

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government

June 2022





UN DESA's Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government

Based at the United Nations headquarters in New York, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) promotes and supports international cooperation in the pursuit of sustainable development for all. It intends to be a premier policy and capacity building partner, by integrating digital technologies, to deliver agile support and achieve measurable results for its stakeholders. Capacity development is the third functional pillar of UN DESA's overall mandate, alongside its normative and analytical work. UN DESA partners on capacity development to support Member States in building integrated, evidence-based, inclusive and well-funded national strategies and plans to achieve sustainable development that ensure no one is left behind. It brings to its contribution at country-level not only global knowledge, but a global perspective on development drawn from its support to inter-governmental policymaking. The Capacity Development Programme Management Office (CDPMO) supports UNDESA's Divisions in the formulation and implementation of the overall Department's capacity development strategy and promotes coherence and integrated delivery of its capacity development work. Its functions include policy and programme development, support and coordination, partnerships and resource mobilization, human resources and financial management services, Management of the Development Account and Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation as well as fellowships and training.

UN DESA's Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) advances effective, accountable and inclusive governance and public institutions for sustainable development, including through innovation, digital government and digital transformation. The Division provides capacity building and policy advice to countries, on request, to strengthen governments' capacities to translate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other internationally agreed goals into institutional arrangements, strategies and programmes for effective service delivery and participatory, accountable and inclusive decision-making processes.



UN Photo/Devra Berkowitz

1. Key role of effective governance and public institutions, including through digital government, for realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights (including the right to development), on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 of the 2030 Agenda specifically calls for effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

While institutions play a critical role in the achievement of all the SDGs and targets, public sector reforms needed to implement the SDGs continue to be a major and vexing challenge in many countries, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

New capacities at all governance levels are needed to implement the 2030 Agenda and to make institutions more effective, inclusive

and accountable, as called for in Goal 16. Governments need to rethink how they design their policies and make decisions, how they operate and deliver services, engage people and partnerships, mobilize resources, leverage technologies as well as monitor and evaluate their programmes and plans. National and local capacities are needed to design and implement holistic, integrated, and coherent and risk informed policies and institutional frameworks that support people's aspirations, strengthening central-local government interactions and capacities. Decision-making at all levels needs to include all stakeholders' voices and perspectives to ensure that no one is left behind and foster inclusive societies. Addressing these complex challenges calls for whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches and partnerships. UN DESA/DPIDG has spearheaded a number of initiatives designed to tackle these challenges.

2. Areas of Support

Governance and public administration are key drivers in the process of implementing the SDGs effectively and inclusively. UN DESA's capacity development activities in support of Goal 16 aim to assist member states' capacity development efforts in the following overarching areas:



Governance and institutions

Enhanced capacity to design and implement effective, inclusive and accountable governance mechanisms and institutional frameworks for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA).



Transformational leadership and new mindsets to realize the SDGs

Enhanced capacity of leaders and public servants to implement the SDGs, including by promoting new mindsets, skills and knowledge.



Participation and accountability

Enhanced capacities for public sector integrity and accountability mechanisms to ensure accountable and responsive institutions, prevent and fight corruption, including by strengthening the capacities of supreme audit institutions.



Innovation and delivery of public services

Enhanced national capacity to design and implement innovative and inclusive service delivery, including through the use of ICTs, implementation and review of sustainable development policies and plans.



Digital government

Enhanced capacities to leverage the power of ICTs and digital government for the transformation of public institutions to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.







Local governance

Enhanced capacities to promote effective national to local governance, local digital services and strengthen government's interaction with citizens, communities, and other stakeholders.

