



## Now onboarding GaaP4CS

The platform path to modern citizen services

## DXC LEADING EDGE | GaaP4CS OVERVIEW

DXC Leading Edge explores the “always-uncertain” era of convergence, where transformative shifts are driving structural changes in industries and society, presenting a unique opportunity to modernize public administration and enhance government–citizen interactions through GaaP for citizen services (GaaP4CS).

Welcome to what may be the most interesting time to be involved in the public sector. It is my belief that we are in a unique moment, where shared responsibility has collided with more opportunity than ever before, to reshape how public administrations serve their citizens — our elders, families and future generations — and to rebuild citizen trust. Trust that will inspire the confidence to allow and encourage progress.

As the world grows more complex and disruption more common, we must examine how the style of public administration has adapted. It is time to consider moving from a passive, compliance-centric stewardship to a more active, citizen-centric one.

Active stewardship requires a shift in how we think about technoculture — the interplay between technology and the culture of public administration. Technoculture has changed the perceptions of what government should do, and it will now require a shift in how we work.

While Government as a Platform isn't new, coalescing forces have made it a powerful model to bring citizen services to life. Legislators, regulators and operators at all jurisdictional levels understand that new ideas, digital platforms and emerging technology can inject flexibility, intelligence and ease of interaction into citizen services. Citizens are equally aware: They understand how Amazon, Deliveroo and Airbnb work — these are integral to daily life.

This approach to using technology to enable extensive reuse — creating generative platforms that work across government agencies, jurisdictions and sectors — has another potential benefit. It might be a way to attract and retain young, talented and mission-driven people, driven by a sense of purpose, who see in government technology the means to contribute. These individuals will help government deliver for the elderly, the single parent, the aspiring maker-inventor, the new business owner and those seeking citizenship.

We must deliver new capabilities, foster public-private partnerships, and leverage a whole-of-government approach to continuously adapt in a changing world.

Will there be challenges? Of course. Will it be easy? Of course not.

We have a profound opportunity to manifest active, citizen-centric stewardship through Government as a Platform for Citizen Services. But we can't be passive about it.

**Let's activate a better future for all, together.**



**Derek Allison**  
Vice President, UK Public Sector  
Aerospace and Defence, DXC Technology



It's been almost 15 years since the concept of Government as a Platform (GaaP) captured the attention of government leaders ... and 15 years of eager discussion about its opportunities. Is GaaP at last ready for prime time? DXC Leading Edge researchers and colleagues believe the answer is yes.

Three platform environments are common in all sectors today: business model, business capability and technical. We're able to discover and stream our favorite films whenever we want (e.g., Netflix), reserve unique vacation rentals anywhere in the world (e.g., Airbnb) and compare prices for hard-to-get items across a global marketplace (e.g., Amazon and Alibaba). Business-capability platform environments provide videoconferencing, and enable financial and customer relationship management. And technical platforms are injecting flexibility and intelligence into operations by scaling compute-on-demand and tool support.

These platform environments are here to stay. They create new, durable value across sectors, along with broad consumer adoption, cementing them within the public fabric and technoculture.\*

**This acceptance drives increasing expectations ever higher.**

**It always has.** The notion of platforms, fortunately, creates a profound opportunity to reorient the style of public administration around citizens, much as Amazon and others have shifted our ways of thinking. In doing so, government organizations can now move toward delivering citizen services that leverage a whole-of-government approach.

The progression path is accelerating because of governments' extraordinary responses to multiple crises that boosted the implementation, adoption and use of technology by all. The types of disruption from these crises, with structural transformations already afoot, led to a convergence of opportunities for strategic leverage that continue to ripple out today.

GaaP for citizen services (GaaP4CS) is a meaningful version of a platform environment. This version includes an ecosystem platform providing both (1) building blocks for more intelligent, tailored citizen services, and (2) a collaborative environment for multisector participation to deliver these services in context. As legislators, regulators and operators work to responsibly harness and apply platform power and adapt in an era of uncertainty, promising examples offer themselves up for examination. The time for GaaP4CS has come.

## Citizen service:

Intended to advance programmatic outcomes, a citizen service: (1) is delivered to an eligible individual; (2) is wholly or largely funded by public funds; (3) is stewarded by government; (4) can be delivered by third parties intergovernmental, intragovernmental or nongovernmental (including private sector); and (5) has social and/or societal impact.

\* Technoculture: Culture as influenced by technology, and the symbiotic relationship that arises from the interactions between technology and culture

## From convergence to “always uncertain” — and GovTech growth

Change and complexity are part of every global trend. But convergence is creating one of the most disruptive eras since the Industrial Revolution. In prior eras, structural transformation occurred over a longer arc, allowing the market, the government, the consumer and the citizen to adjust to a major change — whether it was railroads, electricity, computing technology or space travel. Now, we’re in an “always-uncertain” time.

Inherent in each structural transformation are systemic risks, many of which are manifesting today. Together, the shifts are tectonic, driving multiple structural transformations in industries, economies and society. Increasingly time-compressed, their convergence forms a profoundly disruptive crucible — the very one needed to modernize the style of public administration and drive operational change in government. As nature abhors a vacuum, so does the market — and concomitant transformations drive rising expectations. These transformations create uncertainty and often bring fear of change. They also manifest risks in ways that deliver a nearly unprecedented opportunity to change how governments interact with their citizens and businesses (**Figure 1**).



