

## 1) INNOVATION SUMMARY

### 1.1 Title of Innovation: **Ajman Attractiveness Model**

### 1.2 Year Innovation was put into practice: 2018

### 1.3 Short and Simple Explanation

Launched in 2018, the Ajman Statistics Center has developed a new model to measure the determinants of the 'quality of life' in Ajman, relevant to six key areas of public service i.e., Education, Healthcare, Infrastructure, Telecommunications, Transportation, and Consumer Services. The Model comprises a comprehensive factor measurement framework with customized parameters relevant to the six service areas measured; embedded on a sophisticated web-based platform, with inbuilt protocols for scientific data collection, project management, quality assurance, data analysis, visualization, and reporting. The framework generates real time output of 'composite' performance values (Ajman Attractiveness index composite), underlying factor contributions (parameter scores) and cross-tabulated analyses of demographic, psychographic, and geographical attributions vis-à-vis the performance and community satisfaction levels in each service area.

The model enables decision makers at the highest levels of Government to maximize policy outcomes that are 'citizen centric' and 'future proofed', based on evidential data and inferences premised on the community's perception of, and satisfaction with the access, effectiveness, and efficiency of vital public sector service delivery. It also systematically captures the gaps, areas of improvement and the impacts of intervention, via targeted factor analysis and assessment in performance trends.

The framework of factors within the Model has been designed keeping in perspective all the attributes and 'touch points' that define, shape, and enhance the 'quality of life' for the Ajman community. Keeping these objectives at the center, this framework enables implementation directives to be cascaded 'top down' to relevant Government authorities and regulators; thus, substantiating their role as 'service providers'. It contributes towards 'value maximizing' service design and driving excellence in service standards related to the delivery of vital public services to the community.

The Model also enables the interlinkage of the 'cross – cutting' determinants of the attractiveness of life in the Emirate aligned to the six service dimensions measured; thus, enabling a 'whole of Government' approach that breaks down traditional 'siloed' approaches in policy implementation, and reinforces a 'one Ajman Government' image for the community.

### 1.4 Innovation Overview

The project had its genesis following the economic census conducted in Ajman in 2017 by the Ajman Statistics Center. During the administration of the survey framework, the project team witnessed significant challenges in enforcing robust data collection protocols and quality assurance standards, to ensure the reliability and validity of collected data. In addition, there was a realization of an untapped opportunity to leverage the engagement opportunity with the community, to capture their feedback on what makes living in Ajman attractive to them, and how relevant data captured could be aligned to policy outcomes that maximized value, keeping the community's needs at the 'heart' of public service design and delivery.

Additionally, it was also observed at the time, that Government agencies involved in the delivery of these vital public services in Ajman did not follow a standardized approach in capturing beneficiary (user) feedback on the various attributes associated with the demand, needs and expectations underpinning these services.

It is in this context, that the Ajman Attractiveness Model serves as a unique solution that:

- Presents a comprehensive, scientifically derived framework of attributes that capture the current considerations of demand 'drivers', consumption 'influencers', perceptions of access, efficiency, and effectiveness, as well as the future expectations of the public, relevant to the vital public services that shape their perceptions of 'quality of life' in the Emirate.

- Leverages the opportunity presented via scientifically collected, refined, and analyzed data to design 'fit for purpose' services, develop 'future proofed' policies and enhance public service performance.
- Enables 'razor focused' continual improvements in specific dimensions of public services as captured by the framework of factors deployed for measurement.

The platform deployed for the administration of Ajman Attractiveness Survey (also referred to as 'Ajman Studies') is a highly sophisticated system with in-built quality assurance, project management and data collection protocols, as well as capabilities for automated analysis, data visualization, real time reporting and decision support. It includes various features and mechanisms for:

- Survey management, including but not limited to automated sample allocations to field agents; progress tracking of survey 'completes' and protocols for survey execution and recording.
- Tracking and monitoring all aspects of fieldwork.
- Performing quality audits including data validity checks and verifications.
- Performing cross-tabulations and complex statistical analysis across the combination of multiple data sets, incorporating demographic, satisfaction, awareness, and service performance related variables.
- Generating visual reports and analysis by 'geofenced' areas within the Emirate (maps), charts, tables, and other pivots.
- Facilitating identification of gaps and priority areas of intervention, through custom built programming architecture.