3. Guiding Principles

UN DESA/DPIDG's capacity development is guided by the UN DESA's capacity development strategy. The following key principles apply to the delivery of capacity development services and products:

-  **Holistic links (normative, operational, analytical)**
-  **Development efforts to ensure no one is left behind**
-  **Demand-driven and country-owned development**
-  **Multiplied and long-term results**
-  **Partnerships and South-South cooperation**

4. Strategy

To achieve its goals, UN DESA's capacity development support to UN Member States is delivered through an integrated approach linking the normative, analytical and operational work in the area of governance and public institutions. UN DESA planning, programming and implementation of country-level support is aligned with and supports the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), as "the most important instrument for the planning and implementation of the UN development activities at the country level in support of the 2030 Agenda". Its capacity development work builds on the agreements that emerge from the inter-governmental process and helps countries implement those agreements. It also distills lessons learned from the country level and provides inputs to the inter-governmental process. Capacity development activities benefit from the research and policy recommendations that emerge from the Division's main analytical products, including the [World Public Sector Report](#) and the [UN E-Government Survey](#). Publications and reports are also produced to disseminate findings and lessons learned. Capacity development activities build on the Division's ability to carry out comprehensive comparative analysis on countries' experiences, collect good practices, including the [UN Public Service Awards](#), the [Compendium of National Institutional Arrangements for Implementing the](#)

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The division mobilizes the UN system as well as other partners. It utilizes peer-learning and good practices from countries in the region and globally if required. It works closely with the Regional Commissions and the UN Resident Coordinator Offices, and other relevant partners.

5. Technical Guidance, Methodologies and Approaches

The Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development

The 11 Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development, developed by the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) and endorsed in 2018 by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), provide practical, expert guidance to interested countries in a broad range of governance challenges associated with implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

UN DESA/DPIDG has been working with global experts to prepare guidance notes and provide content to the strategies to support full implementation of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda. The notes include information on how a Government can both assess its current status and measure progress in applying the strategy. Guidance notes on the principles of [sound policymaking](#) and [intergenerational equity](#) were produced.

Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs

The **Curriculum on Governance** is a comprehensive set of Training of Trainers Capacity Development Toolkits, which contain ready-to-use and customizable training materials on key governance dimensions needed to advance the implementation of the SDGs developed by UN DESA/DPIDG. The Curriculum provides methodologies and approaches to advance knowledge and assist governments in developing capacities at the individual, organizational, and institutional/societal levels, to drive the transformational change needed to implement the 2030 Agenda. The Training of Trainers Capacity Development Toolkits are structured around modules that include readings, self-assessment situation analysis, application of theories to concrete issues and challenges, priority setting exercises, through case studies, action planning, and other activities that can assist countries in advancing governance transformation for sustainable development. Some of the toolkits include modules on addressing health pandemics such as the COVID-19.

Curriculum Toolkits at a glance



Changing Mindsets in Public Institutions to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



The training toolkit aims to provide a set of methodologies and tools that can contribute to a change in the environment, culture, and mindset of public servants in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. The training toolkit approaches transforming mindsets in the public sector as the result of three interlinked factors: transforming mindsets (1) at the institutional level through new human resources laws, regulations, policies and regulations; (2) at the organizational level through a new organizational culture inspired by the principles of the 2030 Agenda; and (3) at the individual level through beliefs, values, competencies and skills. A publication produced by DPIDG on "Changing Mindsets to Realize the 2030 Agenda" complements the toolkit.

Transparency, Accountability and Ethics in Public Institutions



The training toolkit approaches integrity and effective anti-corruption in public institutions as the result of three interlinking factors: (1) Transparency of government, which enables people and civil society to hold government to

account, (2) Accountability, which can be enhanced by strengthening oversight institutions, and (3) Transforming mindsets to adopt ethical standards for public servants, who play an enabling role in upholding good governance and anti-corruption. The training toolkit intends to promote public servants' ethical awareness and transform mindsets for ethical behavior and decision-making, enabling them to become agents of change and lead on integrity transformations.