**Figure 1.** Hyper-disruption is driving operational change in public administration

Prior to 2020, GovTech initiatives and implementations were already trending upward.<sup>2</sup> There was greater recognition of the significant upside potential for employing a whole-of-government approach.<sup>3</sup> As platform environments gained steam, government organizations experimented and adopted. Over time, the whole-of-government and platform-as-a-service approaches converged in how the public sector uses data and digital technologies to modernize and transform, i.e., GovTech.

Examples abound of GovTech initiatives delivering on their potential and showing the increasing upside for a whole-of-government approach, which started with e-government. Examples of platform components include digital identity management (often used by the private sector), online payment portals, open government data, data analytics, reporting and case management. These are increasingly commonplace and continue to evolve. Where leaders are prioritizing GovTech, we see transformation in policy, strategy and institutions at the highest levels.<sup>4</sup>

Yet for each success, there are cautionary tales. Ballooning technical debt (tech debt) from trying to integrate legacy IT systems often drives cost overruns, while duplication of effort turns into missed opportunities for reuse. Failure to design integrated, adaptive platforms keeps systems and data disconnected even as technical and operational capacity in other parts of the government system are underused. These are among the greatest risks.

## The 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer showed that in 15 out of 28 respondent countries, business had a double-digit trust advantage over government.

By 2020, turbulence and uncertainty from converging forces was steadily building, accelerating the pace of change and driving up expectations. Public confidence in all institutions was precipitously sliding. Then, the strongest expression of shaken foundations of trust appeared in the U.S. presidential election. The situation continues to be shaky. More importantly, expectations have surged higher. In the May 2023 announcement from the UN's World Health Organization, COVID-19 as a global health emergency was declared over.<sup>5</sup> Now, nations are shifting to recovering from multiple crises and setbacks. And, citizens are expecting even more. The gap between expectations and confidence must be closed.

The 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer, a global measure of consumers' sentiments about major institutions — governments, businesses and media — showed an overall institutional trust gap of 11 points between government and business, with government being far less trusted than business. In 15 out of 28 respondent countries, business had a double-digit trust advantage.<sup>6</sup>

### GovTech initiatives delivering on their potential — examples<sup>7,8,9</sup>

The **European Commission Digital Strategy** has set the standards aligning to the spirit and intent of GaaP, enabling responsible exploration and implementation of GovTech today and creating test beds for new technologies in the future.



**South Korea's post-COVID-19 recovery plan** includes a "Digital New Deal," a pan-government "national innovation project." The country has committed approximately 5.9 trillion won (approximately US\$4.61 billion) to promote the integration of data, network and artificial intelligence (AI) across the economy, through greater public-private cooperation and strengthened data-sharing and governance policies.



**Australia's Digital Government Strategy 2025** aims to put all government services for citizens and businesses online, which has prompted new enabling GovTech policies on digital and information communication technology reuse, digital workforce and digital infrastructure that are also GaaP aligned.



## Boom!

All of this came on the heels of the largest modern global pandemic, one that eviscerated global GDP — in the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression.<sup>10</sup> It also reversed a decades-long trend of increasing lifespans. Healthcare systems and professionals were battered, and many were broken. And, as of May 2023, almost 7 million lives were lost.<sup>11</sup> Then, before there was time for the world to heal, Russia invaded Ukraine. Again, this is convergence: The impact of resulting setbacks is still rippling across communities and the globe.

## From setbacks to setups for better outcomes for all

There are those who expected a return to normal after the pandemic. Others discussed attaining a “new normal.” The reality is that neither is possible: This new era is “always uncertain.” The extraordinary actions taken by governments around the world to contain the spread of the virus and save lives and livelihoods also boosted the implementation, mass adoption and use of technology by all. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, governments executed innovative data-sharing mechanisms to control the sharing of sensitive data used in developing their COVID-19 responses. This necessitated a high priority on digital policy to deal with the pandemic’s multithreaded policy effects. There was rapid development of AI systems across all sectors, including government, to monitor and predict the spread of COVID-19 and to advance research. Throughout, the world experienced skyrocketing demand for high-quality connectivity. Some operators saw a 60% surge in internet traffic

as more consumers and businesses went online. In essence, digital transformation, already affecting the consumer marketplace, accelerated during the pandemic.<sup>12</sup>

One example is the uptake of telehealth. Governments responded quickly to their citizens’ need for access to physicians during quarantines, by allowing doctors and hospitals to consult with patients online and book sessions through platforms — even to be reimbursed directly via those platforms. Some services, such as mental and behavioral health services (e.g., therapy/counseling) went online, often for the first time. This continues as a standard practice today.<sup>13</sup>

“This is the most universally complex policy environment of our lifetime — posing tremendously difficult choices: How can policymakers rein in high inflation and rising debt, while maintaining critical spending and building foundations for durable growth?”

