

**Promoting and Rewarding  
Innovations and Excellence for  
Revitalizing Public  
Administration and Service  
Delivery: the United Nations  
Public Service Awards**

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**There is consensus: Public administration is critical to the development process & MDGs**

**It is a competent, knowledgeable and experienced public service that helps to provide the policy and a strategic impetus and environment in which actors can play their essential roles to deliver on the Millennium Development Goals and other development strategies to improve the lives of people around the world**

# Three critical questions

- **How can public servants be motivated to engage in the search for new and better work methods, approaches, institutional procedures and networking arrangements to deliver public services?**
- **How can the innovations that may be taking place in the public service in various corners of the world be brought to the world's attention and their experiences shared to engineer further innovations?**
- **How can those who engage in successful innovations be rewarded to motivate them and others to sustain innovation and improvement in the public services?**

# Purpose and objectives of the awards

To recognize the institutional contribution made by public servants to enhance the role, professionalism, image and visibility of the public service.

- To reward service to citizens and motivate public servants worldwide to sustain the momentum of innovation and the improvement of the delivery of public services.
- To collect and disseminate successful practices and experiences in public administration in order to support efforts for improvements in country level public service delivery.
- Through success stories, to counterbalance any negative image of public administration, raise the image and prestige of public servants and revitalize public administration as a noble discipline on which development greatly depends

# Purpose and objectives Continued

- **To promote, encourage and facilitate networking among institutions and organizations relevant to public administration and strengthen the networks of the United Nations program on public administration and development.**
- **To enhance professionalism in the public service**
- **To enhance the visibility and credibility of the United Nations program on public administration, as well as the image of the work of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management.**

# Categories Have Involved

For the years 2003 and 2004

- **improvement of public service results,**
- **improvement of the quality of the public service process,**
- **innovations in public service, and**
- **application of information and communication technology in local government.**

For the 2005

- **improvement of transparency, accountability and responsiveness in public service,**
- **improvement of the delivery of services, and**
- **application of information and communication technology in government.**

Three options proposed

- **link the award category to the annual major United Nations theme,**
- **select a specific annual theme to be identified with the award, and**
- **leave them open-ended for the next two to three years**

# **United Nations public service awards process (issues)**

- **Call for nominations:** to collect as much material as possible concerning innovative practices in the public sector
- **Nominees:** reward innovations and excellence exhibited only by institutions in the public sector.
- **References and supporting documents:** emphasize less voluminous but better organized documentation in one of the six official languages of the United Nations to facilitate understanding of the substance of the nominations. (five letters of reference and only three supporting documents, the nominating institutions to validate the primary supporting documents; and nominations and supporting documents should be submitted only in one of the official languages of the United Nations).

# Criteria for selection

proposed generalized criteria for selecting the winning nominations :

- **creativity, as judged from the uniqueness of the concept applied;**
- **effectiveness, as judged from the extent to which the innovation achieves goals**
- **tangible results achieved, as judged from the improvements obtained**
- **citizen centered service, as judged from the benefits the citizens obtain and from the way they are associated to the innovation;**
- **transferability and adaptability of the innovation to other regions, countries, institutions etc.;**



# Criteria continued

- **sustainability**, as judged from the length of the period of application of the innovation;
- **innovative partnerships**, as judged from the way the innovation has facilitated partnerships
- **knowledge networking**, as judged from the way the innovation has created knowledge and facilitated the sharing of its approaches and methodology
- **equity**, as judged from the extent to which the benefits of the innovation are spread,
- **transparency**, as judged from the way the innovation has opened communication and sharing of information,
- **accountability**

## **Modalities for selection**

**From both observation and the recent review, the following should be done to further improve the process:**

- (a) allocating more staff time to the awards process, including hiring consultants to support the pre-screening, which is cumbersome because of the volume of documents to be read,**
- (b) allocating more time for the subcommittee of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to make the final evaluation and select the winners, and**

## **Modalities continued**

**(c) making site visits to the winning nominations to make the process of verification and validation more effective.**

**(d) if the number of nominees continues to grow, institute a two-step nomination process,**

**(i): nominators requested to submit a one- or two page nomination document**

**(ii): making a more detailed submission only for those initiatives/projects/services/institutions considered eligible in the first step.**

**This would reduce the volume of supporting documents that need to be read and analyzed during the pre-selection process.**

# **UNPSA Ceremonies**

**the prestige and visibility of the awards would be enhanced through the following:**

- (a) The UN SG personal participation in the celebrations**
- (b) participation of luminaries, such as Nobel Prize winners and high-level, internationally well known personalities in governance and public administration, as keynote speakers at the ceremonies;**
- (c) expanding the guest list for the ceremonies;**
- (d) holding a gala affair as part of the ceremony; and**
- (e) Member States to engage in activities that promote innovations and excellence in public service to mark United Nations Public Service Day at the national**

# Continued

Moreover, the value of the award itself needs to be improved by:

- (a) inviting the winners of the awards to participate in an activity of DPADM such as AEGMs, workshops, to present their experiences; and**
- (b) improving and standardizing the design of the awards to have a more tangible, attractive and permanent award (the first award, in 2003, was a certificate, and the second, in 2004, was a certificate accompanied by a crystal trophy). The process of upgrading the award should continue until there is a more attractive symbol that does not change with the years.**
- (c) Countries that have the facilities should participate in the ceremony via video conferencing**

# Funding

**A program such as the UNPSA and the improvements proposed here require funds in to be implemented.**

**(a): The DPADM to develop a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy.**

**(b): The Division to explore partnership and sponsorship possibilities for funding with the private sector.**

**©: In addition, specific provisions should be included in the regular budget of the Division to support the UNPSA.**

**(d): explore the establishment of a trust fund with the support of bilateral and multilateral donors.**

# Conclusion

**The UNPSA is very important in inspiring public servants all over the world to work towards perfecting their approaches, methodologies, practices, systems and processes, as well as in delivering public services focusing on results and responsiveness to the people they serve. Coupled with the United Nations Public Service Day celebrations, it enhances the visibility and transferability of innovations, as well as opportunities for sharing experience in the improvement of public service performance. Therefore, the United Nations Secretariat, as well as Member States, should further increase the efforts and resources that are devoted to ensuring that the UNPSA remains successful and improves to become valued by all countries as an instrument for acknowledging the achievements of public servants and encouraging them in their quest for diligent service to the public.**