United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Promoting Digital Skills and Changing Mindsets: UN DESA Competency Framework and European e-Competence Framework

National Capacity Building Workshop to Accelerate Digital Government Transformation in Sri Lanka: Strengthening Digital Governance for Sustainable Development

Cristina A. Rodriguez-Acosta
Inter-Regional Adviser, DPIDG/UNDESA

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Principles for Effective Governance for Sustainable Development

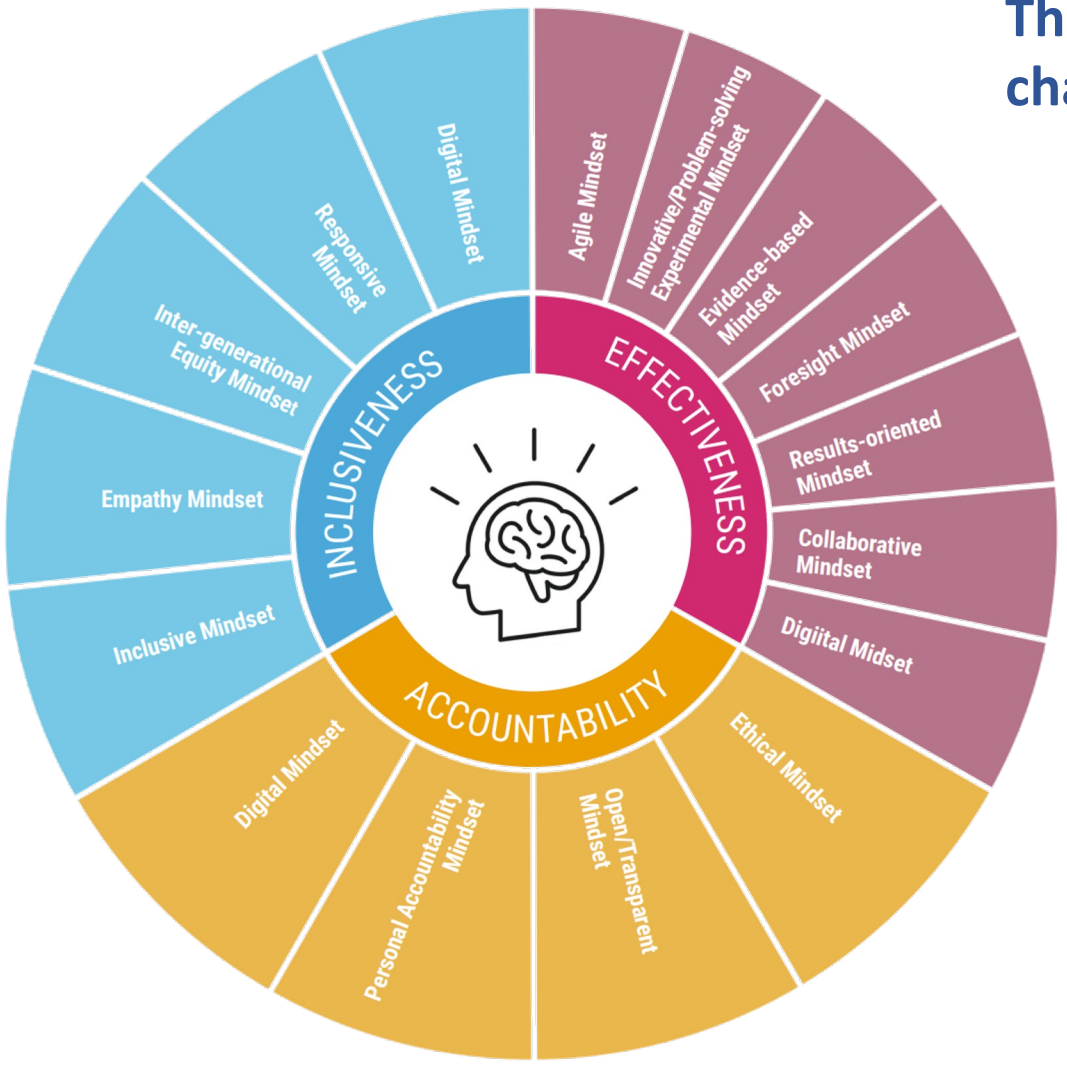
- Developed by the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA).
- The essential purpose of these voluntary principles is to provide practical, expert guidance to interested countries in a broad range of governance challenges associated with implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- They highlight the need for pragmatic and ongoing improvements in national and local governance capabilities to reach the SDGs.
- **Digital transformation requires new skills and new mindsets – the ultimate goal is to achieve the SDGs**.

