

## Foreword

---

Small states face unique hurdles in achieving development gains such as geographic dispersion of islands, economies of scale and skills shortages. These disadvantages are well recognised. What is new and different is that there are valuable experiences concerning the ways and means of overcoming these impediments through the leveraging of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to achieve better governance, efficient and inclusive public service delivery, and social accountability.

ICTs allow for the creation of new digital pathways between citizens and governments, which are both affordable, accessible and widespread, overcoming the boundaries of time and space. This offers the opportunity for developing small states to leapfrog generations of technology when seeking to enhance governance or to deepen democracy through promoting the participation of citizens in processes that affect their lives and welfare.

Thirty-two out of the Commonwealth's fifty-four members are classified as small states, with populations of less than 1.5 million. Access and use of ICTs for governance are at a formative stage in these countries, with millions of people still outside the inclusive net of its benefits.

For such small developing countries, especially those at the nascent stage of building an e-government infrastructure, it is vital to understand where they stand in terms of their e-readiness, reflect upon the intrinsic components of an e-governance action plan, and draw lessons from the success and failures of the various e-government initiatives undertaken by other countries, developed or developing.

This book aims to strengthen the understanding of policy-makers involved in planning and execution of e-government projects, offering a helping hand by endowing them with comprehensive information about embarking successfully on the road to e-government.

It is our hope that with this knowledge, and with an early view of e-governance as not simply a technology project but as a transformative use of technology and networks to improve public sector performance and governance, policy-makers in small states can focus on developing the full potential of e-governance.

**Max Everest-Phillips**

Director

Governance and Institutional Development Division

This page has been intentionally left blank