The novelty of the model is further underpinned in the 'ripple' impacts and disruptions it has created in the conventional public policy cycle, clearly translating 'voice of the community' into tangible benefits via structural reforms, policy enhancements, programs, and infrastructure.

The Ajman Attractiveness survey, which is currently in its fifth cycle, is conducted annually on a scientifically selected sample of 6000+ households in Ajman. The 'backbone' of the research instrument deployed is the customized framework of variables measured to ascertain satisfaction and performance levels on each of the six areas of public service measured. The novelty of the framework is underpinned in its design - its conceptualization is based on a review of 343 academic papers, journals, and white papers, across the six service areas. The initial prototype has been tested through a combination of pilot studies, reliability, and validation tests, as well as feedback capture via subject matter experts. To that effect, the framework which forms the core of the Ajman Attractiveness Model enables an entirely new approach towards measuring and enhancing Government effectiveness in the delivery of vital public services.

The framework is reviewed and enhanced cyclically as part of the overall quality assurance governance, deploying a combination of continued statistical testing and feedback capture from the community on the interpretation and clarity of survey questions.

Each cycle is 4-months and follows a scientific 'input – output' process. The key building blocks include:

- Sample framework development (drawing a scientific representation of citizens and residents across the geographical and demographic profile of the Emirate).
- Research instrument development and technology system set up.
- Pilot study and instrument fine tuning.
- Survey rollout and administration, constituting face to face visits to households based on an automated sample allocation system.
- Quality control and data checking infused at various touch points of the survey execution – notably, this follows the 'agile' approach of project management, with enhancements introduced incrementally in 'time boxes', vis – a – vis a 'waterfall' based sequential approach.
- Analysis and reports generation, comprising real time automated dashboards and programmed reports.

Based on its success in Ajman, the Model has already received nation-wide interest for adoption from Local Government entities across the other Emirates as well as from the Federal Government of the UAE. The methodology 'backbone' of the Model is considered a pioneering 'best practice' in public service performance measurement and is likely to be adopted as a national system. Furthermore, several academic papers covering the project approach and cycle performance results have already been published in prestigious academic journals including the *Open Journal of Business and Management* and the *International Journal of Community Well-Being*. To this effect, the project has contributed to the global body of academic knowledge and best practices in public service performance management and delivery.

## 1.5 Innovation Tags

#Citizen Engagement #Design #Futures & Foresight #Data #Evaluation and Oversight #Methods and Tools #Public Service Delivery #Open Government #Public Policy #Transparency #UX/UI Design #Communication #Digital and Technology Transformation #Leadership #Open Data #Methods #Service Design #Strategic Design #Systems Change #Public Consultation #Process Improvement/Simplification

## 2) INNOVATION DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 What makes your project innovative

The novelty of the Ajman Attractiveness Model is embedded not only in its design, but also in terms of how it has transformed the public policy process and decision making in relation to the enhancement of vital public services in the Emirate of Ajman.

As articulated, in terms of its design, the conceptual framework of parameters used for the measurement of performance and satisfaction of the six service areas that the Model covers, has been derived through a comprehensive process of academic research and mapping of best practices around the world. Furthermore, its conceptualization of the framework emulates a 'user centric' design, keeping the community's objectives at the core. The parameters measured across the six service areas that the model covers are interlinked in a way, that all the experiential aspects that influence the attractiveness of living in Ajman are comprehensively covered.

This unique design ensures that diagnostics on measured attributes directly support, evidence, and substantiate the Government's decisions on programs, policy interventions, service enhancements and infrastructure investment.