— Kristalina Georgieva,  
IMF Managing Director  
(April 2022)



Figure 2. Setbacks lead to more setbacks

Business capabilities like remote work were amplified during the pandemic, when the entire world was locked down and many employees worked almost exclusively from home. The surge in demand for networking equipment drove down supply to critical levels exactly when public and private hospitals worldwide needed to set up temporary COVID-19 testing and treatment facilities. The pandemic required the public and private sectors to work collaboratively to establish secure wireless networks and communications among healthcare professionals and their patients. Physicians and staff needed to stay informed on official protocols to keep communities safe while keeping public officials informed in real time of on-the-ground patient care. And patients needed to securely communicate with the healthcare system and with their families.

Network equipment provider Cisco, which has been creating hybrid work solutions since 1996, stepped in to help meet the demand: Cisco's two rapid-response programs provided pop-up wireless networking equipment to hospitals at no cost. The programs included (1) an equipment brokerage to connect the company's own customers who had excess wireless equipment that could be donated to healthcare organizations in need, and (2) simple network bundle kits identified from Cisco's own inventories within its supply chain. This is the power of the possible between private and public sectors coming together.

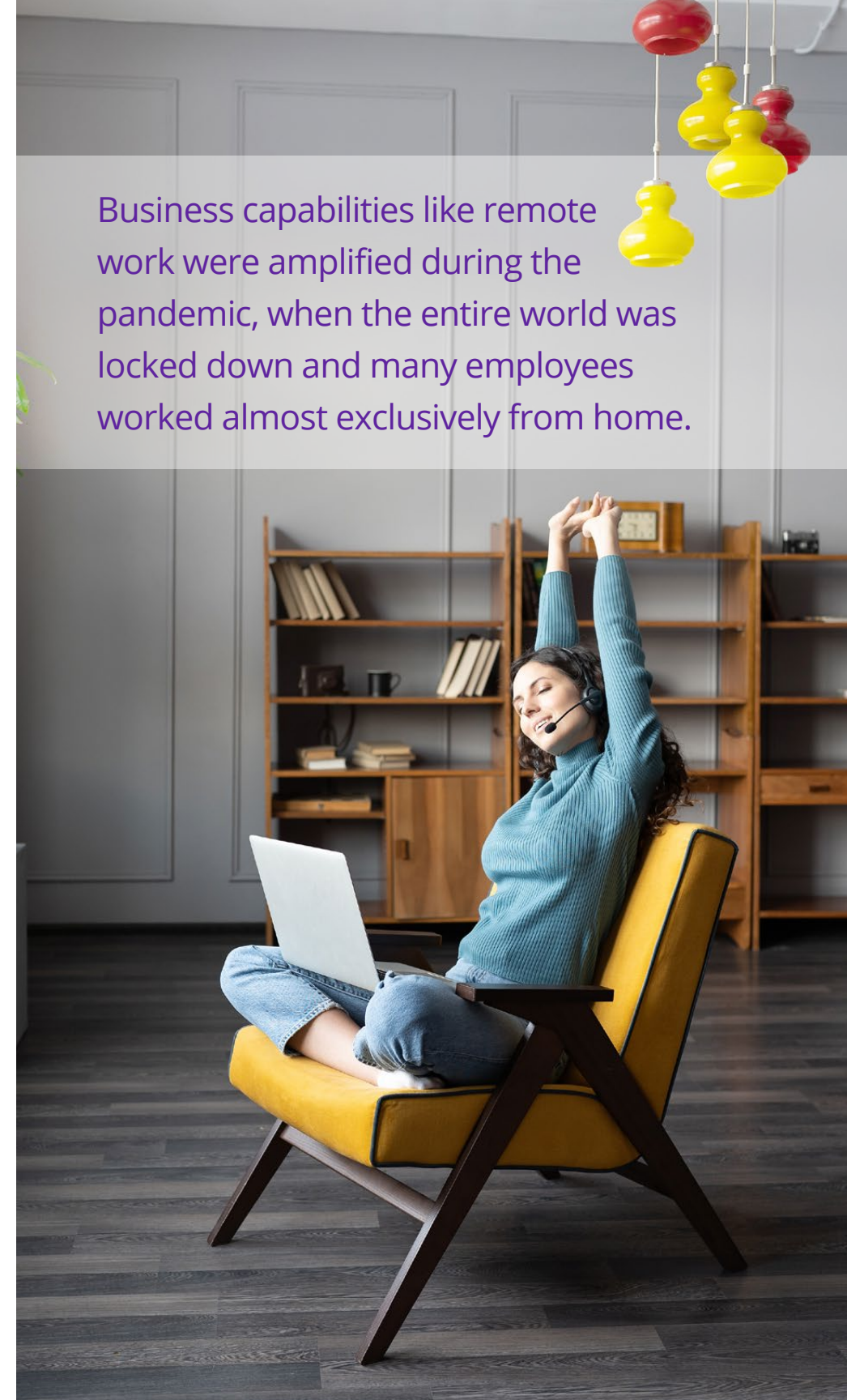
Similarly, public-private partnering allowed for the fastest development of a vaccine in global history — at an unprecedented scale, according to the Center for Global Development. Companies like Cisco are working within broader ecosystems to apply that same focused priority and collaboration, across all disciplines and sectors, to develop innovative solutions at the speed and scale required to address shared concerns, such as climate change.

