

Principles of effective governance for sustainable development

Preamble

The full realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed development objectives will hinge in no small part on a common understanding of the basic principles of effective governance for sustainable development. The basic principles set out below are intended to clarify the governance agenda, taking into account different governance structures, national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. They have been developed by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to help interested countries, on a voluntary basis, build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, with a view to achieving the shared vision for the people and the planet embodied in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As basic principles, they apply to all public institutions, including the administration of executive and legislative organs, the security and justice sectors, independent constitutional bodies and State corporations. The principles are given depth and made operational through a selection of commonly used strategies and related practices, which are an integral and evolving part of this work.

Principle

Commonly used strategies

Effectiveness

Competence	To perform their functions effectively, institutions are to have sufficient expertise, resources and tools to deal adequately with the mandates under their authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of a professional public sector workforce • Strategic human resources management • Leadership development and training of civil servants • Performance management • Results-based management • Financial management and control • Efficient and fair revenue administration • Investment in e-government
Sound policymaking	To achieve their intended results, public policies are to be coherent with one another and founded on true or well-established grounds, in full accordance with fact, reason and good sense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning and foresight • Regulatory impact analysis • Promotion of coherent policymaking • Strengthening national statistical systems • Monitoring and evaluation systems • Science-policy interface

<i>Principle</i>	<i>Commonly used strategies</i>
Collaboration	To address problems of common interest, institutions at all levels of government and in all sectors should work together and jointly with non-State actors towards the same end, purpose and effect
Accountability	
Integrity	To serve in the public interest, civil servants are to discharge their official duties honestly, fairly and in a manner consistent with soundness of moral principle
Transparency	To ensure accountability and enable public scrutiny, institutions are to be open and candid in the execution of their functions and promote access to information, subject only to the specific and limited exceptions as are provided by law
Independent oversight	To retain trust in government, oversight agencies are to act according to strictly professional considerations and apart from and unaffected by others

- Risk management frameworks
- Data sharing
- Centre of government coordination under the Head of State or Government
- Collaboration, coordination, integration and dialogue across levels of government and functional areas
- Raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Network-based governance
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships
- Promotion of anti-corruption policies, practices and bodies
- Codes of conduct for public officials
- Competitive public procurement
- Elimination of bribery and trading in influence
- Conflict of interest policies
- Whistle-blower protection
- Provision of adequate remuneration and equitable pay scales for public servants
- Proactive disclosure of information
- Budget transparency
- Open government data
- Registries of beneficial ownership
- Lobby registries
- Promotion of the independence of regulatory agencies
- Arrangements for review of administrative decisions by courts or other bodies
- Independent audit
- Respect for legality

Inclusiveness

Leaving no one behind	To ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality, public policies are to take into account the needs and aspirations of all segments of society, including the poorest and most vulnerable and those subject to discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of equitable fiscal and monetary policy • Promotion of social equity • Data disaggregation • Systematic follow-up and review
Non-discrimination	To respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, access to public service is to be provided on general terms of equality, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of public sector workforce diversity • Prohibition of discrimination in public service delivery • Multilingual service delivery • Accessibility standards • Cultural audit of institutions • Universal birth registration • Gender-responsive budgeting
Participation	To have an effective State, all significant political groups should be actively involved in matters that directly affect them and have a chance to influence policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free and fair elections • Regulatory process of public consultation • Multi-stakeholder forums • Participatory budgeting • Community-driven development
Subsidiarity	To promote government that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of all people, central authorities should perform only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more intermediate or local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal federalism • Strengthening urban governance • Strengthening municipal finance and local finance systems • Enhancement of local capacity for prevention, adaptation and mitigation of external shocks • Multilevel governance
Intergenerational equity	To promote prosperity and quality of life for all, institutions should construct administrative acts that balance the short-term needs of today's generation with the longer-term needs of future generations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable development impact assessment • Long-term public debt management • Long-term territorial planning and spatial development • Ecosystem management