



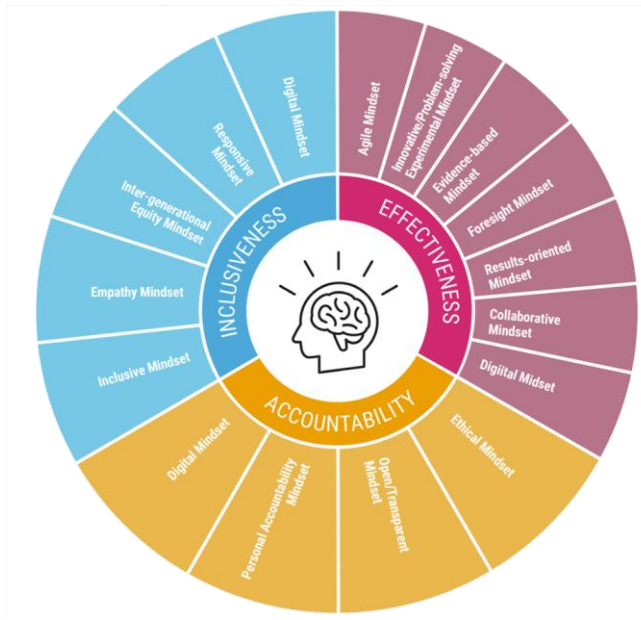
United Nations

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

New Mindsets, Capacities and Competencies in the Public Sector to Promote Effective Governance for Sustainable Development



 **United Nations** | Department of Economic and Social Affairs
 **United Nations PAKISTAN** |  Government of Pakistan |  National Management College
 National School of Public Policy



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- 1. The critical role of effective governance for sustainable development and the need for new mindsets**
- 2. What is a mindset?**
- 3. Why is it important to change mindsets to promote effective institutions for sustainable development?**
- 4. What new capacities, mindsets, and competencies are needed to implement the SDGs?**
- 5. What are some of the strategies at the individual, organizational and institutional levels that can help promote a change in mindsets?**
- 6. Key messages**



1. The critical role of effective governance for sustainable development and the need for new mindsets

① Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Effective, accountable and inclusive institutions

② 11 Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development

Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development

- Effectiveness**
 - » Competence
 - » Sound policymaking
 - » Collaboration
- Accountability**
 - » Integrity
 - » Transparency
 - » Independent oversight
- Inclusiveness**
 - » Leaving no one behind
 - » Non-discrimination
 - » Participation
 - » Subsidiarity
 - » Intergenerational equity



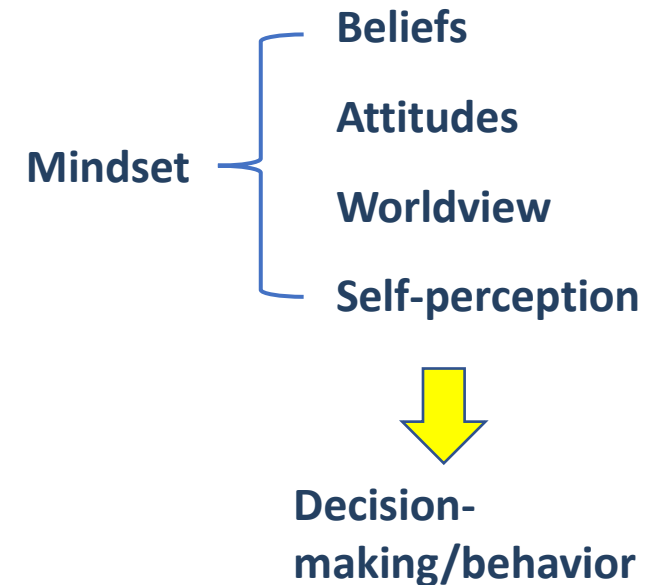
2. What is a mindset?

Table 1.1: Definitions of mindsets

Definitions of mindsets	Source
Mindsets form the “core” of people’s meaning systems, bringing together goals, beliefs, and behaviors to shape people’s thoughts and actions	Dweck & Yeager, 2019
Mindsets refers to people’s beliefs about the nature of personal attributes, such as intelligence	Alexander P. Burgoyne, 1 David Z. Hambrick, & 2 Brooke N. Macnamara, 2020
In cognitive psychology, a mindset represents the cognitive processes activated in response to a given task.	French, 2016
In system thinking, mindset is associated with cultural and social values	Magoroh Maruyama, 1980
Mindsets can be formed and shaped by different factors, including culture, socialization processes, spirituality and religion, and media exposure	Crum & Zuckerman, 2017
“In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success—without effort. They’re wrong”. “In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Virtually all great people have had these qualities.”	Carol Dweck, 2015

Source: Elaboration by the author: Stefania Senese

A **mindset** consists of **beliefs** and **attitudes** that a person has assimilated throughout a lifetime about themselves and the world around them.





