



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



ECLAC



Capacity Development Workshops

Changing Mindsets for Innovation and Public Sector Transformation

24th to 26th March 2025, Nassau, Bahamas

Concept Note

Description of the Event

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), is organizing two Capacity Development Workshops on “Changing Mindsets for Innovation and Public Sector Transformation” in collaboration with the Caribbean Centre for Administration Development (CARICAD) and the Caribbean Office of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). It will be held in person from 24th to 26th March 2025 in Nassau, NP The Bahamas. One workshop is directed to the 26 Permanent Secretaries of The Bahamas and their key staff. The second workshop is directed to General Directors, Senior Public Officers at the level of Directors, Director Generals, Heads of Agencies and Authorities and Chairman of Boards/Board of Directors in charge of public policy implementation. At the request of the Director of Labour of the Ministry of Labour and Public Service, representatives of the youth (students of the International School of Business, Entrepreneurship and Technology - ISBET) will participate in the event.

The Workshops are being organized within the framework of the project on “*Developing Capacities for Innovation, Digital Government Transformation and Changing Mindsets in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (DA2427J)*” which is being implemented by the Bahamas Ministry of Labour & the Public Service, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs’ Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (UN DESA/DPIDG) and the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) in

collaboration with the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the UN Resident Coordinator Offices in the region. The project aims to strengthen public sector national capacities for innovation, digital government transformation and changing mindsets by strengthening public servants' skills, knowledge, and understanding of the importance of public sector transformation. The project also aims to strengthen the capacity of selected countries in the Caribbean SIDS to mobilize their institutions and public servants to enhance effectiveness and institutional coordination, public accountability, and engagement of key stakeholders in the implementation and review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Lessons learned and experiences will be shared among countries in the region during the life of the project.

Background

The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) – a Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity highlights that “the next ten years are critical for SIDS. A new context is emerging wherein the economic, social and environmental as well as geopolitical threats to SIDS development are so great that they can only be ameliorated by a reinvigorated enabling environment that gives meaningful effect to their sustainable development.”(para.12) In the Caribbean SIDS, progress towards the achievement of the SDGs is stagnant or faces significant or major challenges as indicated by the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the Caribbean 2022-2026¹. Despite economic and social advancements in recent years, several adverse factors (from COVID-19 to the war in Ukraine, inflation, impact of climate change, etc.) have resulted in both domestic and external challenges in the Caribbean region. Given the region's prevailing economic and social inequalities, strong unemployment effects will disproportionately impact the poor and the vulnerable middle-income strata, possibly leading to even higher levels of economic inequality. The public sector in the Caribbean region continues to face a capacity challenge in delivering change and transformation, with challenges being experienced in relation to mindsets, capacity, processes, and right skill sets.

At the Fourth SIDS Conference held in 2024, Member States have also agreed that it is necessary to build strong institutions by, among other things, investing in continuous education and training and professional development programs for public servants, and building public sector skillsets for the future, including in improving the agility of public service delivery and public procurement.” (ABAS, para. 25, (ii) d). The 2024 Pact for the Future², adopted by the UN General Assembly, also underlines the need for increased capacity-building efforts to bridge digital divides and foster innovation, futures thinking, and foresight among Member States. It underscores that strategic foresight is necessary to ensure long-term thinking and planning. As such, United Nations Member States have agreed “*to develop and implement sustainable practices and the institutional reforms necessary to ensure evidence-based decision-making, while making governance more anticipatory, adaptive, and responsive to future opportunities, risks and challenges. They agreed to ensure inclusive and equitable access to knowledge, science, and information, while promoting innovation, critical thinking and life skills to create generations of citizens that are agents of positive change and transformation*” (para.25).