Leaders are working to address the setbacks brought about by multiple crises, now recognizing that an “always uncertain” world demands that governments be prepared to adapt at any time. There are three strategic imperatives: (1) embrace citizen-centric platform thinking; (2) carefully prioritize spending; and (3) strategically leverage across the whole of government for impact (**Figure 3**).

Expectations	Imperatives
Enable new and better ways to <b>serve the citizen</b>	<b>Embrace citizen-centric platform thinking</b>
Do <b>better and more with less</b> while <b>protecting the most vulnerable</b>	<b>Carefully prioritize spending</b>
Turn setbacks into setups for <b>better outcomes for all</b> and lead for the future	<b>Strategically leverage across the whole of government for impact</b>

**Figure 3.** Government expectations and imperatives

Business capabilities like remote work were amplified during the pandemic, when the entire world was locked down and many employees worked almost exclusively from home.



## Platforms reshaping our world are driving change in government

DXC Leading Edge has conducted research on platforms that can be instructive for governments, particularly government CIOs:

- [Rethinking digital platforms as change agents in a software-defined world](#)
- [Mastering platform-driven business](#)
- [Platform culture: Mastering the art of information flow](#)

Legislators, regulators and operators in all governments are working to harness GovTech and apply platform power (**Figure 4**). They are at different stages of maturity in doing so, according to the World Bank’s 2022 GovTech Maturity Index, which validated trends in public sector digital transformation at a country level across 198 economies.<sup>14</sup> DXC Leading Edge added primary research to this Index that we believe brings us to the next iteration of GaaP: the ecosystem platform environment. The goal of an ecosystem platform environment is to enable its participants to interact and collaborate more effectively to advance shared outcomes.

Years ago, GaaP as both approach and platform required “digital stitching.” Since then, the emergence of different platform environments — technical, business capability, business model — has given rise to the “stitching” to enable the ecosystem platform environment. This new environment has a natural home in government because of the outcomes-based nature of public policy and administration.

The ecosystem platform environment includes the underlying collection of relationships and their resources (assets, capabilities, competencies and know-how, brand and capacity), structured and orchestrated for interaction and use to add value in the service of shared outcomes. The network effects from a strong ecosystem should lead to new opportunities (e.g., innovation, growth) while delivering mutual benefits for participants.



**Figure 4.** Ecosystem platform environment<sup>15,16</sup>



## Enter GaaP4CS

Government leaders realize that more intelligent and tailored citizen services are possible. Citizens do, too. There is a path forward to carefully guide decisions and support platform-enabled capabilities — one that develops a platform for architecting agile, anti-fragile and modular services that can be combined into robust services for citizens. The dynamics leading up to today have set the stage for GaaP4CS, building on the foundation of GovTech. The shift to GaaP4CS represents an inflection point — a change in trajectory from GovTech, which is more traditional (linear) (Figure 5). GaaP4CS facilitates value exchange and co-creation, which creates an ecosystem driven by network effects.

With GaaP4CS, relevant data, people and other resources from across the whole of government can be securely and appropriately connected on a common core infrastructure. Then GaaP4CS can add shared digital systems, technology, ways of working and practices to facilitate fast flow and rapid scaling. Each government authorizes and owns final technical strategy, policy, standards and inherently governmental\* reusable patterns. This enables value-creating interactions between government entities, external (multisector) producers and providers, and consumers of citizen services who rely on its stewardship. In the process, insights from the GaaP4CS ecosystem can help inform government and its citizenry\*\* to solve collective problems at multiple levels.

\* Inherently governmental: A role so intimately related to the public interest that it requires performance of related functions by government employees