2. What is a mindset?

Table 1.2: Definitions of principles, values, belief and attitudes

External & Universal

Principles	Propositions that are a guide for behaviors
Values	Prescriptions for being ¹⁵ which contain an ethical dimension
Belief	What we hold to be true - How we see the world
Attitudes	A way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior

Personal values (internal)
Institutional values (external)

- **How we interact with the world**

Source: Elaboration by the authors

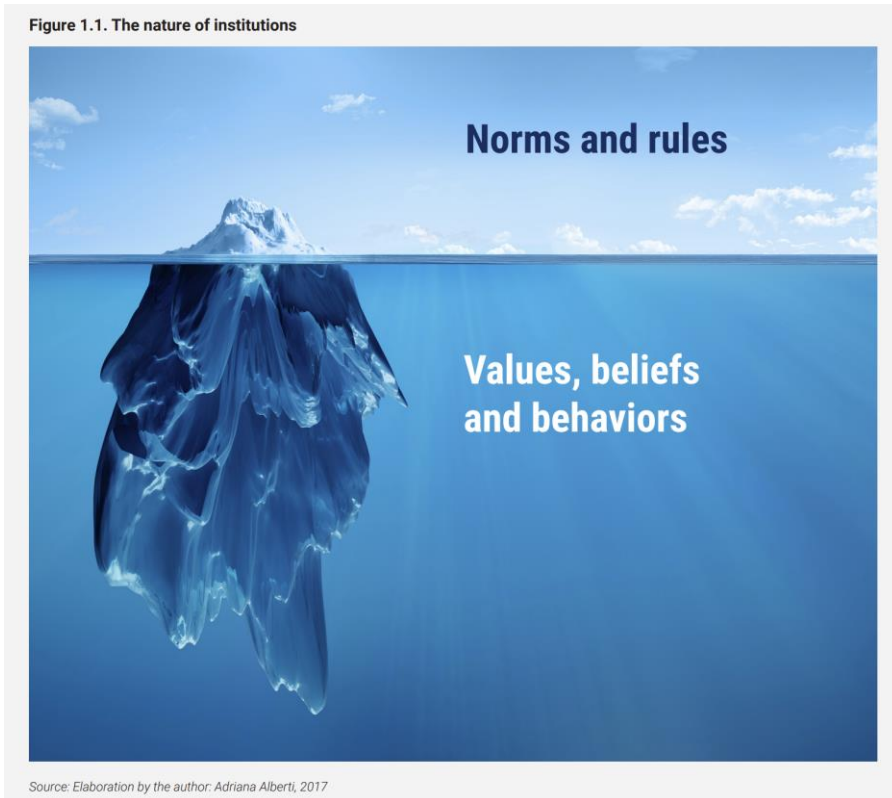
Beliefs and attitudes are influenced by values



3. Why is it important to change mindsets to promote effective institutions for sustainable development?

① Understanding the nature of institutions and institutional change

Visible part
↕
Dual nature
↕
Hidden part



Institutional change does not mean a change of rules and goals per se. It also implies changing the beliefs and attitudes (mindsets), and values of public servants to reorient behavior to attain those goals. Above all, it means **behavioral changes** that enact the new prescriptions for action which are implied by the new rules.



