Assessing the Digital Governance Landscape in Local Governments:
A Case Study of Lithuania

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Abstract: The integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) into public administration is crucial for enhancing efficiency, transparency, and citizen engagement, particularly within local governments. The shift from traditional 'digital government' towards 'digital governance' exemplifies this evolution, as it encompasses not only the delivery of services but also the intricate interplay between government entities, the private sector, and civil society (Gil-Garcia et al., 2018; Barcevic?ius et al., 2019; Erkut, 2020; Esposito et al., 2024). This transformation towards digital maturity offers numerous advantages, including the enhanced capacity of local governments to respond more effectively to community needs, meet citizen expectations, and promote changes in organisational processes and culture; it also facilitates the development of employees' digital literacy and competencies while increasing organisational innovativeness, openness, and transparency.

Digital governance can be characterised by three main types, reflecting the level of digital maturity: digital consistency, digital adaptation and digital transformation (Denyer, 2018; Vial, 2021; Kraus et al., 2021; He et al., 2023). These types clearly demonstrate the progression of local governments as organisations from minimal commitment through active adaptation to leadership and innovation. However, each local government may possess distinct legal, socioeconomic, and technological contexts; thus, in order to ascertain the type of digital governance that has been established in the particular local government, it is essential to elucidate the specifics of these contexts and to evaluate the corresponding level of digital maturity. The evaluation of the digital governance type at the local government is based three main dimensions: strategy, employees and processes (Denyer, 2018; He et al., 2023). It is important to evaluate these dimensions, as this enables local governments to the identify strengths and weaknesses of digital governance and facilitate the implementation of specific measures or actions aimed at enhancing organisational digital maturity.

The aim of this research is to assess the current landscape of digital governance within local governments in Lithuania. This study seeks to identify strengths and weaknesses in the existing digital governance practices, offering insights into the challenges faced by local authorities and highlighting opportunities for increasing of the level of the digital maturity.

A quantitative study was conducted across all 60 Lithuanian municipalities. A written survey method was employed, enabling the collection of information from representatives of local governments, regarding their assessment of the current state of the municipality's digital governance. It has been established that the type of digital governance within local governments depends on the maturity level of each dimension, including prior strategic decisions, employees' competencies, and ongoing processes. The type of digital governance is also influenced by the socio-economic and geopolitical context of the municipality. To enhance digital governance at the local level, it is recommended to involve employees in the strategic planning and improvement of processes related to adaptive and transformative digital governance, while aiming for digital maturity.