\*\* Individual and corporate/institutional citizens

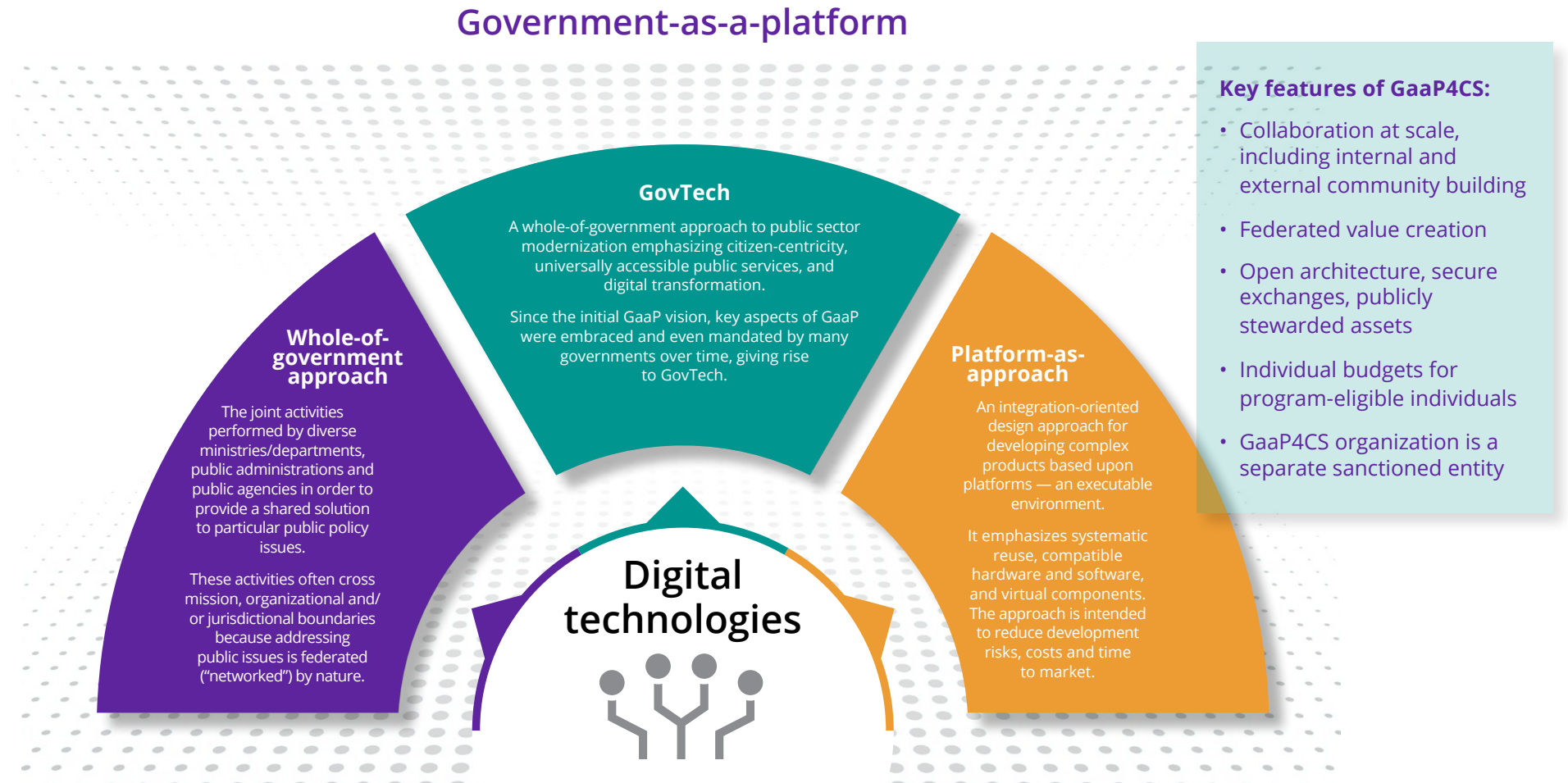


Figure 5. From GovTech to GaaP4CS

## Alignment is not enough

The pandemic and the war in Ukraine created a window of opportunity to capitalize on the mass adoption of technology and innovative practices that resulted from governments' extraordinary responses. More importantly, many emergent operational infrastructures demonstrate the adaptiveness inherent in platform thinking, along with a base of capability and capacity to build upon. The building blocks for GaaP4CS are increasingly in place. Understanding the degree of alignment to each lens of the

platform leadership framework is essential, but it isn't enough. The global recovery will require significant public expenditure. Not wasting the opportunity provided by a crisis — in this case, multiple crises — will require strategic leverage.

The World Bank's 2022 GovTech Maturity Index (**Figure 6**) provides a bird's eye view of current digital capability and capacity at a country level. The index combines multiple indices with key indicators that, interestingly, make up key aspects of GaaP. For example, 70% of participating economies have committed to taking a whole-of-government approach (a maxim of GaaP) to transformation, with almost half in the process of institutionalizing the approach.<sup>17</sup> That's strategic leverage.

- The Indian government's biometric digital identity system is called Aadhaar (which means "foundation"). Launched in 2009, Aadhaar covers 1.3 billion citizens and is increasingly being used in the private sector. With Aadhaar, in just 1 week, the government was able to transfer more than 600 Indian rupees per month to 200 million vulnerable women, as part of its COVID-19 response efforts to ease financial stress.<sup>18</sup>
- Another example is the World Health Organization COVID-19 Dashboard,<sup>19</sup> which received data from central governments worldwide. Were there fits and starts? Yes. But over a very short period of time, local authorities could feed directly into the dashboard while providing complementary hyperlocal, cross-sectoral information to their communities. Strategic leverage is everywhere — now.