3. Why is it important to change mindsets to promote effective institutions for sustainable development?

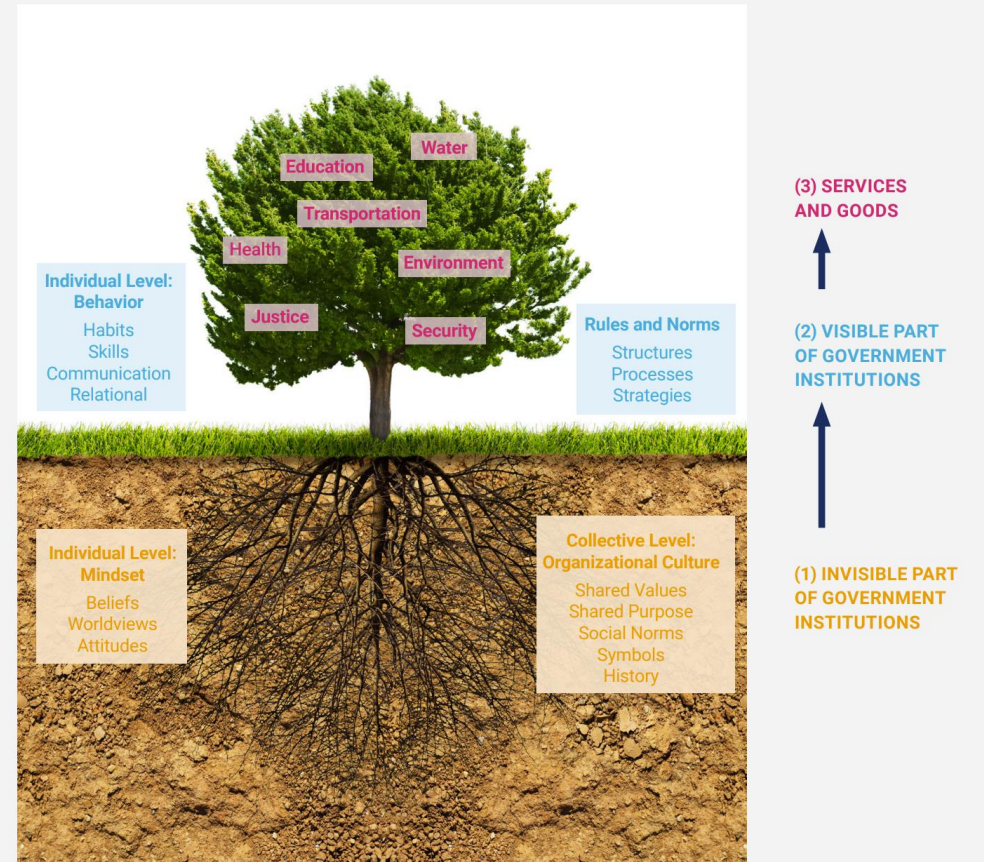
② Why a change in mindsets and behaviors is critical to promoting effective institutions

Table 1.3: Dimensions of effective institutional change

	Internal	External
Individual	Mindset Beliefs Worldviews Attitudes	Behavior Actions and Habits Skills Communication Relational
Collective	Organizational Culture Shared Values Shared Purpose Social Norms Symbols History	Rules and Normative Frameworks Structures Processes Strategies

Source: Authors' adaptation from Ken Wilber, 2021

Figure 1.2: Aligning internal with external dimensions of institutional change





4. What new capacities, mindsets, and competencies are needed to implement the SDGs?



Capacity - the ability to achieve intended development results through desired change

Mindset - are required to turn into action the key principles of the 2030 Agenda and the 11 Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development

Competency - specific knowledge, skills, and attributes

- Individual
- Organizational
- Institutional and Enabling Environment



4. What new capacities, mindsets, and competencies are needed to implement the SDGs?



Table 1.4: Mindsets and Competency Framework for SDGs Implementation²⁷

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS			
MINDSETS	BELIEFS	ATTITUDES	COMPETENCIES
Agile Mindset 	Change is possible and necessary to address multiple possibilities before quickly reaching a solution; failure is momentary, and any obstacles can be quickly overcome.	Is proactive, comfortable with the uncomfortable and complexity, uses inquisitive thinking and critical reasoning, adopts a holistic view of challenges, eager to learn and improve, willing to fail, and embrace constant change and encourage collaboration and trust.	To have an agile mindset, public servants need to develop competencies in systems-thinking to perceive the links, cause-effect relations, and dynamics affecting sustainable development; risk-informed adaptation to maintain effectiveness when experiencing change and continue delivering results within new structures or despite external shocks; and collaboration to perceive problems of common interest and positively conceive that dialogue, coordination, partnerships, and networks can address problems.
Innovative/ Problem-solving Experimental Mindset 	Human capacities are not fixed; it is possible to continuously improve through efforts and learning. ²⁸	Is a risk-taker, eager to experiment, problem-solver, creative, resilient, driven and motivated to achieve excellence, thinking outside of the box.	An experimental problem-solving/experimental mindset is characterized by strategic problem-solving to develop and break down problem scenarios to ensure solutions that can be presented in a stepwise approach towards the achievement of a target; creativity to actively seek to improve programmes or services, offering new and different options to solve problems and meet client/citizen needs and innovation to value the improvement of process and new solutions in work situations, while perceiving different and novel ways to deal with public challenges and opportunities.
Evidence-based Mindset 	Data is critical to make good decisions.	Is driven and motivated to using, validating, and documenting data.	A competency associated with the evidence-based mindset is data and information literacy to recognize the need to locate, retrieve, analyze, and utilize data and information for problem solving as well as to promote transparency for better public policy and service design and delivery. Public Financial Management (PFM) competency is also needed for effective public administration and service delivery, especially in fragile and post conflict environments (see chapter 12).
Foresight Mindset 	Present and future transformation in support of the SDG is possible. The future can be influenced, and trends anticipated if we ask the right questions, plan, and prepare for the future.	Is open to using techniques and methodologies for discovering and designing future trends to anticipate challenges and solutions.	A foresight mindset includes short and long-term planning to develop clear goals that are consistent with agreed strategies such as the 2030 Agenda and specific SDG targets; forward looking and proactivity to ensure anticipatory, flexible and action-oriented behaviors to implement potential solutions and address challenges. as well as risk-management competencies to identify and assess issues and risks and create a plan that allows to contain or control those identified and their consequences.