Strengthening Institutional Arrangements and Governance Capacities for Policy Coherence



The training toolkit aims to support United Nations Member States in developing their governance capacities and institutional arrangements for policy coherence. The toolkit focuses on public institutions' capacity to spearhead integrated planning, policymaking, decision making, implementation, M&E and aligning budgets at the national government level. The toolkit is aimed at supporting building capacities for a whole of government and whole of society approach for policy coherence by examining the core role of a strategy to implement the SDGs, the roles and responsibilities of different government institutions and non-government actors involved and how they are coordinated. The toolkit also touches upon which human, financial, and technological resources are needed to strengthen those institutions.

Effective National to Local Public Governance for SDG Implementation



The outcome of the training is to strengthen public institutions to facilitate more coherent implementation of the SDGs, while supporting greater integrated public governance, including through planning, policymaking and finance practices, between national and local authorities.

Government Innovation for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups



The training toolkit aims to build capacities to promote government innovation for social inclusion of vulnerable groups by introducing approaches, strategies, and experiences at the national level. It also highlights the importance of empowering vulnerable groups and engaging them in policy design, implementation, and monitoring processes, as agents of change.

Risk-informed Governance and Innovative Technology for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience



This training toolkit seeks to build national capacities to spearhead innovations and utilize Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and frontier technologies in government to drive DRR and build resilience. Special emphasis is given to public service innovations that serve the needs of countries in special situations, including methods for adapting and scaling them to align them with the national context. The materials presented and the activities that are part of the training toolkit aim at exploring the mechanisms for access, adoption, uptake, finance, and maintenance of emerging technology in practical formats that seek to advance public sector capacities for risk-informed policymaking and resilience.

Innovation and Digital Government for Public Service Delivery



The training toolkit contains a set of comprehensive training materials aimed at strengthening the capacities of government officials to promote innovation for SDG implementation.

Self - Assessment Tools, Guidelines, and Handbooks

The following are additional materials developed by UN DESA/DPIDG for its capacity building activities.

Self-assessment methodologies

Capacity Needs Assessment of Government Institutions to Implement the Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development and Identification of Priority Areas for Capacity Development



The Survey helps gather information on steps taken by countries to adapt the SDGs to national contexts, develop policies and action plans, mobilize and adapt their institutions, engage civil society, private sector,

scientific community, and people, as well as establish the framework for reviewing progress in the implementation of the SDGs.

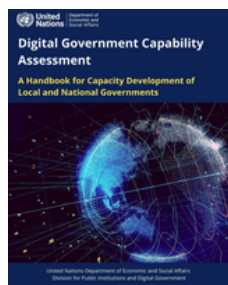
Readiness Assessment on Institutional Arrangements for Policy Coherence to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



The readiness assessment is a tool that contains questions to facilitate a participatory dialogue process among national ministries/agencies (and sub-national levels of government).

The assessment is composed of 9 building blocks, which together give an indication of whether and to what extent a government agency has in place mechanisms that effectively enhance institutional arrangements for policy coherence to implement the sustainable development goals.

Digital Government Capability Assessment



The Digital Government Capability Assessment (DGCA) is a six-dimension framework of enablers to engage governments in discussions towards digital government transformation.

Considering that digital government requires a multifaceted response from governments, the dimensions of the DGCA contain various statements which could guide governments in understanding gaps and policy entry points. This tool can be used at the inter-institutional level as part of a national exercise or as an international comparative exchange between different countries at the regional or global level.

Open Government Data (OGD) Readiness Assessment



The OGD Readiness Assessment was created to assist Governments in assessing how prepared a country is to the adoption and implementation of an OGD initiative. Specifically, the assessment helps governments to identify specific areas for improvements and potential niches for the initial start up of OGD initiatives. Based on key factors, the assessment can assist governments in adjusting their respective plans to consolidate strengths and address weaknesses.