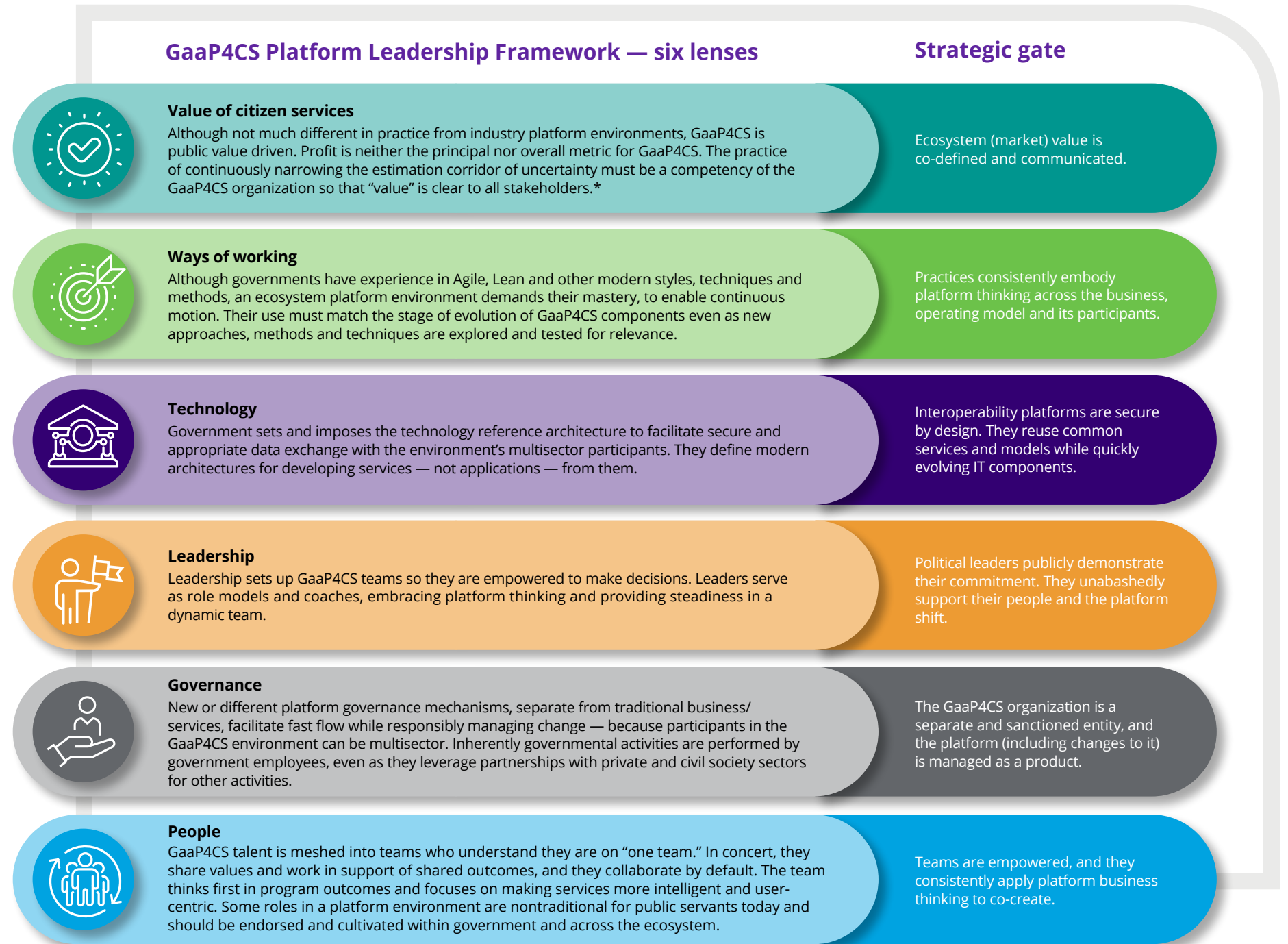
Figure 6. Component indices of the World Bank GovTech Maturity Index



## A platform leadership framework for GaaP4CS

Given the imperatives to prioritize smart spending, leverage the whole of government for impact and embrace citizen-centric platform thinking, what are the strategic considerations for government leaders?

We tailored the [DXC Platform Leadership Framework](#) to government’s needs by defining five indicators for each of six lenses for an ecosystem platform environment for citizen services (**Figure 7**). Each lens includes a strategic gate that is essential for shifting responsibly from traditional citizen service delivery to GaaP4CS. The resulting GaaP4CS Platform Leadership Framework gauges the degree to which organizations align to each lens, to facilitate planning as leaders work to harness platform power.



\* Examples of value: Convenience for citizens, return on investment for industry, reduced administrative cost for government

**Figure 7.** GaaP4CS Platform Leadership Framework — six lenses

## The DXC GaaP4CS Journey Assessment

Platform thinking has evolved the way ecosystems create and consume value, resulting in new executable environments that are reshaping our world, including government. Governments are already on the journey of platform-driven change. Indeed, government organizations already have, use and participate in many platform environments (technical, business capability and business model) and have institutional arrangements to accommodate them. Many organizations have also embarked on ambitious GovTech modernization initiatives to loosen the grip of tech debt on their operational environments and budgets. Broad government adoption and adaptation to a GaaP4CS platform environment is in the early stages of evolution.

To guide and advance the journey, alignment and leverage are both necessary. The combined scores of the DXC Platform Leadership Framework for GaaP4CS and the World Bank GovTech Maturity Index express the GaaP4CS journey (**Figure 8**) in four broad business capabilities for the ecosystem, suggest different strategies and offer a sample of incremental GaaP4CS and use cases to explore along the way.

Government leaders must embrace citizen-centric platform thinking, prioritize spending and harness platform power to activate the whole of government, in order to adapt and respond in an “always uncertain” world. GaaP4CS is key.

### Promising examples of platform-enabled citizen services

#### Canada

Under Canada’s national HomeShare program, people (often elderly) open parts of their homes to students in return for support in the care of themselves and their homes. Students get access to accommodation and lend a hand to the owner while there. The platform environment, which the government provides, allows students to search the digital marketplace for suitable accommodation, while the government provides associated matching services.