Institutional effectiveness is based on the principles of sound policymaking, competence, and collaboration.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS			
MINDSETS	BELIEFS	ATTITUDES	COMPETENCIES
Results-oriented Mindset 	Good decisions are those that are focused on results.	Is focused on taking actions and achieving results.	To develop a results-oriented mindset, public servants need to possess results-based management competencies to manage for results. Also, public servants need to have a life-long learning competency to share and apply knowledge learned across the organization to advance the realization of the SDGs. Finally, public servants need to manage performance , ensure that a set of outputs meet the goals effectively and efficiently, define strategic and operational objectives, and link them to resources.
Collaborative Mindset 	Working with others results in higher impact.	Is willing to learn, co-create, share experiences, and have a dialogue with others.	By developing a collaborative mindset, public servants are better prepared to develop a skillset that focuses on coordination, integration, and dialogue across teams, levels of government, and functional areas. Public servants will be able to build multi-stakeholder partnerships by bringing together a range of partners with the opportunity to interact, learn from others, and collectively help strive to achieve the same goals.
Digital Mindset 	If properly leveraged, digital technology can help address a multiplicity of challenges.	Is focused on leveraging the advantages of technology in support of governance transformation while addressing its risks.	A digital mindset is not just the ability to use technology, but it is a set of behaviors 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.



4. What new capacities, mindsets, and competencies are needed to implement the SDGs?



MINDSETS FOR INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY			
MINDSETS	BELIEFS	ATTITUDES	COMPETENCIES
Ethical Mindset 	The implementation of the principles of the 2030 Agenda will lead to sustainable development.	Doing the right for the right reason; is respectful of the views of others, and observes the ethical and legal standards of one's organization.	To develop an ethical mindset, public servants need to strengthen competencies in professionalism, results-based management, lifelong learning and managing performance . Public servants should be able to demonstrate professional competence and mastery of sustainable development both as a concept and value and understand its national application and relevance.
Open/Transparent Mindset 	Trust, communication, and openness are essential for better decisions.	Is open to new ideas, readily shares non-classified information. Public servants should have the ability to combat misinformation.	Competencies of a transparent mindset include ability to collect, manage, and share information and data to increase budget transparency, promote disclosure and access to information.
Personal Accountability Mindset 	Personal commitment, ownership, and responsibility for own actions and consequences are key to excellent performance.	Is committed to proactive actions and taking responsibilities to achieve results.	Competencies linked to this mindset include adaptability to respond to changing circumstances, learn new skills, and perform well communication to successfully work with new colleagues and new environments, to communicate effectively, listen attentively to others, and share information in a timely manner, and managing resources by allocating time and resources efficiently and effectively, translating strategies into plans for action; and monitor the progress of their work. Skills in collecting disaggregated data and statistical capacity, risk management, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes for poverty eradication, among others, are critical for greater transparency and accountability.
Digital Mindset 	If properly leveraged, digital technology can help address a multiplicity of challenges.	Is focused on leveraging the advantages of technology in support of governance transformation while addressing its risks.	A digital mindset is not just the ability to use technology, but it is a set of behaviors 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.

Institutional accountability is based on the principles of integrity, transparency and independent oversight.