Creating a forward-thinking culture is also the focus of work at the United Nations, as presented by the United Nations 2.0 Quintet of Change. The Quintet of Change offers a useful framework by focusing on

¹ https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/Caribbean%20Multicountry%20Sustainable%20Development%20Framework_2022_2026_0.pdf

² <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sof-the-pact-for-the-future.pdf>, Pact for the Future, 2024

innovation, strategic foresight, data-driven decision-making, digital transformation, and partnerships. It encourages a culture of agility and resilience, empowering governments to address emerging challenges with inclusive policies and sustainable solutions. By emphasizing systems thinking and integrated approaches, the Quintet can help to drive public sector transformation, enabling impactful outcomes in a dynamic global environment. As noted, the framework outlines a modernized system with enhanced expertise in data, innovation, digital technology, foresight, and behavioral science to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Caribbean's commitment to the ABAS and the SDGs and the vision and priorities of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states, require more innovative, responsive, and transformed public services. **The Caribbean region must be prepared to take advantage of developments in technology, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), to create an environment which will lead to adaptability in mindset, resilience, and innovation.** A holistic strategy is essential for transforming public service delivery and requires fostering new mindsets and behaviors in public servants. Governments may need to make urgent investments in retooling public services and equipping civil servants with new knowledge, skills, and competencies (UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration -CEPA, 2018) that are supportive of accelerating transformations for SDGs implementation in a more volatile, unstable, complex, and ambiguous world. This process involves promoting practical, competency-based learning and a culture of innovation and problem-solving.

Thematic Focus

Based on the findings of a first exploratory visit to The Bahamas and on conversations with government officials, the Workshop on Changing Mindsets for Innovation and Public Sector Transformation will explore practices and approaches to support changing mindsets for innovation and digital transformation of public services, as well as capacity building strategies (aimed not only to the public sector but society as a whole) to support this transformation.

The workshop will examine the relevance of adopting new mindsets to accelerate innovation, the use of strategic foresight, data driven decision-making, and the implementation of digital government transformation to improve the delivery of public services to citizens, as well as some of the challenges faced by the public sector in this regard. By working on action plans and strategies to change mindsets in support of innovation and public sector transformation, participants will have an enhanced understanding of the role that they can play in leveraging the potential of emerging technologies, as well as fostering a culture of innovation and resilience that responds to the needs and expectations of citizens.

Methodology and Format

The workshop will feature presentations by experts and discussions on innovative practices for peer-to-peer learning. It will be conducted in person in Nassau, NP The Bahamas. The workshop will consist of two distinctive sessions:

1. A 1.5-hour workshop on Changing Mindsets for Innovation and Public Sector Transformation
 - a. Target Audience: Permanent Secretaries
 - b. Objectives: to increase awareness and highlight the importance of interagency coordination and collaboration to promote innovation and experimental mindsets in the public sector to improve public service delivery.
 - c. Date: 24th March 2025

- d. The session will last for **2 hours** and will consist of:
 - i. A presentation by featured speakers
 - ii. Q and A segment
2. A 2-days hands-on workshop on Changing Mindsets for Innovation and Public Sector Transformation
 - a. Target Audience: General Directors, Senior Public Officers at the level of Directors, Director Generals, Heads of Agencies and Authorities and Chairman of Boards/Board of Directors in charge of public policy implementation. Youth representatives of the International School of Business, Entrepreneurship and Technology (ISBET) will be included in some of the workshop presentations to increase their awareness of growth mindsets and enhance their understanding of the complexities of policy-making.
 - b. Objectives: to increase awareness and highlight the importance of interagency coordination and collaboration to promote innovation and experimental mindsets in the public sector to improve public service delivery.
 - c. Dates: 25th– 26th March 2025
 - d. The format will consist of presentations by featured speakers and hands-on interactive exercises aimed at strengthening strategies and action plans to promote an innovative and experimental mindset in the public sector.

Expected Results

By the end of both workshops, participants will have:

- Learned about the changes that are required at different levels (individual, organizational, and institutional) to successfully change mindsets.
- Learned how new mindsets, such as innovation and foresight mindsets, can be directly applied at the individual, organization, and institutional level.
- Gained insights to inspire and guide their actions to address the challenges of promoting innovation in the public sector and of implementing digital public services in their contexts.

It is anticipated that actionable and innovative governance strategies, which can be applied to participants' specific contexts, will be discussed. Through group discussions and activities, the workshop is also expected to strengthen collaboration among public sector leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders in The Bahamas, which is key to addressing future challenges.