#### China

Drawing on a program model from the Netherlands called Buurtzorg (“neighborhood care”), China brings home care to people in need by offering a digital marketplace to search for and find nurses. Nurses publish their availability on the digital marketplace. Funding for care comes from insurance companies and government programs.



#### Ireland

Ireland’s DIGITAL Skillnet program provides 100% funded training and work placement for jobseekers matched to company roles via a digital marketplace. The program’s mission is to enable companies with software technology functions to remain competitive by facilitating active talent development and continuous upskilling for staff. It is part of the broader Skillnet Ireland program, which aims to develop future-ready talent.



#### Netherlands

The Public Employment Services agency gives every citizen of the Netherlands access to training to improve their chances of getting a new job or getting promoted due to new skills acquired in their current job. The agency provides a personal budget of €1,000 and a digital marketplace where eligible training institutions have their training catalogs.



#### United States

In the U.S., Helper Bees provides tailored home care services through a digital marketplace. The government provides budgets to eligible citizens via insurance providers such as Medicare.



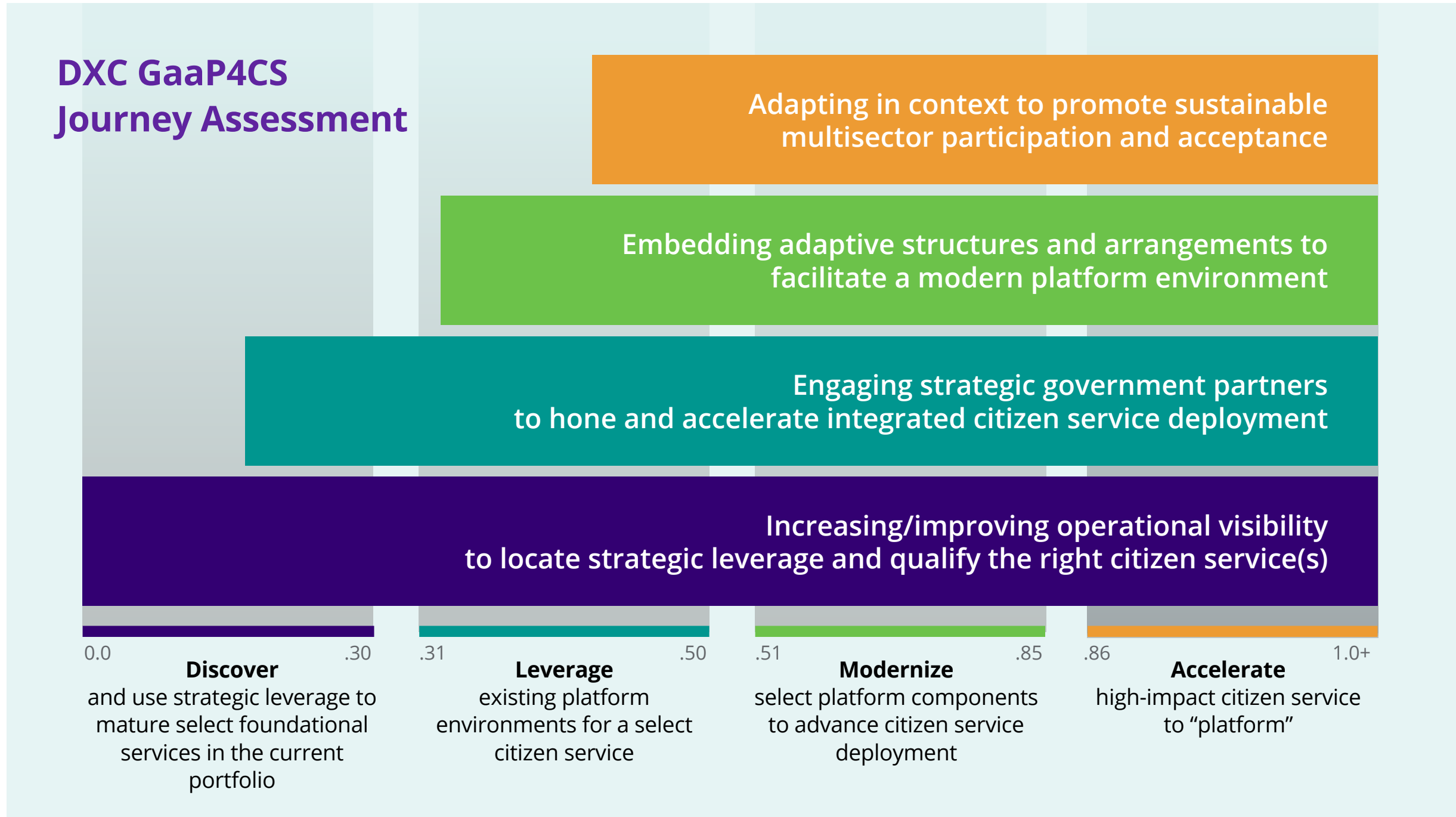
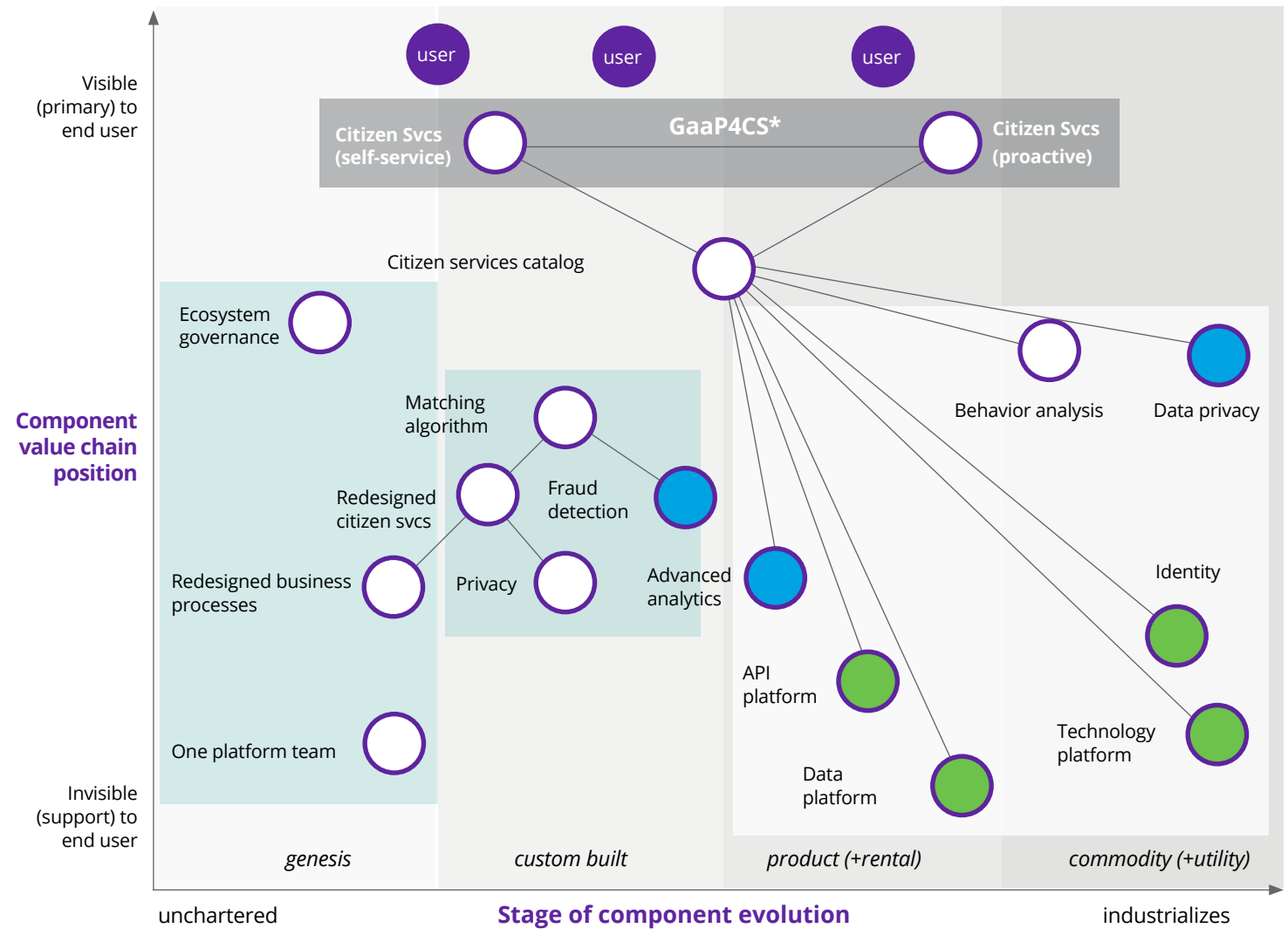