4. What new capacities, mindsets, and competencies are needed to implement the SDGs?



MINDSETS FOR INSTITUTIONAL INCLUSIVENESS			
MINDSETS	BELIEFS	ATTITUDES	COMPETENCIES
Inclusive Mindset 	All people are equal in dignity and rights and deserve equal opportunities for a better life.	Is committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect; empathy, tolerance, solidarity, and no discrimination.	Competencies that are linked to this mindset are: respect for diversity, and non-discrimination to promote public sector workforce diversity, and in line with SDG 16.7, ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels; inter-generational equity to ensure prosperity and quality of life for all, noting especially the needs of today's children and how current actions may jeopardize the basic needs of future generations; empowerment and participation and develop awareness of own and communities' beliefs, values and expectations and ensure a culture of caring; and negotiation and facilitation to find solutions to a shared problem. Successful negotiators will analyze a problem, identify the interested parties, and reach a consensus. Communication, persuasion, planning, strategizing, and cooperating are essential skills of negotiation and facilitation.
Empathy Mindset 	Understanding the experience and feelings of others is crucial to make decisions that leave no one behind.	Is attentive and focused on understanding the feelings and needs of others, particularly vulnerable groups and those that are left behind, and takes actions to address their needs.	Competencies of an empathy/relation mindset include emotional intelligence, socially conscious awareness, responsibility, and collaboration. Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, manage and communicate with emotional regulation, and respond appropriately to the emotions of other people. With socially conscious awareness, responsibility, and collaboration competencies , public servants will be able to develop an awareness of their own and communities' beliefs, values, and expectations and ensure a culture of caring, being flexible to recognize the different needs of employees, and the people. Finally, they will be able to collaborate with stakeholders from different backgrounds.
Responsive Mindset 	Public Institutions exist to respond to people's needs and protect human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all.	Putting people first by effectively anticipating and responding to their needs and creating an enabling environment for sustainable development.	Very important competencies linked to this mindset are the abilities to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, and ensure equitable access to public service delivery provided on general terms of equality (without distinction of any kind, as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status).

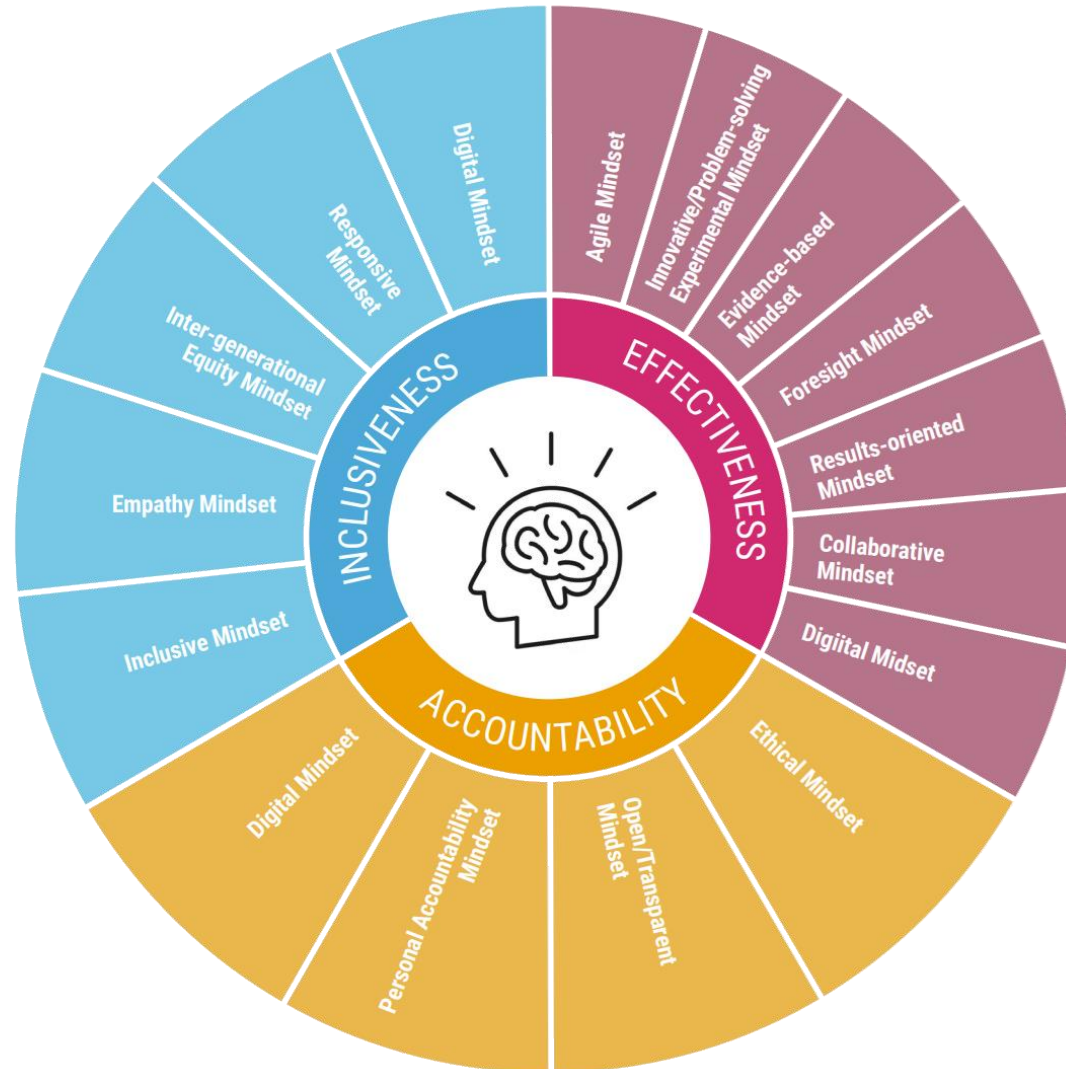
Institutional inclusiveness is based on the principles of leaving no one behind, non-discrimination, participation, subsidiarity, and inter-generational equity.

