



United Nations

Department of Economic and Social Affairs



Ministry of Public Service



Capacity Development Training Workshop on **INNOVATION, DIGITAL GOVERNMENT AND CHANGING MINDSETS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSFORMATION IN GUYANA TO ACHIEVE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

Ministry of Public Service of Guyana

Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD)

Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

With the support of the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Guyana

22 March – 31 March 2022

Session 1: 22 – 24 March 2022; **Session 2:** 29-31 March 2022

10:00 am – 1 pm ECT- EDT

Concept Note

1. Background

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), through its Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), the Ministry of Public Service of Guyana, the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), with the support of the Resident Coordinator Office, are co-organizing a Training Workshop on “Innovation, Digital Government and Changing Mindset for Public Sector Transformation in Guyana to Achieve the SDGs”. The Training Workshop will be delivered between 22 March and 31 March 2022 in two sessions of 180 minutes each. The course will be attended by Permanent and Deputy Permanent Secretaries, Regional Executive Officers, Chief Executive Officers of Guyana.

This Capacity Development Training Workshop is a follow up to two events. One is the High-Level Seminar virtually conducted by CARICAD for the Ministry of Public Service and senior officials in Guyana on 17- 18 November 2021. The second one is the Capacity Development Workshop on Innovation, Digital Government and Public Service Delivery for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean organized by UN DESA/DPIDG together with the SIDS Unit of UN DESA/DSDG, in collaboration with the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Outcomes from the High-Level Seminar have highlighted that holistic public sector transformation is very complex. It requires time and a focus on sound policies, strategies, and development programmes across the different levels of government and sectors. These policies and programmes should be formulated in close collaboration with all concerned public and private stakeholders. Conclusions from

the seminar also included the need to work towards building awareness of why a holistic transformation of public administration is needed to promote progress on the SDGs. In addition, a shift in mindsets will be necessary to manage tension and to understand how the new model for transformation would drive improved service delivery. Cultural awareness of leaders and management will be critical to setting and sustaining transformation and change management.

Outcomes from the Capacity Development Workshop on Innovation, Digital Government and Public Service Delivery for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean have highlighted that a major concern for Guyana is electronic access for Hinterland Poor and Remote Communities (HPRC). This involves the deployment of ICT infrastructure, including modern wired and wireless telecommunication networks, hardware and software, and interactive networking platforms – all of which are linked to securing full connectivity. Once access to the technologies is secured, and with complementary supportive legislation, the provision of public services can be improved, and social inclusivity goals will be more easily achieved.

Countries leading in digital government typically take a holistic approach, use systems-thinking in policymaking and service delivery, make intensive use of ICTs, re-organize institutions before automation, and have enhanced capacities in data management and ICT infrastructure. They also ensure that structural changes are accompanied by cultural changes and the development of new mindsets and skills, as the latter is an integral part of an effective digital government transformation. Transformational Leadership, Political Commitment and Citizen Engagement are essential for any meaningful digital government transformation. It is clear that digital government transformation is not just about technology. To embrace the potential of technologies, governments should adopt a holistic approach that puts people first. Leadership's commitment at all levels of government is essential and the use of ICTs in government should support the overall vision of a nation.

In addition, there is a need of a whole-of-government approach and inter-ministerial collaboration. SDGs have been mapped against the development objectives of Guyana and “the inter-sectoral linkages have visibly emerged, signaling the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration for the delivery of public programmes. Collaboration is instrumental in reducing redundancies and efficiently allocating resources by allowing each authority to plan more effectively, thereby allowing for priority setting and the dedication of limited resources to undertaking only the most catalytic investments first”¹

2. Thematic Focus

Guyana has set itself an ambitious, but realizable, goal of achieving a Green State by 2040, and this long-term development strategy has effectively incorporated all the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)².

Guyana has also promoted public sector transformation to improve outcomes, public services delivery, reduce inequalities, and enhance the well-being of the people. As underlined by the Hon. Savitri Sonia Parag, Minister of Public Service of Guyana: "Guyana, is at one of the most exciting places in its development, which requires public sector transformation. There is a need for a highly skilled public service empowered with the necessary and innovative tools to function effectively. Thus far, this journey has been incredibly challenging".

The Covid 19 pandemic and other complex socio-economic and environmental events have created a number of issues for the region and the world at large. Therefore, it would be essential to rethink

¹ GUYANA First Voluntary National Review High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development JULY 2019 https://guyana.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/24297Guyana_VNR2019_Report.pdf

² Ibidem

governance systems and public sector arrangements, with SDG 16 as a key pillar for transformation. Recovering from COVID 19 and other events will require strengthening competitiveness through knowledge and skills upgrading. Also, innovation at national and local levels is needed to create innovative, technology-driven economies and societies. Accelerating the implementation of SDG 16 involves a public sector transformation and the promotion of a “whole of government” and “whole-of-society” approaches which are needed to tackle complex, interrelated challenges such as increasing inequalities, climate change, and rapid technological disruption.

An Online Pre-Session Survey conducted by CARICAD in Guyana on public sector transformation and change management activities across the public service has underlined *inter alia* that “transformational change is needed...also, capacity development is critical. The public sector appears to be facing a capacity challenge in delivering change and transformation, with particular challenges being experienced in relation to mindsets, capacity, processes, and right skillsets.”

Public sector transformation is “a continuous process of leading and managing change in the public service for innovative adaptation to enable the delivery of services and results in a resilient and sustainable manner” (CARICAD, 2021) and includes new cultures, capacities, and knowledge. Indeed, the greatest challenge for bureaucratic organizations is to change their mindsets, operating models, and performance structures. Changing public servants' beliefs and attitudes (that is, the mindset) is essential to ensure institutional effectiveness for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Also, the availability of new digital technologies can help public organizations achieve significant improvement in the delivery of public services as well as to solve “wicked” problems and deliver new services.