The Model has thus effectively instilled a novel approach in Government functioning, as reflected in the following aspects:

- Based on the results of the cyclical index, directives for policy intervention, decision-making and implementation, flow directly from the Ruler's office to the designated Government authorities linked to the six areas of public service that the index measures – this eliminates the bureaucracy associated with a 'bottom up' approach of policy agenda setting by individual Government agencies, often operating in silos.
- The Model has enabled a platform for prioritizing projects that are 'cross-functional' in nature and inter-link various 'user touch points' that have an impact on the 'quality of life' for citizens and residents of Ajman, across the spectrum of vital public services that it covers – notably, these 'touch points' underpin the broader perception of the attractiveness living in the Emirate
- The Model has contributed significantly towards transforming policy design from a 'department-specific', 'entity-specific', or 'service-specific' approach to a 'whole of Government' agenda.
- It has inspired a 'consumer centered' approach towards the design of public services, premised on direct engagement between the highest levels of the Government and the community, and by placing public service agencies as 'providers'; reinforcing the community's needs, which are always kept at centerstage (*Note: Referred to as the 'Ajman Community Care Model', this approach was infused into the framework design as part of the 2021 cycle*).

- It has promoted the Ajman Government’s public image as an ‘open’, ‘transparent’ and ‘accountable’ Government, as the results of the survey are made available publicly, via a host of interactive tools, reports, and dashboards.
- It has contributed towards enhancing the Government’s ‘performance legitimacy’ with community voice’ directly translated into mega projects (*Note: As an example, the Government has announced the development of 17 parks covering 1234000 sq meters, based directly on community’s low satisfaction levels on ‘time spent on outdoor activities’, captured via the framework*).

## 2.2 Innovation Status

The Ajman Attractiveness Model is currently in a mature state of development within the innovation cycle i.e., “Diffusing Lessons”. As articulated, the Model is currently being studied by other Local Government and Federal Government entities in the UAE to enhance their public service performance measurement frameworks as well in enhancing the agility of public policy decisions related to Government services.

The Ajman Attractiveness framework is also being continually mapped to other measurement frameworks linked to other projects spearheaded by the Ajman Government. This exercise has been leading to positive benefits in the form of ‘cross pollinated’ measurement efficiencies, output validation, and improvements in instrument design. As an example, a mapping conducted with the “Children’s Happiness Index”, another flagship project led the Ajman Statistics Center, has led to tangible enhancements in the frameworks of measurement for Education and Healthcare services covered by the Ajman Attractiveness Model.

Notably, the framework design remains agile, in response to the external environment and evolving needs of the community. As an example, in response to the pandemic, the ‘Telecommunication Services’ framework of the Model was enhanced to incorporate specific parameters to reflect the importance of internet connectivity in a virtual working environment. Similarly, the ‘Education Services’ framework has been enhanced to capture factors measuring impact on parents of school going children, of the official change in the working week in the UAE (Monday to Friday, instead of Sunday to Thursday).

Furthermore, the Ajman Statistics Office regularly publishes academic white papers, and articles on various aspects of the design, methodologies and ‘lessons learnt’, underpinning the model and its implementation (Table 1).

In addition, the Office has successfully published two academic manuscripts, so far, including:

- Book 1: *Residents’ Satisfaction on Healthcare, Education and Public Services, in Ajman as a Benchmark for MENA Region (published through Lambert Academic Publishing)*
- Book 2: *Residents’ Satisfaction on Infrastructure, Transportation and Telecommunications, in Ajman as a Benchmark for MENA Region (published through Lambert Academic Publishing)*

*Table 1: List of Journals featuring academic articles on the Ajman Attractiveness Model*

