

In collaboration with Deloitte

Report Preview: Governing Smart Cities

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The World Economic Forum will launch in 2021 its first report on the state of technology governance in cities. The report is a publication of the [G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance](#), a global effort to advance the responsible and ethical use of smart city technologies. The alliance and its partners represent more than 200,000 cities and local governments, leading companies, startups, research institutions and civil society communities. The Forum serves as its secretariat.

Governing Smart Cities provides a benchmark for cities looking to establish a foundation of policies for ethical and responsible governance of their smart city programmes. The publication, which explores current practices related to privacy, security, openness and sustainability, is based on surveys and interviews with policy experts and city government officials from the alliance's [36 pioneer cities](#) (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1 G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance pioneer cities








About the survey

A policy assessment of the alliance's 36 pioneer cities was conducted from January to March 2021. The cities span six continents and 22 countries, with populations ranging from 60,000 residents to more than 10 million. The assessment evaluates the state of current governance practices in these cities through the lens of five model policies which the alliance has developed with global policy experts (see Figure 2).

Preliminary analysis of this research highlights a number of notable findings:

- As referenced in Figure 3, there is a small cohort of cities within each policy area that have already drafted corresponding policies. While this suggests an opportunity for shared learning from these cities, there is also significant work to be done to mainstream these policies. **In all areas, with the exception of open data, the vast majority of cities do not currently have comparable policies written or enacted.**

FIGURE 2 The five model policies

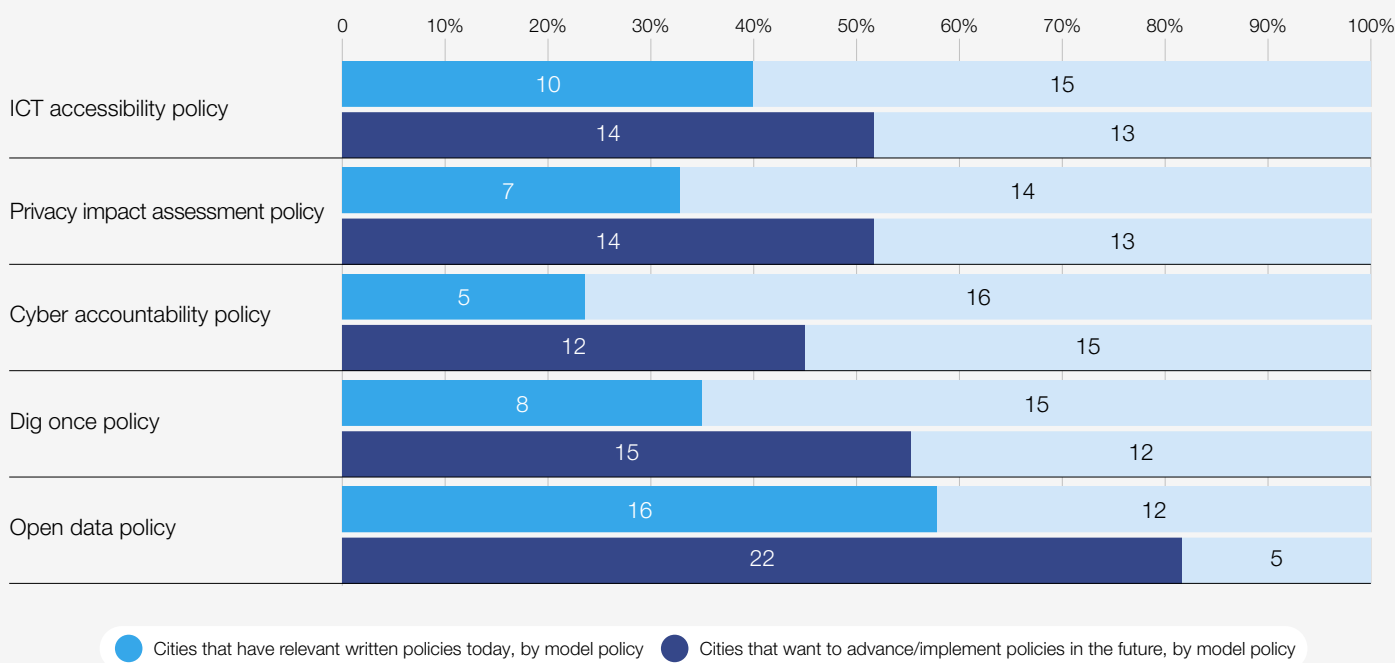
	ICT accessibility policy	Building accessibility standards into procurement to ensure digital-related services are accessible to those with disabilities.
	Privacy impact assessment policy	Defining processes to assess privacy implications of new urban technology deployments.
	Cyber accountability policy	Defining key accountability measures that cities should take in order to protect the city's and its citizens' assets.
	Dig once policy	Setting out planning policies that improve coordination among city stakeholders and reduce the cost of digital infrastructure rollout.
	Open data policy	Developing a model policy for open data strategy in a city.

- Despite the growing awareness and new legislation on data protection and privacy, **most cities surveyed do not currently conduct a privacy impact assessment** before a technology deployment. Seventeen out of 21 responding cities said that conducting a privacy impact assessment was not a typical practice in their city.
- “Dig once” policies, which have been around since the 1990s, make installing digital infrastructure more efficient. Yet, the uptake in this policy area was low; **only 8 out of 23 responding cities currently have a dig once policy** in place.
- Most responding cities already have an open data policy in place. Even so, **open data policies are the most sought-after model policy for adoption**, demonstrating the continued interest from cities in this policy area.

The full report, scheduled for release in summer 2021, will explore all five model policy areas in depth.

If you would like to receive a copy of the report when it is published, contact Rushi Rama, Project Lead for Smart Cities, World Economic Forum, by email at rushi.rama@weforum.org.

FIGURE 3 Prevalence of model policies in the alliance’s pioneer cities



Note: Data as of March 21

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