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

- New mindsets must go in hand in hand with **new competencies**, which call for specific know-how and skills.
- Governments may need to invest in retooling public services and reskilling public servants.

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Figure 1.3: Mindsets for SDGs implementation



The critical role of focusing training assessment on changes in mindsets and behaviors

Training assessments need to assess not only the knowledge and skills acquired, but most importantly whether the training and follow-up actions help to instill **new values and mindsets**, which can lead to institutional expected behaviors.

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

What is a Digital Mindset?

Digital Mindset

BELIEFS: if properly leveraged, digital technology can help address a multiplicity of challenges

ATTITUDES: Is focused on leveraging the advantages of technology in support of governance transformation while addressing its risks

COMPETENCIES: A digital mindset is not just the ability to use technology, but it is a set of behaviours and attitudes; it is a change of public institutions' capacities needed to **keep abreast of technological developments and understand the applicability (benefits and risks)** of digital technologies to solve complex problems (digital literacy). Digital transformation requires abilities to apply technology to appropriate tasks within government, seeking effectiveness, and transparency of government processes, reorganization of work, and continuous training. It also requires the ability to secure sensitive data.

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

How do we build digital skills in the public sector workforce?

Some suggested strategies include:

- Creation of a centralized agency which main is mandate to train and prepare the public sector workforce (upskilling and reskilling)
- Online learning platforms
- Certifications tied to agency's mission
- Invest in skills-based learning approach which can help identify current gaps and develop effective plans for capacity development
- NB to offer training not only based on "good performance" (as a reward) but also as a key component of the job description – as a fundamental part of the role.

Source: Center for Digital Government

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Some key areas for digital skills development

1. **Data literacy**: from the use of excel to the ability to visualize, contextualize and tell stories with data. Data mining, agile management, website analytics, ability to deploy and use AI.
2. **Cybersecurity skills**: including data privacy, cyber awareness, cyber defense, resilience, AI for threat detection and prevention.
3. **Cloud skills**: as more assets are moved to the cloud, it becomes increasingly important. Skills are typically highly technical from application programming & database management to AI and Machine Learning (ML).
4. **Human skills** (soft skills): from communication skills, leadership, program management, planning, budgeting, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving.

Source: Center for Digital Government

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Action Plan: In order to maximize impact of digital trainings, a plan of action must be established

- Leadership and executive buy-in: leaders must support digital skills learning programs aligned to the larger strategy goals of their agencies.
  - A communications plan needs to be crafted so the vision can be shared.
  - NB consistent messaging across all levels of organization. It helps employees see the commitment from their leaders.
- Assessing Digital Skills levels: benchmarking of current skills and identify gaps
  - NB to look not only at current gaps but also think about what digital skills will be needed in the future.

- Identify core competencies: need to outline each agency's unique core competencies and goals, then map the digital skills needed to develop specialized training around them.

- Use of multi-modal approaches to learning from in-person to online, interactive, group learning, etc. Adapt to the needs of the user.

- Track and assess learning (Key Performance Indicators – KPIs).
  - Using not only traditional quantitative metrics but also qualitative ones (helping employees apply what they have learned, explaining it to others).

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

- Based on the needs assessed, competences and competencies can be defined, redefined, and revised. Digital capacity training can be planned.
- Defining e-competences will largely be based on the context of each particular agency/government office.

- There are several models and references regarding e-Competences:
  - The EU e-Competence Framework (e-CF) provides a reference of 41 competences as required and applied in an IT professional work context, using a common language for competences, skills, knowledge and proficiency levels that is applied and understood across Europe.
  - In the United States, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has been conducting Government-wide occupational studies using its *Multipurpose Occupational Systems Analysis Inventory - Close-Ended* (MOSAIC) methodology for more than two decades.
  - Through these studies, OPM has identified the critical competencies and tasks employees need to perform successfully in nearly 200 Federal occupations, as well as for leadership positions.
  - UN DESA has developed the Digital Transformation Capability Assessment, a tool that can help identify gaps and support the building of digital skills in the public sector.