The Division has also developed the following tools:

- [Citizen Engagement Self-Assessment Questionnaire](#)
- [Measurement and Evaluation Tool for Engagement and e-Participation \(METEP\)](#)
- [Toolkit on "Reconstructing Public Administration after Conflict"](#)

Guidelines and Handbooks

Guide on Lessons for Open Government Data Action Planning for Sustainable Development



The Guide on Lessons for Open Government Data (OGD) Action Planning for Sustainable Development contains hands-on and easy-to-use information of particular relevance to

the work of government policy-makers and technology experts that wish to understand what OGD is; why governments could use OGD as a tool for supporting transparent, accountable and participatory governance for sustainable development; and how to assess, plan, implement and evaluate successful OGD initiatives and programmes.

Common Competency Framework for Implementing the SDGs



The UN DESA Competency Framework of Public Servants to Implement the SDGs was designed to advance the achievement of all 17 Goals and 169 Targets of the 2030 Agenda. It was developed together with schools of public administration from various regions of the world. The competencies are based upon the key principles of the 2030 Agenda. These principles serve to guide public service values, mindsets, and competencies for strengthened performance measurement in public institutions.

6. Projects

UN DESA/DPIDG implements a number of technical cooperation projects, including the [UN Project Office on Governance \(UNPOG\)](#) and the [Internet Governance Forum](#). The UNPOG is based on a Trust Fund Agreement between UN DESA and the Government of the Republic of Korea whereas the IGF is based on a multi-donor trust fund. The projects are executed by UN DESA through DPIDG. Detailed information on other projects is available [here](#).

7. Levels of Intervention

In line with UN DESA's capacity development strategy, the Division works at a variety of geographic levels — global, regional, national and subnational — and aims to match each capacity development intervention to the most appropriate level for that specific response. Work at higher geographic levels is sought when that increases impact and facilitates a more efficient use of resources. The Division leverages technology whenever possible to ensure access to its activities by a wide-range of stakeholders.

Global and Regional Level Initiatives



UN DESA's capacity building activities in support of SDG 16 are carried out in the various regions of the world by working closely with the regional commissions, and through its networks. UN DESA/DPIDG, the International Development Law Organization, and the Government of Italy organize the [SDG 16 Conference](#), which addresses key issues related to governance and public institutions.

Every year, the Division organizes the [UN Public Service Forum and Day](#), a unique capacity development global event on public governance that provides a platform to explore, discuss and learn about: (i) emerging challenges, issues and trends in public governance; (ii) innovative practices to address these challenges; and (iii) capacity development strategies, approaches and tools in support of sustainable development.

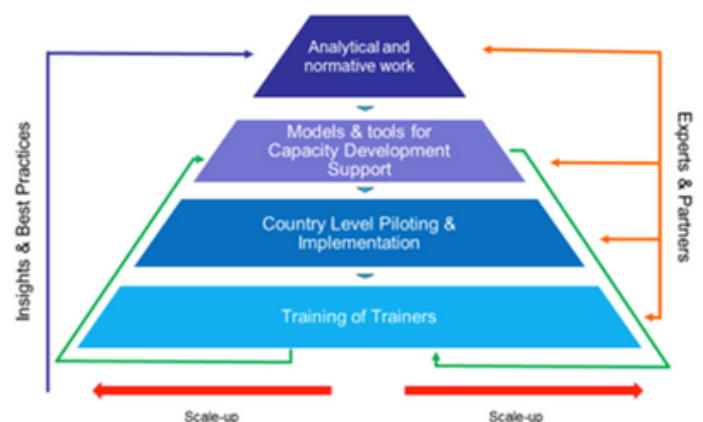
In particular, for Asia and the Pacific and Eastern Africa, DPIDG's initiatives are implemented in collaboration with its Office on Governance (UNPOG) located in Incheon, Republic of Korea.

National and Local Levels

At the national level, the Division supports member states through advisory services and national workshops/training based on research and analysis. It takes advantage of its advisory missions to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda and facilitate countries' engagement in the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF), as well as explore the synergies with other regional instruments such as AU Agenda 2063.