“The Government of Guyana is committed to transforming the delivery of public services and using digital solutions to enhance good governance. The aim of this digital governance roadmap is to assess the current e-governance ecosystem in Guyana, propose a conceptual model of integrated e-governance and compare the current situation with the model to find gaps and provide suggestions for further activities based on Estonian and international practical experience. The roadmap provides an overview of the strategic building blocks of any digital society – e.g. secure data exchange, electronic identification of citizens and businesses, population management, etc. – along with suggestions for the organizational, financial and legal framework of e-governance and general proposals for sectorial interventions (e-School, e-Police, e-Health, e-Cabinet, national geoportal, etc.)”³.

The CARICOM Secretariat has observed that the digital economy has been playing an increasingly significant role as a new driver of economic growth and social transformation. This is all the more necessary as the COVID 19 pandemic has caused major economic setbacks. CARICOM is fostering the development of Digital Government for Public Service Delivery by various means, including the development of the CARICOM Single ICT Space. It is notable that a major factor contributing to the failure of many digital government efforts has been the “project management” approach and that, for too long, government and donors viewed the introduction of digital services as a stand-alone “technical engineering” problem, separate from government policy and processes.

Embarking on a serious transformation of structures and cultures and enhancing the digital capabilities of public organizations will require governments to understand how their governance systems can adapt to rapid changes. Also, public sector transformation must count on the strong commitment of officials from the highest levels of government. Ethical, transformational leaders must drive the required change across the public service and putting people at the center.

³ Digital Governance Roadmap for Guyana, https://ndma.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/DigitalGovernanceRoadmap_20181025.pdf

In this people-centered approach, the expected outcomes would be to improve people's satisfaction with public services, enhance collaboration between government and citizens, and develop innovative solutions to continuously improve service quality.

The ability of agencies to work together and people to engage in wide-ranging dialogue with government become especially important in the context of putting e-government to the service of inclusive and people-centred sustainable development. Integrated policy approaches, enabled by cohesive institutional mechanisms and modern technology, contribute to the overall objectives of long-term development while lending greater legitimacy to government activities. The entry point for an integrated approach to whole-of-government is to determine the baseline conditions which allow for collaboration, across and between departments, through institutional arrangements so that the ensuing system is holistic, synergistic and coordinated in the delivery of public services. To realize a national strategy, strong leadership is required. Among other things, top e-government officials can bring together key stakeholders across ministries and agencies, define shared needs, identify potential gaps and redundancies in implementing strategic goals, and guide e-government innovation in service delivery⁴.

The Workshop will underscore how innovation, digital government, and changing mindsets can nurture transformation by building capacities for change across the Ministry of Public Service and the whole government.

The Workshop will be articulated along the following key structural building blocks which are useful for governments when embarking on public sector transformation and strengthening their governance effectiveness at the national level:

1. Political commitment
2. Transformational leadership, and changing mindsets
3. Institutional coordination and system thinking
4. Coherence between national and local/regional level
5. Organizational structures and processes
6. Financing
7. Digital Technology and Data Management
8. Stakeholders' engagement
9. Monitoring, reporting, and evaluation (including mechanisms for citizen feedback).

Participants will focus on a few priorities building blocks needed to accelerate the transformation and deliver on the Ministry's objectives.

3. Objectives

The Training Workshop aims to raise awareness and develop capacities to promote innovation, digital government in public service delivery and changing mindsets.

The objectives of the Training Workshop are to:

1. Uncover challenges and identify building blocks for public sector transformation.
2. Learn and apply new concepts, tools, and approaches in the areas of changing mindsets, innovation, and digital government, to support strategies, capabilities, and action planning.
3. Explore strategies to strengthen Guyana's capabilities, as they relate to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, for innovative, inclusive, and effective public service delivery.

⁴ 2012 E-Government Survey <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2012-Survey/Chapter-3-Taking-a-whole-of-government-approach.pdf>

4. Establish follow-up mechanisms.

4. Methodology and Session Themes

The Training Workshop will feature presentations by experts, interactive activities, group discussions and innovative practices for a peer learning. The activities and group discussions will enable participants to transform in-depth learning into practice.

5. Format

The Workshop will be composed of six sessions of 180 minutes, delivered over a period of 2 weeks. Participants should commit to participating full-time in all the sessions as they are inter-connected and build on each other. For each session and between sessions, participants will undertake a limited number of offline tasks (readings, preparation of presentations) individually and/or in teams.

Each session will present the following key features:

- Pre-workshop preparation
- Brief introduction/icebreaker
- Presentations
- Interactivity – participant presentations, breakout rooms, polls, chat, discussion
- Key messages – to bring out insights and learnings in a different format each day
- Concrete follow-up actions at the country level

6. Target Audience

The workshop will involve Permanent and Deputy Permanent Secretaries, Regional Executive Officers, Chief Executive Officers of Guyana.

7. Expected Results

Participants will explore the institutional, organizational, structural, cultural, and personal change needed to promote innovation and digital government transformation in support of the SDGs. They will also have the opportunity to devise strategies, roadmaps and action plans to be implemented in their own country upon completion of the course. At the end of the workshop there will be concrete post-workshop assignments with groups formed and actions to be taken as a follow-up. This activity will be coordinated by the Ministry of Public Service.

Each session and the overall course will be evaluated by the participants

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