MINDSETS FOR INSTITUTIONAL INCLUSIVENESS			
MINDSETS	BELIEFS	ATTITUDES	COMPETENCIES
Digital Mindset 	If properly leveraged, digital technology can help address a multiplicity of challenges.	Is focused on leveraging the advantages of technology in support of governance transformation while addressing its risks.	A digital mindset is not just the ability to use technology, but it is a set of behaviors 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.
Inter-generational Equity Mindset 	Young and old generations deserve to live in a sustainable planet and have their needs met.	Is compliant with the principle of environmental, social, and economic equity.	Competencies that are linked to an intergenerational equity mindset include the abilities to construct administrative acts that balance the short-term needs of today's generation with the longer-term needs of future generations. Also, skills in management and planning are critical for long-term public debt management, long-term territorial planning, and spatial development, and ecosystem management. Finally, skills in assessing the impact of the SDGs are critical for the decision-making process.



4. What new capacities, mindsets, and competencies are needed to implement the SDGs?

Figure 1.3: Mindsets for SDGs implementation





5. Strategies at the individual, organizational and institutional levels to promote a change in mindsets

Steps to changing mindsets:

STEP 1: Identify

STEP 2: Realize

STEP 3: Understand

STEP 4: Adopt strategies

STEP 5: Change beliefs

STEP 6: Transform behaviors





5. Strategies at the individual, organizational and institutional levels to promote a change in mindsets

Table 1.5: Key strategies to foster a change in public servants' mindsets

(1) STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHANGE AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL – MINDSETS	
<p>1.1 Raise awareness of the principles and values of the 2030 Agenda and of the 11 principles of effective governance for sustainable development and their underlying beliefs and enhance the understanding of how to align public servants' mindsets with those principles.</p>	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update public service codes of conduct and public service charters to include reference to the principles and values of the 2030 Agenda and to the principles of effective governance for sustainable development. b. The set of guidance notes to implement the principles of effective governance could be mainstreamed in the capacity development training courses of schools of public administration and development agencies. c. Schools of public administration²⁹ can undertake training on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to sensitize public servants to the principles and values of the 2030 Agenda. In this respect, the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs developed by UN DESA provides training material that can be adapted to the regional/national context and can be used to help promote effective change in public institutions.³⁰ In particular, the toolkit on Changing Mindsets in Public Institutions can be a reference for institutes of training to gain insights on new values, mindsets and competencies needed to implement the 2030 Agenda.
<p>1.2 Promote socially conscious and transformational leadership values and mindsets with a focus on building inclusive societies. Socially conscious leaders have a significant role to play in the survival and long-term development of institutions that promote the principle of equity and inclusiveness. Building capacities in socially conscious leadership values and enhancing skills in empathy, social research, systems thinking, participatory planning, and team building can promote and transform the mindsets of change-agents to implement the SDGs, both within and across nations (see chapter 2).</p>	<p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish capacity development and training activities to promote socially conscious leadership values, mindsets, and behaviors for public servants across all government levels.
<p>1.3 Define new mindsets to implement the SDGs in the public sector through a new competency framework for the SDGs.</p>	<p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. See below 2.1
<p>1.4 Adopt an innovation/ problem-solving, agile and evidence-based mindset in the public sector as well as continuous learning. Shifting mindsets involves a dynamic process – not necessarily a linear path – of constant practice and renewal (see Chapters 4 and 5). Training, both for long- and short-term change, could be more effective when focusing on problem-solving.</p>	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Design and adopt a Public Service Charter for Innovation in Public Management. b. Develop capacity development training on innovation, experimentation, and evidence that can promote high-level motivation and a greater propensity to embracing new mindsets.
<p>1.5 Governments need to be able to attract, develop, and retain a dedicated workforce. Public sector human resource professionals are a key component in attracting and motivating the best talent in the public sector and hiring people with the right mindsets.</p>	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Human resource practice should move from being transactional to being more strategic. Human resources departments should have a more strategic role in recruiting and attracting the best talent in the public sector (see Chapter 9). b. Mechanisms to promote employee engagement is key to having a motivated, engaged workforce that embraces new mindsets and performs the critical work of government (see Chapter 9).