Figure 8. Platform leadership dimensions and GovTech for leverage make up the GaaP4CS journey



**Figure 9.** Notional Wardley Map: Many GaaP4CS components likely already exist, but at different stages of evolution

- LEGEND**
- \* Experience driven
  - Component
  - Standard
  - Challenging
- Types of platform environments**
- Ecosystem
  - Business model
  - Business capability
  - Technical

Not all citizen services (or public services, more broadly) are ready for or are meant for full GaaP4CS, but many of their technical components likely already exist. Others, such as ecosystem governance, a “One Platform” team and redesigned services, are in the early stages of evolution as depicted in the [Wardley Map \(Figure 9\)](#).

**To chart your GaaP4CS journey:**

- Understand the dimensions of and readiness for change for GaaP4CS.
- Map out the initial landscape for GaaP4CS to craft the right story.
- Do a deep dive into the components of candidate, prioritized and selected citizen services.
- Target your GaaP4CS interventions.
- Activate strategic leverage.\*\*

In an “always uncertain” era, the ability of government to adapt to increasing disruption — whether to meet moments of crisis or respond to perpetually increasing expectations — is vital. Platform leadership is the linchpin to creating durable value in support of shared outcomes through relevant citizen-centric services. The time for GaaP4CS has arrived.

**How can your organization move forward?**

DXC has developed a GaaP4CS Platform Leadership Framework and Journey Assessment to help you chart the path forward. Find out how to put these tools to work for you.

[Register to take the Journey Assessment.](#)



\*\* Existing investments, resources and multisector arrangements that have accommodated aspects of GaaP4CS

## Endnotes

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