



CONCEPT NOTE

1. Event Description

The 2022 Webinar on “Effective Governance for Transformational Change: Strengthening capacities, mindsets, and competencies of public institutions to build the next generation of public servants in the Arab Region” will be organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), through its Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), and in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). It is intended for Resident Coordinator Offices and UN Country Teams in the Arab region. It will be held online (via Zoom) on **16 November 2022** from 08:30 to 10:00 AM (**New York time; GMT-5**)/ and will be conducted in English.

DESA/DPIDG provides secretariat support to the United Nations Programme in Public Administration. DPIDG’s mission is to assist the Member States of the United Nations in advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including through fostering effective, efficient, transparent, accountable, inclusive, and innovative public governance, administration, and services for sustainable development. The United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was established on 9 August 1973 pursuant to Economic and Social Council’s resolution 1818 (LV). Its purpose was to stimulate economic activity in member countries, strengthen cooperation between them to promote development. In recognition of the social component of its work, the Commission was renamed the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) under Economic and Social Council resolution 69/1985 of July 1985.

2. Background

The [UN DESA's Global Initiative on Building Capacities of Public Servants](#) for the implementation of the SDGs, launched in 2017, aims at developing the capacities of governments and public servants (in terms of knowledge, skills, attitude, leadership competencies, and mindset) to support the implementation of the SDGs. It also aims to provide data and information about the development of capacities in the regions and support institutional capacity development for improved public service delivery as well as North-South and South-South exchange of effective governance practices to ensure cross-fertilization and mutual learning.

The objective of the initiative was to co-create with the schools of public administration (i) a curriculum on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, which includes several online and face-to-face training programmes, and (ii) a competency framework for public servants to implement the SDGs. It is also expected to help schools to mainstream the SDGs in their curricula and courses.

Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs

It is imperative to strengthen public institutions as the key pillar for sustainable and resilient development in response to the challenges resulting from and amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic in the Arab region¹. A professional, competent, and responsive public service is a critical driver of citizens' trust in public institutions.

National schools of public administration play a strategic role in developing public service capacities anchored in the SDGs while considering the specific needs of the Arab region. The schools can indeed be levers for public sector reform and innovations to improve the quality of public service delivery. National schools of public administration are also critical in changing mindsets and developing competencies and capacities tailored to a new generation of public servants.

DESA/DPIDG proposes to mainstream the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs in the public administration schools' Curriculum in the Arab region. The Curriculum is a comprehensive set of Training of Trainers Capacity Development Toolkits, which contain ready-to-use and customizable capacity building material on key governance dimensions needed to support a resilient and sustainable economic development and advance the implementation of the SDGs.

The Curriculum stems from UN DESA's mandate to support of key intergovernmental outcomes on sustainable development issues and in line with "the AU Agenda 2063, the Africa we want", and DPIDG's and ESCWA's normative and analytical work on governance and institution building (SDG 16), including the CEPA 11 Principles of Effective Governance².

Training of trainers can ensure continuity of training in the national context, rather than building the capacity of government officials directly on a project-basis. This continuity will be crucial in the context of conflict-affected or fragile countries or countries in transition. The capacity building toolkits should contribute to the development of a long - term strategy where knowledge and capacities can be turned into action. The approach used in the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs aims at changing mindsets, nurturing change champions and building coalitions for change to trigger individual, organizational and institutional changes identified by the National Schools of Public Administration.

¹ The social and economic impact of the pandemic has increased unrest, instability, inequality, and a humanitarian crisis among some countries in the region.

² [United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs > Intergovernmental Support > CEPA > PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE](#)

3. Objectives

The Webinar on “Effective Governance for Transformational Change: *Strengthening capacities, mindsets, and competencies of public institutions to build the next generation of public servants in the Arab Region*” aims to inform the Resident Coordinators Offices and UN Country Teams in the Arab region about: (1) **why mainstreaming the SDGs in the curricula of schools of public administration is critical to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and what new competencies are needed to promote transformational change;** (2) **how the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs can be adapted to the region’s needs** (see proposed project in Annex 1); and (3) **possible avenues of collaboration in the design and implementation of a project on the same topic**. The webinar will also seek feedback and advice from the RCs/RCOs on the most pressing needs in the region and key entry points for accelerating the implementation of the SDGs.

4. Structure

The Webinar will have three sessions and last overall one-and-a half hour. The first session will focus on why mainstreaming the SDGs in the curricula of schools of public administration is critical to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and what new competencies are needed to promote transformational change. It will also provide an overview of the 11 Principles of Effective Governance and of the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs. The second session will examine how the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs can be adapted to the region’s needs. The third session will offer an overview of the overarching purpose of the proposed project in the Arab region (see annex I) and provide time for to Q&A and interactive discussion on possible areas of collaboration with the RCs participating in the event.

5. Expected Results

Expected results include: (i) increased awareness of the Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development and of the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs; (ii) enhanced understanding of possible options to mainstream the SDGs in the curricula of national schools of public administration; and (iii) strengthened collaboration with the RCs in the Arab region and other relevant actors to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs, particularly through capacity development activities that support transformational change and new competencies in the public sector. The webinar is also expected to help identify countries in the region that would be interested in mainstreaming the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs and national schools of public administration that are committed to teaching the SDGs.

6. Target audience and language

Resident Coordinator Offices and UN Country Teams in the Arab region.