About the Organizers

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

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is a vital interface between global policies in the economic, social and environmental spheres and national action. The Department works in three main interlinked areas: (i) it compiles, generates and analyses a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and information on which States Members of the United Nations draw to review common problems and to take stock of policy options; (ii) it facilitates the negotiations of Member States in many intergovernmental bodies on joint course of action to address ongoing or emerging global challenges; and (iii) it advises interested Governments on the ways and means of

translating policy frameworks developed in United Nations conferences and summits into programmes at the country level and, through technical assistance, helps build national capacities.

The Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD)

The Caribbean Centre for Development Administration was formed in 1979 as the Caribbean Sub-Centre of the Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD). The Centre became fully operational in 1980 with Headquarters established in Barbados and is an Institution of the Caribbean Community under Article 21 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. The Agreement Establishing CARICAD charges the Centre with the general objective of “rendering... assistance to the countries of the Caribbean area for the purpose of improving their administrative capability to accelerate their social and economic development”. In keeping with this mandate, CARICAD is the Region’s focal point for transforming and modernising the public sectors of Member States to better formulate and implement public policy towards the achievement of good governance which is indispensable to sustainable development.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

ECLAC is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations which was established to promote economic and social development through regional and subregional cooperation and integration. To that end, through its substantive divisions, subregional headquarters and national offices, it undertakes studies, research and other support activities within the terms of reference of the Commission; gathers, organizes, interprets and disseminates information and data relating to the economic and social development of the region; formulates and promotes development cooperation activities and projects of regional and subregional scope commensurate with the needs and priorities of the region and acts as an executing agency for such projects; provides advisory services to Governments at their request and plans, organizes and executes programmes of technical cooperation; assists in bringing a regional perspective to global problems and forums and introduces global concerns at the regional and subregional levels; organizes conferences and intergovernmental and expert group meetings and sponsors training workshops, symposia and seminars; and provides substantive secretariat services and documentation for the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. Further, it coordinates activities with those of the major departments and offices at United Nations Headquarters, specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations with a view to avoiding duplication and ensuring complementarity in the exchange of information.

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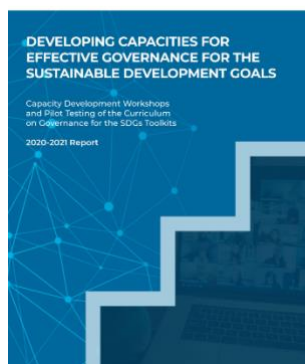
Useful Readings and References



Report on Changing Mindsets to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The idea of producing a publication on Changing Mindsets to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was conceived in 2019 as a follow-up to the workshop on “Mobilizing and Equipping Public Servants to Realize the 2030 Agenda”. The workshop brought together worldwide experts on the subject matter of changing mindsets and allowed for insightful discussions with many schools of public administration. It was organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) during the United Nations Public Service Forum in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan.

The publication is intended as a companion document to the Curriculum on Governance for the Sustainable Development Goals and its Toolkit on Changing Mindsets in Public Institutions to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development developed by UN DESA, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG). UN DESA/DPIDG’s mission is to support governments in strengthening their 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.



Curriculum on Governance for the Sustainable Development Goals

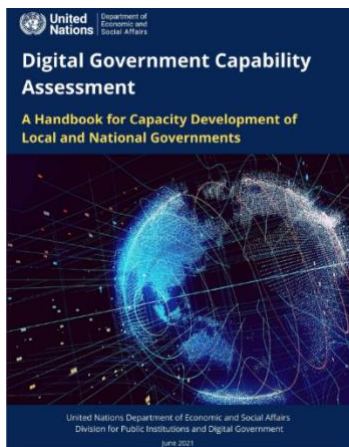
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights (including the right to development), on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions”. Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda specifically calls for effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Indeed, institutions play a critical role in the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets. However, public sector

reforms needed to implement the SDGs continue to be a major and vexing challenge in many countries. The 11 Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development, developed by the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration and endorsed in 2018 by the Economic and Social Council, provide practical, expert guidance to interested countries in a broad range of governance challenges associated with implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Curriculum Toolkits address the 11 Principles of Effective Governance. The Curriculum on Governance for the Sustainable Development Goals aims to provide a holistic and integrated framework for capacity development in the area of governance and public institutions. It aims to promote critical understanding of sustainable development issues, enhance governance capacity, and strengthen public servants' awareness of their active role in contributing to the achievement of the SDGs.