Outcomes of capacity development activities can be used as possible inputs into the inter-governmental process, including the HLPF and the meetings of the [UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration \(CEPA\)](#).

Capacity Development Delivery Method



8. Types of capacity development support

Policy advice through short-term field missions to Governments and other relevant stakeholders in developing countries upon their request to carry out needs-assessment and diagnostics as well as to support the design/redesign of national policies and strategies on aspects related to Goal 16 and other SDGs.

Strategic support to the UN Resident Coordinator System (RCO) through outreach and knowledge exchange, inputs for policy advice at the country level, analytical inputs as well as contributions to the Common Country Analysis and to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) programming and operations.

Development and piloting of innovative methodologies and approaches to support capacity development efforts in the area of governance and public institutions, including through the Curriculum on Governance, self-assessment tools and guidance materials.

Development and facilitation of training courses and national workshops at the request of developing countries, especially Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlock Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), to promote common approaches among Member States. Awareness raising and strengthening capacities is conducted through Training-of-Trainers in cooperation with (global and regional) networks for National Schools of Public Administration and other partners.

Monitoring and analysis of trends and innovative practices in the area of governance and public institutions, and preparation of policy advisory notes to inform governments as well as feed into the intergovernmental process. This is done through the [UN Public Service Innovation Hub](#) by compiling and analysing relevant good practices from the UNPSA.

The [UN E-Government Knowledge Base](#) provides access to city, country and regional data based on the UN E-Government Survey findings.

Regional capacity development symposiums and workshops, meetings, study visits and twinning arrangements to support and facilitate dialogue and exchange of lessons learned, and peer-to-peer learning among Member States to adapt good practices and to promote South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation.

Global peer-to-peer exchange and learning among countries in different regions, including through the UN Public Service Forum. The capacity development activities at the global level enhance advocacy and policy dialogue on emerging public administration issues and trends related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through global fora and events.

Codification of lessons learned through the preparation of manuals, guidance notes, and publications.

Dissemination of lessons learned and practical implications from the work and analysis of activities at the country level through the **organization of side events and other activities during inter-governmental meetings**, including CEPA and the HLPF.



9. Prioritization of Interventions

Planning decisions as to whether and how to provide support is based on a thorough analysis of our mandates, priorities, comparative advantage, and available capacities as well as opportunities to work with strategic partners to ensure the effective and sustained delivery of our capacity development assistance.

Countries are identified for projects and other capacity development activities upon request of UN Member States. In responding to requests, and given its limited resources, the Division assesses whether it can provide support by following specific criteria. These include: (a) the request is in line with UN mandates; (b) it is in one of DPIDG's focus areas, (c) the beneficiary is a developing country/s, particularly LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, (d) resources are available and (e) it builds synergies in collaboration with the RCOs. Regarding local authorities, assistance is mainly provided through dedicated meetings, engagement in other meetings, or cooperation with networks.

10. Partnerships

Partnerships are crucial for implementing the 2030 Agenda and essential for the successful delivery of capacity development work. Partners play an important role in maximizing the impact and sustainability of UN DESA's contributions to capacity development.

UN DESA/DPIDG partners with the UN Resident Coordinator Offices, UN agencies and other international organizations, with governments and with non-government institutions at global, regional and national levels to deliver its capacity development assistance. UN DESA/DPIDG engages with a variety of partners in the development of methodologies, approaches, and global norms and standards as well as piloting at the country-level, including replication/upscaling of interesting approaches. It also partners with a variety of institutions and member states in organizing forums and other CD events. UN DESA's DPIDG

leverages partnerships, including by working with regional commissions, relevant UN entities, UN country teams, the UNPAN partners and members, the networks of schools of public administration, experts, regional organizations, networks of academics, schools of public administration or expert councils in each thematic area of the Division to support research, assess needs of member states and help draft CD tools.