UN DESA's Digital Transformation Capability Assessment – DTCA

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

The Digital Transformation Capability Assessment - DTCA

- Digital Government Capability Assessment (DGCA) was developed to help identify institutional gaps and policy entry points in innovation and public service delivery.
- It can help to produce new insights for defining options and making decisions on strategies and actions to transform government and create public value.
- The focus is not on a particular digital initiative, such as a portal, but rather on the whole of government capability needed for advancing digital government.

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

The Digital Transformation Capability Assessment - DTCA

Identifies key enablers for effective digital transformation.

Produces new insights for identifying options and making decisions on strategies and actions to transform government and create public value.

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Why conduct a DTCA?

- To understand the present level of digital transformation capabilities as a foundation for public service delivery.
- To understand the whole government capability for creating and sustaining a mature digital government (not just a particular digital initiative, such as a portal).
- *To **inform decisions** on where investments are needed to improve innovation and digital government capability for improved public service delivery.*

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

The 6 dimensions of the DTCA

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Icon	Dimension	Definition
	Leadership	Leaders are the stewards of digital government efforts. They must engage, motivate, build commitment, and mobilize resources for the successful implementation of a digital strategy. Leaders must also craft the plans to achieve the organizational goals, as well as its communication to stakeholders and monitoring the progress.
	Strategy	Strategic plans help to support the government agenda. This contains the actions to be taken to pursue the digital government goals.

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Icon	Dimension	Definition
	Governance	The organizational capacity and managerial actions developed to overcome potential cultural barriers in implementing the digital strategy across agencies and departments. The development of good governance must be aligned with the strategic goals, as well as legal framework.
	Legal	The set of legislation, guidelines, and standards that a department or agency must comply with in deploying digital services.

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Icon	Dimension	Definition
	Technology	The set of technologies that directly and indirectly contribute to the delivery of programs and services through digital platforms.
	Professional and Workforce Development	The policy and programmatic affordances in place to support ongoing capacity development.

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Number of Questions	Sub-total
Leadership	Vision	4	11
	Policy	4	
	Data	3	
Strategy	General	8	15
	Integration and Interoperability	3	
	Data	4	
Governance	General	6	20
	Citizen and Business	5	
	Partnership	2	
	Data	3	
	Organization	4	
Legal	Laws and Regulations	5	26
	Policies and Procedures	14	
	Data	3	
	Procurement	4	
Technology	General	4	21
	Citizen and Business	5	
	Public Servants	3	
	Cybersecurity	9	
Professional and Workforce Development		7	7
Total			**100**

Dimension 6. Professional and Workforce Development

- Our Ministries/Agencies invest in digital learning and in promoting a digital mindset among our staff.
- Government provides adequate financial support for ICT training for civil servants who work in our Ministries/Agencies.
- Our Ministry's/Agency's civil servants have received ICT training deployed by the government or third-party providers.
- Our Ministry's/Agency's digital learning platform supports upskilling (improving a personal skill set).
- Our Ministry's/Agency's digital learning platform supports the development of soft skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving/innovation and creativity.
- In our Ministry/Agency there is a committee making decisions about online education and workforce development.
- Our Ministries/Agencies ensure that the policies and procedures for online learning and workforce development programs are transparent and consistent throughout the Ministry/Agency.

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Enablers for promoting digital skills and changing mindsets

- Political commitment - **Leadership**
- Support a culture of transformational leadership, investing in HR and changing the mentality of the public sector that allows for continuing training.
- Systemic thinking and synergies that allow complementarity in training policies and their implementation.
- Organizational structures and processes that allow intersectoral, intergovernmental and interdepartmental coordination and collaboration. - **Governance**
- **Appropriate funding.**
- Appropriate legislation/regulations/guidelines that support training and promote digital skills.
- Involvement and empowerment of all sectors.
- Monitoring, reporting and evaluation of processes.
- **Promote a skills-based approach to hiring and promotion**.

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Thank you!

Cristina.rodriguezacosta@un.org
www.unpan.un.org