UN E-Government Survey 2024

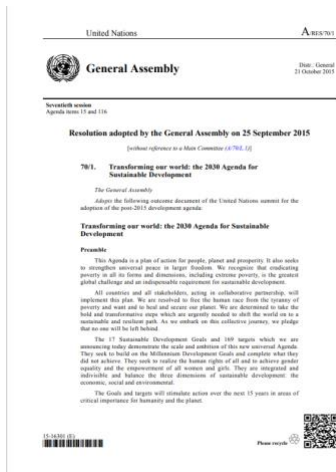
This thirteenth edition of the United Nations E-Government Survey, released in 2024, provides a comprehensive assessment of the digital government landscape across all 193 Member States. The 2024 Survey highlights a significant upward trend in the development of digital government worldwide, with increased investment in resilient infrastructure and cutting-edge technologies. The global average value of the E-Government Development Index (EGDI) shows substantial improvement, with the proportion of the population lagging in digital government development decreasing from 45.0 per cent in 2022 to 22.4 per cent in 2024. Despite significant progress in digital government development, the EGDI averages for the African region, least developed countries, and small island developing States remain below the global average, underscoring the need for targeted efforts to bridge existing gaps. At the local level, the Survey continues to assess city portals using the Local Online Services Index (LOSI). The LOSI findings reflect steady progress but also highlight persistent disparities between national and local e-government performance, pointing to the need for focused initiatives to strengthen digital government at the municipal level. This edition introduces the new Digital Government Model Framework, providing countries with a comprehensive road map for the effective planning, implementation and assessment of digital government initiatives. A short addendum explores the integration of AI in digital government development, emphasizing the importance of maximizing benefits and minimizing risks to achieve balanced governance.



Digital Government Capability Assessment Handbook

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.

Completing a DGCA will help civil servants build new understanding of the level of digital government capability that exists in a country as a foundation for continued efforts to innovate and lead in the area of digital government and public service delivery. A DGCA is not meant to be used to benchmark capability, but rather to develop an understanding of current capability and to inform decision making about where investments are needed to increase innovation and digital government capability leading to improvements in public service delivery.



Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognize that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

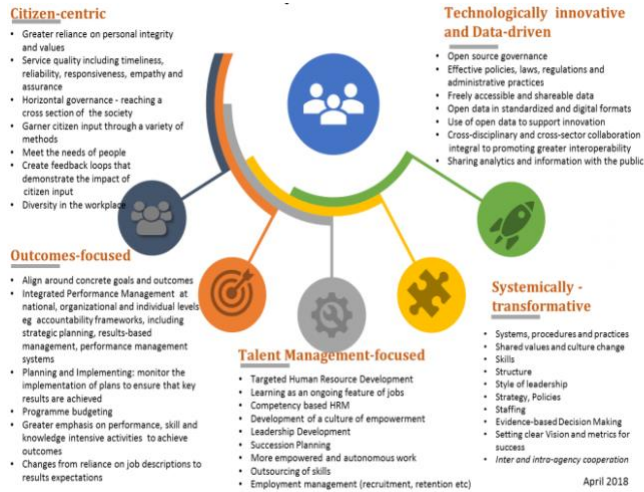
All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet. We are

determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind.



Innovation, Digital Government and Public Service Delivery for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean Region

This report summarizes presentations and outcomes of a facilitated online training workshop on Innovation, Digital Government and Public Service Delivery for Sustainable Development, which was jointly organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (UN DESA/DPIDG) and the SIDS Unit of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG), in collaboration with the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and with the participation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN ECLAC), among others.



Building a Resilient 21st Century Public Sector in the Caribbean

This article recognises the contextualised nature of public sector transformation in a complex, frequently intransient and change-averse system, and identifies some factors that are necessary in order for public sector organisations to attain resilience status. These include the importance of: citizen centricity, technology, human capital development, systemic transformation and a focus on outcomes.

(CARICAD, 2018)