(2) STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHANGE AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL – BEHAVIORS	
<p>2.1 Define new mindsets through a new competency framework to implement the SDGs and describe what new behaviors are needed to implement Goal 16. Public administration systems must define new mindsets and competencies that can advance the principles of the 2030 Agenda across public service and ensure that they are put into practice. UN DESA's competency framework (see page 25) could serve as a reference for countries that would like to focus on new competencies, mindsets, and behaviors.</p>	<p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a new competency framework to guide public servants' recruitment, behavior, and performance.
<p>2.2 Instill meaning and an understanding among public servants of the required mindsets and related behaviors needed to advance the SDGs. Public servants first need to understand why a change in mindsets and behavior is needed. Second, they need to understand what change (in terms of values, beliefs and attitudes, and capacities and competencies) is required to advance the realization of the 2030 Agenda. Third, they need to understand how these changes can be triggered. (see Chapters 10 to 15).</p>	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Schools of Public Administration and Management Institutes and Public Service Training Institutions/Units* should mainstream the SDGs and new mindsets required to realize the 2030 Agenda in their curricula (see Chapter 9). b. Schools of public administration can promote acculturation, investment in personal socialization, and individual's ethical education to foster a change in public servant's previous patterns of beliefs and behaviors. Understanding how people behave is critical to fostering a change in mindsets. c. Promote effective communication campaigns regarding the new competency framework within the public sector to highlight the changes needed to encourage a change in mindsets and behaviors.
<p>2.3 Nurture champions of change in the public sector for the successful implementation of the SDGs. Organizations need to identify champions of change that can serve as role models for new mindsets and behaviors that will support change (see Chapter 9).</p>	<p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Government can establish or submit initiatives to Award programmes at the national and local levels to help uncover champions of change. For example, the UN Public Service Awards, which is the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service, can help discover champions of change and disseminate national initiatives worldwide.



5. Strategies at the individual, **organizational** and **institutional** levels to promote a change in mindsets

(3) STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHANGE AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL – CULTURE

3.1 Ensure that there is coherence between public servants' values and those of an organization and the SDGs, and that those principles are translated into tangible behaviors.

Recommendations:

- a. Assess, by using diagnostic tools, public servants' mindsets – their values, inspiration, and their behaviors – to inform the design of structures and processes and, ultimately, change organizational culture to advance the implementation of the SDGs (Chapter 1 and 4).
- b. Design organizational socialization processes for the internalization of organizational values and principles among public servants.

3.2 Use Behavioral insights methodologies to promote organizational change. Guidelines can help drive public institutions' performance, and, ultimately, design management processes that will determine the institutional goals' success. Behavioral science initiatives in various parts of the world have shown to help change organizational performance by making slight changes to their environment (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Recommendation:

- a. Design and implement changes in the public sector's organizational culture, environment, and choice architecture. Changes in the public sector's environment and choice architecture can help to foster changes in the mindsets of public servants. It is possible to influence behavior through small changes to the environment (see Chapters 7 and 8). It can be helpful to identify the desired behavior as well as the barriers to such behaviors and add or remove obstacles to promote desired behavior.

3.3 Link public servants' performance management with the new mindsets needed to implement the SDGs and results-based management. A public sector with strengthened capacity and increased performance has a higher likelihood of reaching the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Performance appraisals play an essential role in management practices to increase performance. Creating a performance and results-based culture is also critical to providing a clear direction in the public sector.

Recommendations:

- a. Create a link between personal performance goals and appraisal indicators to organizational goals. The latter can make individual mindsets coherent with others in the organization. Managers can adjust performance appraisals to measurable objectives and use digital tools for sharing information and monitoring information at the micro-level (see Chapter 10). Measurement drives behavior, so managers need a clear view of human nature and behavior in organizations. (See Chapter 9).
- b. Public sector organisations can redesign performance management systems taking into account newmindsets and behaviors.
- c. Develop a caring culture in the public sector and increase the engagement of public servants to promote inclusive and empathic mindsets, which can help provide better services to citizens (see Chapter 8).

(4) STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHANGE AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

4.1 Promote policies and regulations for strategic human resources management and training that focus on the new mindsets required to implement the SDGs.

A shift from traditional, often siloed, and cumbersome policy development is needed to embrace more agile and responsive governance policies and regulations that focus on new tools, processes, and mindsets to inform more systemic responses to the challenges in implementing the SDGs (see Chapter 3).