Service Area	Journal	Date of Publication
Infrastructure	<i>Open Journal of Business and Management</i>	6 <sup>th</sup> September, 2021
Education	<i>Creative Education</i>	31 <sup>st</sup> August, 2021
Transport	<i>Open Journal of Business and Management</i>	4 <sup>th</sup> January, 2022
Telecommunication	<i>Open Journal of Business and Management</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> February, 2022
Healthcare	<i>Health</i>	30 <sup>th</sup> November, 2022
Public Services	<i>International Journal of Community Well-Being</i>	21 <sup>st</sup> February, 2022

### **3) INNOVATION DEVELOPMENT**

#### **3.1 Collaborations & Partnerships**

Aligned to its core philosophy of keeping the community at the center, the conceptualization of the model engaged citizens, residents, and civic interest societies during the design stage. Focus group discussions were conducted with over 100 participants constituting the demographic, psychographic and geographical profile of the Emirate of Ajman. Academicians and subject matter experts were also consulted to conduct reliability and validity tests on the initial prototypes.

As part of the survey execution cycle each year, the Ajman community is engaged for inputs on - framework architecture enhancements, clarity of measurement variables, interpretation, and validation of results. Additionally, there are also partnerships in place with technology service providers for instituting improvements in the functionality and UX interface of the survey platform.

#### **3.2 Users, Stakeholders & Beneficiaries**

Expectedly, the key beneficiary of the Ajman Attractiveness project is the Ajman community. Given that the societal stakeholders are at the center of the model design; policy outcomes are directly aligned to generating societal benefits in relation to the six vital services that the framework covers.

Complementing the framework, Government decisions related to the design, delivery, and enhancement of these public services, have become more agile and effectively aligned to the community's expectations. Furthermore, given the endorsement and adoption of the Model by the highest level of Government, it promotes agility through a direct 'community voice to implementation' approach, whilst placing relevant public sector service agencies as providers.

In addition to the positive impact on Government efficiencies, the Model has promoted more cross-functional initiatives that challenge traditional 'silo based' working of fragmented Government agencies; this further exemplifies how the widespread adoption of the Model can lead to higher Government effectiveness and operational efficiencies.

### **4) INNOVATION REFLECTIONS**

#### **4.1 Results, Outcomes & Impact**

The architecture of the framework enables a cycle-on-cycle trends analysis of 'factor-specific', 'service area-specific' and 'composite-level' results. This also supports an assessment of the impact and attribution linked to specific program and policy interventions by the Government.

The Model has resulted in several initiatives by the Government that have had a direct and tangible impact on "moving the needle" on the satisfaction levels measured by the Ajman Attractiveness Index. Overall, these initiatives have resulted in enhancing the appeal of Ajman, amongst its residents, as a place to live.

As a reflection of impact, some of these initiatives include the following:

- A total 'green area' of 7,778,847 sqm added, between 2018 and 2021, based on the future expectations of the community for higher access to parks and need for more outdoor recreational activities, captured by the framework.
- The fire alarm coverage across households in Ajman went up from 57.9% in 2018 to 71% in 2021, based on the Government's drive in response to the assessment of key indicators of public safety captured by the framework.
- The Government announced the development of 12 public Majlises (community areas), based on the community's feedback for higher social engagement to improve social immersion and inclusion – of these, while 5 have already been established, another 7 are currently under construction, across designated areas within the Emirate.

As an overall reflection of impact, the composite of attractiveness index (0 to 100) has gone up from 83.5 points in 2018 to 91.5 points in 2021. The index values for all the six services areas captured by the index, have also shown an upward positive trend between 2018 and 2021 (Table 2).

**Table 2: Results of the Ajman Attractiveness Survey (2018 to 2021)**

	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Overall Composite</b>	83.5	83.8	91.9	91.5
<b>Infrastructure</b>	81.0	76.1	90.3	89.1
<b>Transport</b>	89.7	90.9	94.8	93.9
<b>Telecommunication</b>	77.5	75.2	86.6	86.2
<b>Consumer Services</b>	86.0	85.2	92.2	90.9
<b>Education</b>	82.1	87.4	93.0	94.5
<b>Healthcare</b>	84.5	88.8	94.3	94.2

## 4.2 Challenges & Failures

While the project has had significant contributions in delivering tangible impact on the attractiveness of Ajman and the ‘quality of life’ in the Emirate, the implementation of the framework faced certain challenges, in its early days.