UNPAN - The **United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN)** is a global network that connects international, regional, sub-regional and national institutions and experts worldwide working on governance and effective, inclusive and accountable public institutions for sustainable development in line with **Goal 16** of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. UNPAN's mission is to promote the sharing of knowledge, experiences and best practices, throughout the world by means of ICTs, sound public policies, effective public administration and efficient civil service, and through capacity-building and cooperation among Member States, with an emphasis on South-South cooperation and UNPAN's commitment to integrity and excellence. It is the only network of its type in the world today. UNPAN Members are from five geographical regions in line with the UN regional commissions, namely Africa, Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia and the Middle East.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the United Nations Public Administration Network. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the United Nations logo and the text 'United Nations Public Administration Network'. Below the navigation bar, there is a search bar and a 'A-Z Site Index' link. The main content area is divided into four sections: 'UNPAN Members', 'Sustainable Development Goals', 'UNPAN Services', and 'Public Institutions and the SDGs'. Each section contains a brief description and a 'Read more...' link. The 'Sustainable Development Goals' section features a circular graphic of the 17 SDGs, with Goal 16 highlighted. The 'Public Institutions and the SDGs' section features a graphic of a scale of justice and a dove, representing peace and justice.

DPIDG has also established in 2017 a [Global Initiative on Governance for the SDGs](#) to facilitate the mainstreaming of the SDGs in the curricula of the schools of public administration and knowledge sharing among these schools. The Global Initiative on Governance for the SDGs aims at developing the capacities of governments and public servants (in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and mindset) to support the implementation of the SDGs; providing data and information about the development of capacities in the regions; and strengthening institutional capacity development for improved public service delivery. It also aims to support North-South and South-South exchange of effective governance practices to ensure cross-fertilization and mutual learning.

The Global Initiative brings into collaboration the directors and trainers from schools of public administration, civil service colleges, and similar training institutions to set the foundation for a holistic, participatory, and action-oriented learning system, which is essential for generating positive change in the public service and for sustainable development.



11. Partner Countries

UN DESA/DPIDG supports developing countries, with a particular focus on Least Developing Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The Division also supports middle-income countries that can

help promote south-south cooperation or support pilot activities that can help promote peer-to-peer learning. Within SIDS and LDCs, priority will be given to Government ministries and agencies in charge of public administration. Sectoral ministries, national development planning institutions; local authorities and local institutions, parliaments, supreme audit institutions (SAIs), schools of public administration, among others, will also be involved in CD activities. The same applies to middle-income countries.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation



Monitoring and evaluation of CD activities and products is essential to ensure that they are effective, accountable and demand-driven.

Activities are monitored on a regular basis through satisfaction questionnaires and by soliciting feedback from member states. Evaluations are conducted at the end of each project and lessons learned are used to inform new capacity development services and work.

Further information on the type, number and impact of our capacity development activities is available in the annual [CD Snapshot](#).

How to Submit a Request for our Advisory Services

UN DESA makes its specialized advisory services and assistance available to all countries at their request and is always interested in working with partners to achieve sustainable results.

Government ministries and national entities can approach us directly or through their UN country team through the UN Resident Coordinator. We might also invite expressions of interest from countries to be part of global, regional or sub-regional initiatives.

Following a direct request or expression of interest, we will assess the feasibility and modalities for our intervention to ensure that we can achieve maximum results and efficiency.

If you are interested in receiving more information or expressing your interest in our advisory services, please submit your request to Mr. Juwang Zhu, Director of DPIDG, at unpan@un.org.



Contact Us

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about how UN DESA/DPIDG can support your work related to Goal 16. Interested national entities and partners can also contact us through DPIDG's Programme Management and Capacity Development Unit (PMCDU).

Also, for any other inquiries regarding our initiatives and activities, or for more information please contact us at:

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government
Tel. 1-212-963-2299
E-mail: unpan@un.org
Twitter: @UNPAN