7. Contact Information

UN DESA	Adriana Alberti Chief, PMCDU, DPIDG, UN DESA Email: alberti@un.org	Veronique Verbruggen Senior Inter-regional Adviser DPIDG, UN DESA E-mail: verbruggen@un.org	Stefania Senese Programme Management Officer PMCDU, DPIDG, UN DESA Email: senese@un.org
UN ESCWA	Karam Karam Senior Inter-regional Adviser on Public Administration Email: karamk@un.org		




Annex I – Objective, expected results and activities of the proposed project on “Effective Governance for Transformational Change: Strengthening capacities, mindsets, and competencies of public institutions to build the next generation of public servants in the Arab Region”

The overall objectives of the proposed project include:

1. Strengthening the capacity of schools of public administration in the selected countries who are the main actors in the training of civil servants and who can build their capacity for undertaking tasks of policy formulation and implementation and build strong and resilient institutions. Schools of public administration play a strategic role in improving the quality and effectiveness of public policy management, implementation, and evaluation in countries and improve the quality of pre-service and in-service training and education of all those engaged in public service.
2. Preparing the new generation of public servants who will be the champions of transformational change for SDG implementation. Capacity building will focus on diversity in the public sector, on the competencies and know-how required in the future, in specific in fragile and conflict-affected countries, and on how to bring innovation and ensure gender balance and inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Several approaches will be used to mainstream the Curriculum, including:

- (i) conducting baseline assessments to measure the level of policy coherence, effective governance or digital governance status and needs
- (ii) applying conflict-sensitive analysis/ approaches to “do no harm” and customize the capacity building toolkits to the specific challenges and circumstances of fragile and conflict-affected countries.
- (iii) organizing training of trainers
- (iv) organizing workshops for peer-to-peer learning activities to promote knowledge sharing among the schools, and
- (v) organizing regional lessons-learned workshops/seminars to strengthen South-South cooperation.

Priority Areas	Focus Areas
Responding to immediate challenges of the vulnerabilities of governance system	Self-assessment of governance capacities of selected countries
 <p>Building and strengthening Capacity, Mindsets and Competencies of the young generation to promote a fit for purpose public administration</p>	Working with Schools of Public Administration and invest in a new generation of public servants.
 <p>Increasing advocacy and awareness-raising through targeted and context-tailored efforts to achieve progress of SDG 16, including innovative solutions and bottom-up approaches to engaging young generations for inclusive, accountable and effective public institutions</p>	Piloting several training toolkits of the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs
 <p>Establishing partnerships among several stakeholders to promote a transformational change in public Administration</p>	Working with ARADO and GIFT- MENA, UNOSSC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflict-affected countries - Countries in transition - Arab LDCs

Potential partners in the implementation of the project are the United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA), Resident Coordinators, National Schools of Public Administration, and other regional and international organizations, including:

- Arab Administrative Development Organization (ARADO)
- Universities and think tanks
- UNSCC
- International Association of Institutes and Schools of Administration (IAISA)

The project envisages the following **results**:

- (i) Trained trainers who are capable of developing the knowledge and capability of public servants to deal with the aftermath of the pandemic and the consequent crisis as well as enhance the public institutions' legitimacy and support transformational change
- (ii) Increased engagement with crucial stakeholders in capacity building to stimulate a whole of government/ whole of society approach for the development and implementation of the policies and the SDGs – crucial to create trust and legitimacy of the public institutions.
- (iii) Establish a competency framework tailored to the new generation of public servants in the Arab region, based on the UN DESA and UN ESCWA framework
- (iv) Creation of a (digital) community of practice or network to exchange knowledge, lessons learned and ideas and/or development of approaches to support change management in public institutions, triggered by network/ membership organizations like GIFT-MENA and ARADO.
- (v) Development of a roadmap per country to embed the Curriculum or parts thereof in the Capacity building of Schools of Public Administration and sustain transformative change and public sector reform in the Arab region.

The main **activities** envisioned by the proposed project include the following:

1. Conduct scoping missions in collaboration with UN ESCWA to do a needs analysis to have a good understanding of the capacity needs and agree on the approach to take with each school of public administration to ensure ownership and have a good understanding of the origins of the conflict and/or fragility.
2. Selection of the toolkits per country involved and customize the approach as well as the substance
3. Translation of the toolkits in Arabic/ French (depending)
4. Conduct capacity building workshops (hybrid or face-to-face)³
5. Support the Schools with the development of roadmaps to embed the ToT into the Curriculum of the respective Schools of Public Administration and/or initiate change management initiatives and change champions
6. Organization of regional peer-to-peer workshops (e.g., through ARADO or GIFT-MENA) on topics like changing mindsets, digital transformation, policy coherence, social inclusion, strategic foresight, risk management
7. Involve universities and think tanks to the trainings to develop a broad platform for capacity building in governance matters for the implementation of the SDGs

³ Based on earlier webinars that UN ESCWA organized with DPIDG, it is recommended to also include face-to-face workshops in order to develop trust and ownership among the participants and to agree on an approach that will be owned by the participants.

8. Develop additional toolkits and assessment tools on topics that are identified by the networks like GIFT-MENA or ARADO that could contribute to transformational change in the public institutions in the Arab region. Consultants will be hired for this.
9. A workshop will be held to share project progress and change activities or priorities when needed.
10. International workshop to discuss the results achieved among the different countries, share experiences, and deliver final recommendations/ guidelines for reform and implementation. It could include supporting countries with the implementation of the roadmaps to roll out the training in the curriculum of (senior) and new generation leadership civil servants.