Recommendations:

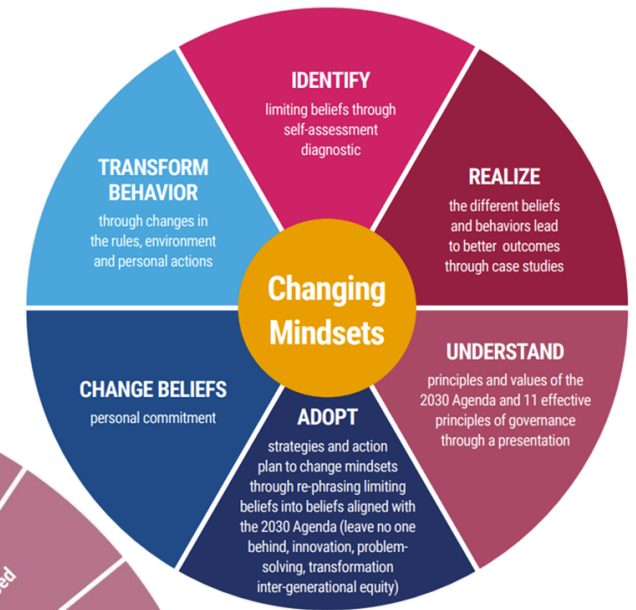
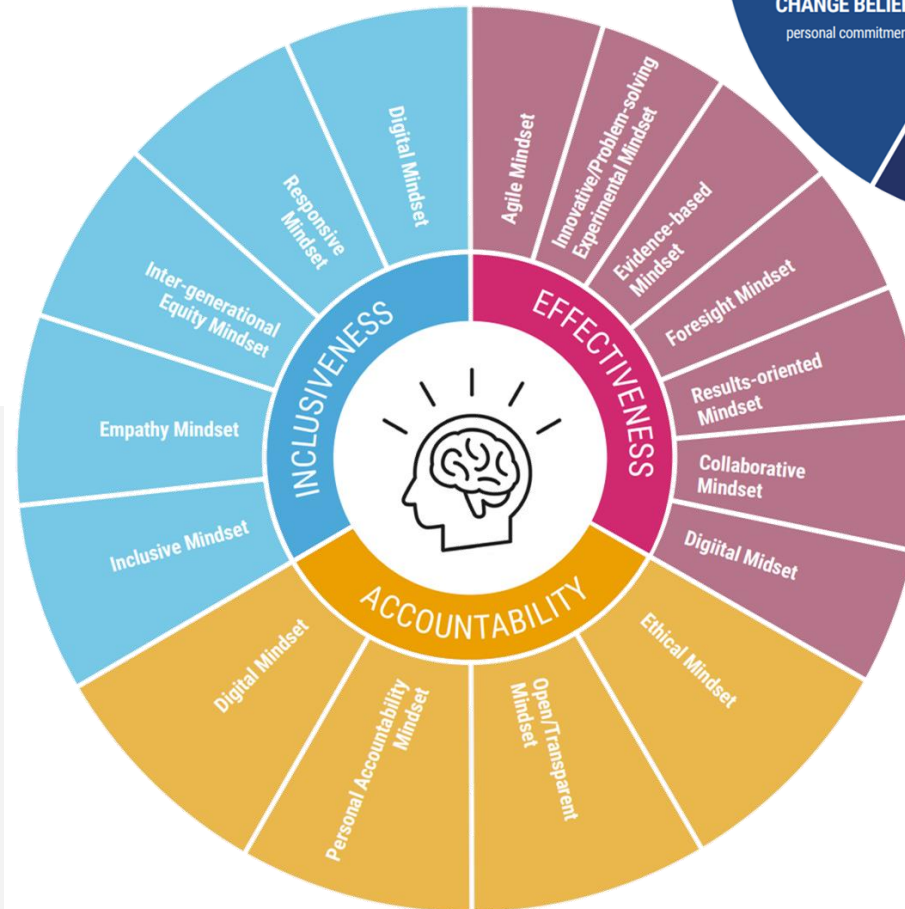
- a. Devise new policies and regulations to ensure that human resources strategies for recruitment, advancement in career, and life-long-learning reflect the new mindsets needed to implement the SDGs. Policies should promote design-thinking methods, such as co-creation, prototyping, testing, iteration, and an inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach, ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented and reflected.
- b. Develop HR strategies that promote the reframing of human resource management addressing not only mindsets but also the mix of HR systems that are needed to implement the SDGs.
- c. Promote networking among the schools and institutes of public administration is imperative to share knowledge and good practices in changing mindsets.



6. Key Messages



	Internal	External
Individual	Mindset Beliefs Worldviews Attitudes	Behavior Actions and Habits Skills Communication Relational
Collective	Organizational Culture Shared Values Shared Purpose Social Norms Symbols History	Rules and Normative Frameworks Structures Processes Strategies





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Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Changing Mindsets to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

How to promote new
mindsets and behaviors
in public institutions to
implement the Sustainable
Development Goals



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