As established; while the framework of measurement is unique, the novelty of the Ajman Attractiveness Model is in the way it has disrupted public policy decisions. While the project today has endorsement from the highest levels of the Ajman Government; achieving this required significant efforts in demonstrating the linkage of model outcome to decision outcomes. Furthermore, with the paradigm shift associated in Government decision making as an outcome of the deployment of the Model, public service agencies in Ajman falling within the delivery ecosystem of the six services areas had to be carefully managed.

Engagement efforts with the Ajman community were also critical to demonstrate the project’s benefits and garner effective participation to provide accurate feedback.

There were other challenges in project management that were systematically identified and addressed, to optimize operational processes. For instance, a phased ‘step up’ and ‘step down’ approach was incorporated within the data collection component of the survey cycle, to address cost and time inefficiencies observed in the earlier cycles. An agile approach of infusing quality management interventions in smaller ‘time boxes’ was incorporated within the survey administration plan to address challenges related to inconsistencies in field visits conducted during the initial cycles.

## 4.3 Conditions for Success

The Ajman Attractiveness Model exemplifies pioneering best practices in performance measurement of vital public services, ‘community centric’ framework design, and agility in Government decision making.

However, without the absence of defining success factors, the full potential of the project could not have been realized. These include:

- Endorsement of the highest levels of Government (Ruler’s Office)
- Effective framework design and conceptualization based on a combination of scientific vigor and design thinking principles, keeping the community’s objectives, “front and center”.
- Effective use of technology infusing rules and protocols of robust project management, quality management and performance management.
- Effective participation of the Ajman community in providing accurate feedback.
- Effective alignment of project results to policy intervention outcomes.
- Effective change management to drive adoption and endorsement of the Model by public service agencies in Ajman.

#### **4.4 Replication**

As established, the Ajman Attractiveness Model is currently being studied by Local Government and Federal Government agencies across the Emirate, to derive 'key lessons' geared towards revitalizing measurement frameworks linked to flagship programs and projects in the realm of public services. Beyond the Emirates, the Model has the potential for defining regional and global 'best practice' related to public service performance measurement and decision making. As articulated, efforts have been taken to diffuse vital learnings related to the project, through credible academic contributions made by the Ajman Statistics Office.

#### **4.5 Lessons Learned**

The Ajman Attractiveness Model was initially conceptualized to enhance the quality of data for policy outcomes related to enhancing vital public services in Ajman. However, its implementation has had a far-reaching positive impact on enhancing the Government decision making process, and in fostering engagement opportunities with the Ajman community. This reflects the importance of comprehensively identifying the direct, indirect, and induced benefits associated with projects of this nature, to maximize design and implementation outcomes.

Additionally, the need for change management cannot be underestimated – the Ajman Attractiveness Model showed how effective engagement with decision makers, public service agencies and the community, can drive a paradigm shift in public policy implementation. The Model enables implementation decisions to be cascaded top down reinforcing the role of Government agencies as service providers geared towards maximizing value delivery for the community.

The Ajman Attractiveness Model also exemplifies how the power of technology can be harnessed to achieve desired outcomes. In this regard, the platform ('Ajman Studies') used for the administration of the Ajman Attractiveness Survey, is a custom-built sophisticated tool that leverages software program capabilities to incorporate project management, quality management and performance management protocols in its architecture. This reflects the importance of mapping out technology capabilities and aligning them to strategic objectives, as part of a generalized project design approach.

Furthermore, the Model also exemplifies the benefit of a 'user centric design' approach to unleash maximum impact – the design of the Ajman Attractiveness Framework is premised on identifying, inter-linking and enhancing all the 'touch points' that define the resident's (user) perception of attractiveness and quality of life in Ajman.

x-x-x