcomes you where you can mention your constructive comments and views. Your contribution be appreciated and taken into account as one of the important references in the discussion of improvements and enhancements for our services.

Although (the name of the federal entity) welcomes any free comments and input on this platform, it has the full right to hide any content that:

• Represents a threat to security.
• Includes inappropriate language.
• Violates the privacy of others or offensive.
• Violates local laws.
• Indecent, obscene or defamatory.
• Includes unwanted messages or promotes any trade.
• May be interpreted as prejudiced or harmful to any section of the society on the basis of race, colour, nationality, religion or status ... etc.
• Includes collective or political discussions.
• Contains a breach of intellectual property rights
• Not complying with this policy can lead to blocking the participant.

11.4. Appendix 4 – work plan for E-participation

Following is some of the most prominent tasks the government entity should implement in order to activate the e-participation along with a timetable for implementation from the date of publishing this policy on the website of the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority:

#	Task	Duration in months
1	Assigning a person as the e-participation officer	1
2	Revising the internal policy for social communication and updating it according to the directives in this guideline.	3
3	Implementing training programs for the entity employees on the contents of this guideline and the entity's internal policy for social media	3
4	Revision of the e-participation page on the entity's website and updating it according to the instructions in this guideline	2
5	Supervising the entity's accounts on social networks and updating content according to the instructions in this guideline	1
6	Starting to adopt instructions in this guideline for the e-participation practices of the entity	3

11.5. Appendix 5: evaluation of the Exten of complying with instructions

The following indices assist the entity to evaluate their compliance level with instructions listed in this document:

#	Elements of Evaluation
1	Did you assign a "social media officer"?
2	Did you revise the social media internal policy and update it according to the directives in this guide?
3	Did you conduct any trainings on the social media internal policy and the instructions listed in this document?
4	Did you update the e-participation page on your website according to this document's instructions?
5	Did you revise and update the entity's accounts on social media according to this document's instructions?
6	Does the entity implement the "electronic data" practice at least once a week?

11.6. Appendix 6 – list of references

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