Interview 2

**Demographic Data**

* Gender: Male
* Age: 47 years
* Job Title: CEO
* Department: Operation and Governance
* Experience: 25 years
* Academic Qualification: PhD

**Questions and Answers**

1. **What are the challenges which face the Open Government Data in the Kingdom of Bahrain?**  
   This project has multiple challenges; we overcame some of them, and others need more time. The first challenge is the culture. You know we come from professional communities that protect data and feel they own it. This culture is present in all government institutions, not just in Bahrain but across the MENA region. Changing this culture is a challenge. We have a long-term plan and gained approvals from higher authorities to address it, spreading awareness that personnel data is protected while sharing other data benefits knowledge.  
   The second challenge is data quality. Bahrain has been a pioneer in IT since the 1960s, but early data lacked governance and standards. We performed a data cleansing exercise, which helped improve data quality, but some datasets are still excluded due to quality issues.  
   The third challenge was legislation. Without proper laws defining which data is shareable, it’s difficult to proceed. Bahrain has introduced legislation like the Personal Data Protection Law and other acts to guide the sharing process.  
   The fourth challenge is balancing sensitivity and openness. Workshops and guides have helped classify what data is safe to share while protecting sensitive information.
2. **You said the cultural challenge requires awareness. How does awareness help solve this issue?**  
   Yes, cultural change takes time. Even with legislation, awareness is essential for people to understand the nature and importance of sharing data responsibly.
3. **Are ministries and the private sector also concerned about data ownership, and how does IT balance sensitivity?**  
   Twenty years ago, tools for secure data sharing were unavailable. Today, IT advancements allow us to store, encrypt, and monitor data usage effectively. Technology has been a pillar in achieving Open Government Data goals.
4. **Which fields benefit most from Open Government Data?**  
   The healthcare sector benefits significantly, especially post-COVID. Data helps identify diseases and medical development needs. Green power is another area, using data on electricity consumption to guide investments in renewable energy solutions. The education sector uses data to match graduate skills with market needs, helping universities adjust programs accordingly.
5. **How does technology innovation enhance Open Government Data?**  
   Technologies like cloud computing and AI have significantly improved data analysis and storage. Cloud computing enables efficient data storage and scalability, while AI helps analyze large datasets and make predictions. Automation, such as data pipelines, streamlines data collection, cleansing, and compliance, making it easier for government entities to share usable data.
6. **How do you measure data performance as part of the IT section?**  
   Initially, performance was measured using basic metrics like dataset numbers and website visits. Now, we aim to assess the societal and economic impact of data usage through hackathons and user feedback. This project is ongoing to better link data to its potential use.
7. **Do you measure KPIs like dataset users?**  
   Yes, tracking dataset usage provides intuition about platform development. However, upper management wants deeper insights into societal and economic impacts.
8. **Is tracking data usage applicable, especially for paid datasets?**  
   Paid datasets are tracked on different platforms. Open data, however, must ensure user privacy, making performance tracking a challenge. We aim to balance privacy and usability.
9. **Can hackathons drive innovation?**  
   Hackathons foster innovative ideas by providing data to researchers, start-ups, and universities. Collaborations with other countries have also yielded valuable use cases.
10. **What is the relationship between technology innovation and Open Data?**  
    Innovation thrives on data availability. AI and other technologies require accessible data to advance. Balancing data security and openness is crucial for fostering technological growth.
11. **What are the future trends in e-government and Open Data?**  
    Strengthening e-participation is key, using AI and big data to understand citizen needs through social media and other channels. Projects like biometric IDs aim to integrate services for both government and private sectors, enhancing security and user experience